

you this out of professional courtesy, but if they don't, it is appropriate for you to ask.

Interviewers should not ask 'discriminatory' questions

During an interview, the Selection Committee can ask almost anything about your professional experiences as they relate to the job. However, state and federal antidiscrimination laws, as well as school board policy, forbid certain questions from being asked.

For example, it is against the law/policy to ask about your religious preferences, political affiliation, ancestry, national origin, birthplace, sexual orientation, marital status, or family (children or spouse). It is also unlawful to ask your age, date of birth, or ages of your children.

If you feel this information might be helpful to you, simply volunteer it. One method of doing this is to include it on your resume.

If a tabu, unlawful question is asked, you have several options:

- You can simply answer the question.
- You can ask the interviewer to explain the relevancy and hope it will be withdrawn.
- You can state the question is inappropriate and refuse to answer it.

The best advise is to plan ahead what your response will be if you are asked a potentially discriminatory question.

However you decide to respond, you have a legal right to file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). **You should also notify JCEA.**

How do I accent the positives and minimize the negatives?

All professional people have strengths

and weaknesses, areas in which we need to grow. Selection Committees understand that and during the interview will attempt to assess both. Your goal is to sell them on your strengths, while minimizing your weaknesses.

Some teachers/SERS may also have concerns about negative references, situations, or evaluations which may be a part of their personnel file.

As a matter of practice, most interviewers will review personnel files prior to the interview; so they will already know your professional "warts." Therefore, most experts advise applicants to be prepared to discuss such situations.

If, for instance, you have received a previous evaluation indicating difficulty with classroom management, be prepared to address the issue. Without appearing defensive, explain the conditions surrounding this perception. Then indicate how you have grown/learned from the experience. If you have received additional training to correct the problem, tell the interviewer that, too.

A word of caution. While it is OK to acknowledge a difference of philosophy or opinion, never speak negatively about another school, or a former principal/supervisor. In general, most employers admire candor and honesty, but be careful.

Call For Information Or Help!

If you are a JCEA member and have questions about the transfer process or your contractual and/or legal rights, call JCEA (303-232-6405) and talk to your JCEA UniServ Director.



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Promoting yourself:



A practical guide to Article 34, the voluntary transfer process

Article 34 provides that vacancies (in continuing positions) that occur between September 15 and June 30 must be advertised for voluntary transfers. However, for most, the transfer season really begins in the spring after retirements have been announced and enrollments determined.

With each transfer season, comes a host of questions about the process. How does the transfer process really work? What do I need to do to win this job? How important is the interview? Do I need a portfolio and videotape?

The answers lie in a better understanding of your rights in Article 34 and in knowing how to promote yourself in the interview.

Voluntary Transfer Process

Article 34 guarantees all teacher/SERS vacancies which occur between September 15 and June 30 will be advertised and filled through the Selection Committee process. Voluntary transfers will be advertised in both the *Messenger* and through electronic media from February through June 30.

The district will first determined whether or not the position shall be "restricted" or "unrestricted." Restricted positions may only be filled internally. Applicants must be teachers on con-

tinuing contracts (non-probationary or probationary) and spend a majority of their time in the disciplines posted.

After February 15 all open, unrestricted positions will be posted for both internal and external applicants.

After all involuntary transfers and leave returnees have been assigned, open positions will continue to be advertised through June 30.

Normally all applicants will receive an interview, unless they fail to meet pre-screening criteria, which must be specifically identified on the job description. (The job description will be available on-line for your review.) If there are more than six qualified applicants, the Selection Committee may use the one page resume and one page statement of educational philosophy to limit the pool to six. Any applicant denied an interview will be so notified in a "timely manner."

Any teacher/SERS seeking a voluntary transfer must request the transfer on-line through the on-line application process. **Article 34-3-1 and 34-5-1** state that a school Selection Committee, composed of at least 50% teachers, will be formed for each identified vacancy. The Committee shall write or approve the job description (including job title, job number, job responsibilities, and pre-screening criteria if any) and file

it with the district. [Note: Applicants should carefully review the job description prior to the interview.]

The Selection Committee has the responsibility of interviewing all "qualified" applicants to determine the "best qualified candidate for the position." The Committee's "consensus" decision shall be based on all of the following:

- A. The teacher's experience and/or qualification related to the vacancy.
- B. Information obtained from interviews of selected candidates.
- C. Evaluation and relevant information in the central personnel file.
- D. Job requirements as specified in the job requisition.
- E. Length of service in the District.

It is the responsibility of the Committee to determine what weight will be given to each of the criteria above. [For more information regarding the Selection Committee process call JCEA (303-232-6405) and ask for the pamphlet "23 FACTS every Selection Committee needs to know!"]

Applicants **may** bring a portfolio of their work, but video tapes will **not** be required.

Applicants may **not** be required to use personal leave or be forced to request other staff members to cover classes to participate in the voluntary transfer process.

Historically, through the contract, JCEA and the school district have recognized the potential abuses of a selection system which relies too heavily on subjective selection standards, such as how well one performs during an interview. One's ability to interview well may or may not have anything to do with the

ability to perform the duties required of the vacancy. Nevertheless, administrators and Selection Committees often cite poor performance during the interview as a major reason why an applicant was not selected.

Realistically, the interview plays a significant role in the selection process, and teachers should be aware that for many administrators and/or Selection Committees the interview is extremely important.

**What's the bottom line?
To win a voluntary
transfer, you have to
promote yourself!**

Interview Skills

Experts in this field argue that the process of selecting applicants—rightly or wrongly—is highly subjective. Employers, they say, tend to hire people they like.

For the employer, the interview is an opportunity to assess your personality, determine your skills, and clarify information from your resume or application.

From your perspective, the interview is the opportunity to sell yourself and your skills. It is also a time for you to decide, if in fact, you want the job.

Before the interview, plan ahead:

1. Find out all you can about the school/SERS area and the interviewer(s). Contact a colleague in that school/area and discuss the situation with them. Know the interviewers' names and use them.
2. Be on time. In fact, it is a good idea to get there early so that you can catch your breath and mentally prepare.

3. Always request a copy of the job description well in advance of the interview. Study it. Know what the school/SERS area wants. Catalogue your experiences and training and be prepared to demonstrate them. Be sure to let the administrator and/or interview committee know what you could add to the staff.
4. Ask in advance what weight the Selection Committee is giving to the above criteria. Then plan your interview strategy accordingly.
5. Develop a portfolio or other way of presenting examples of your skills and experience. Include the one-page resume and statement of educational philosophy, letters of recommendation, commendations, previous successful evaluations, and materials that show your knowledge and skills pertinent to the job description.
6. Get plenty of rest before the interview so that you will be alert and have adequate energy.

During the interview, remember:

1. First impressions are important. Begin with a firm, professional handshake. Convey a pleasant, confident attitude and manner.
2. Never assume you will get the job just because *you* believe you are qualified for it. Go after each job as if it were your first. Be enthusiastic. Keep your energy level high. Sell yourself!
3. Act, dress, and speak professionally.
4. If you have not been given the interview questions, clarify both the number of questions and the length of time



scheduled for the interview. That way you can determine the amount of time necessary to answer each question.

5. When you are asked a question, be sure you understand it before you answer. If you are not sure, restate the question in your own words to test your perception. If correct, proceed. If not, ask for clarification. Keep all of your answers succinct and provide relevant, real-life examples. If unsure about the length of your answer, simply ask the interviewer if you need to elaborate.
6. It is perfectly OK for you to ask questions to determine if in fact you want to work in this situation. If you decide you do, acknowledge this fact—"I've always wanted to teach in a non-graded primary program, and yours sounds like what I have been looking for!"
7. Be aware of when the interview is coming to a close. Don't draw it out. Thank the Selection Committee and shake hands as appropriate. Again, express interest in the job.

After the interview, follow-up:

1. If time permits, it is always a good idea to send a brief note to the Selection Committee and once again express interest in the position. If there was a point you wanted to stress or something that needed correcting, do so briefly.
2. If you fail to get the job, call the administrator and find out why. Ask the administrator how you could improve your interview. Don't despair. Learn from the experience and get ready for your next one.
3. Finally, you have a right to know who got the job. Administrators should tell