

MASTERING THE ART OF THE JOB INTERVIEW

CMEA BAY SECTION WINTER
CONFERENCE 2016

A LITTLE ABOUT US...

- ▶ Lindsey Ferreira (LFerreira@SRVUSD.net)
 - ▶ Music Director at Los Cerros Middle School (SRVUSD)
 - ▶ Elementary Music Teacher for 4 years, 2 years at Middle School
 - ▶ CMEA Bay Section Public Relations Representative
- ▶ Matt Ferreira (mferreira@stmchs.org)
 - ▶ Music Director and Visual/Performing Arts Department Chairperson at Saint Mary's College High School (Berkeley)
 - ▶ 10 years teaching experience
 - ▶ 7 years as Department Chairperson

A LITTLE ABOUT US...

- ▶ Dr. Laura Franks (LFranks7362@gmail.com)
 - ▶ Principal at Hellyer Elementary School
 - ▶ Educator for 30 years (26 years at middle/ high school levels)
 - ▶ Dissertation on What is the role of CTE in the era of NCLB?

FROM THE NEWLY HIRED:

- ▶ NETWORK! Getting your name out there, getting to know people in the districts you are applying for ALWAYS helps.
- ▶ First impressions matter, sometimes before you even meet - be aware of your interactions.
 - ▶ While waiting for the interview, you never know who is paying attention to your actions. Other teachers, parents, students, and school staff may be watching what you do and reporting back to the hiring committee.
- ▶ Be prepared to NOT be offered the position. Take what you learn from the interviews you do and improve for the next one. Make note of questions you were unprepared for, or that you would like to answer differently in the future.
- ▶ Be on time and dress appropriately for the position you want.

FROM THE NEWLY HIRED:

- ▶ Consider priorities - Do you want to work in a specific district or a specific level?
 - ▶ If you want to work in a specific district, consider subbing to get your foot in the door. That way you get experience, and the local music teachers get to know you and how you work. This builds name recognition and your reputation as an excellent fit for the position is already in place.
 - ▶ Consider accepting a job at a different level than your ultimate desired level. That way you can build tenure and seniority within the district while waiting for the job you want to open.
 - ▶ If you are set on getting a job within a very specific level, consider widening your search range.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- ▶ At the risk of sounding cliché, a job interview is like going on a blind date!
- ▶ It's easy to get nervous or scared, especially if you've had some unsuccessful interviews.
- ▶ Be confident. You're the expert in the room!

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- ▶ Research the school and/or district to which you are applying. This demonstrates interest.
- ▶ Dress for success (and other no-brainers)
- ▶ Bring evidence of how awesome you are: multiple copies of your cover letter, resume, sample lesson plans, concert programs AND “non-musical” items like a budget, discipline plan, grading rubrics, etc.
- ▶ The hiring committee may include the superintendent, site supervisor (principal, dean, or VP), department or district head, teachers, and students.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- ▶ Share your answers to the following questions, even if they're not asked:
 - ▶ Why do you want to teach adolescents (or the age group you're applying for)?
 - ▶ Why do you want to teach music to children?
 - ▶ Sharing your philosophy of music education demonstrates your passion. Offer to teach a sample lesson.
 - ▶ Make sure you address the students in the room.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- ▶ Brush up on current educational trends and talk about how you incorporate them into your teaching:
 - ▶ ie: Common Core, Growth vs. Fixed Mindset, Backward Design, Restorative Justice, assessment models, National Core Arts Standards, CA state standards, etc.
- ▶ Be a team player! Accentuate the curricular rigor inherent in music education, but don't ignore the "extras" that come with the job.
- ▶ Try to remain relaxed, conversational, yet professional. The committee is "looking for a good fit."

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- ▶ Have an answer to every question and use examples. “I’d be willing to learn” only works 2 or 3 times before you start looking unprepared.
- ▶ Questions you can ask:
 - ▶ Is there a Music Boosters? (Share your experience networking with parents.)
 - ▶ What is the size of the program?
 - ▶ What are the traditional expectations of the job/program?
 - ▶ What performances/festivals/competitions does the program participate in or host?

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- ▶ If you referenced recordings, concert programs, or anything else not in your portfolio, send them to the committee chairperson.
- ▶ A follow up email a few days after the interview may also be helpful (though I have mixed feelings about them)

CLOSING...

- ▶ Questions?

Sample Questions

- There will be questions about your discipline system – reference that the best way to combat discipline issues is to have a well-organized lesson that is engaging for all students.
- There will be questions about contacting parents – reference returning calls/emails within 24 hours maximum and reaching out right away when there are possible concerns to work together to prevent issues.
- Questions for teacher candidates are often “generic.” Be able to manipulate questions that (on the surface) may not apply to the grade level you are interviewing for. For example, “Two students come in after recess...” We all know that there is no recess at the secondary level but there are breaks at nutrition, lunch and passing periods.

Sample Questions cont.

1. How would you implement CCSS in your classroom?

- Be familiar with Common Core Literacy and writing standards for CTE courses
- Speak to collaborating with other teachers both in your department and in other departments so that students can see how your course fits with the other courses that they are taking
- Use of rubrics, graphic organizers, etc. that are also used in other courses

2. How do you plan opportunities for students to verbalize their thinking?

- a. Speak to assignments where students have the opportunity to work independently or with a small group to perform an analysis and then verbalize their thought process and product
- b. Have at least one assignment as an example.

Sample Questions cont.

3. How do you meet the needs of students who are full inclusion, special education, physically challenged or resource using a collaborative model?

- a. Speak to working with SPED teachers to find ways to incorporate SPED students of all levels into your program
- b. Give regular feedback to the SPED teacher on progress of student towards their goals that they are working on in your class

4. Describe how you determine whether or not learning targets have been met?

- a. Make sure that you know how to write a learning target that is measurable
- b. Speak to CFU opportunities in your class

Sample Questions cont.

5. If someone familiar with your teaching were to describe your teaching ability what would that person say was your greatest strength and what would be an area of potential growth?

- a. Check with master teacher or administrator to get their input on area of potential growth.
 - i. When you know what this is, speak to how you are already working on it
 - ii. If none is told to you, then choose something like “I need to learn to not overextend myself. I tend to get very involved in my school because I enjoy opportunities to get to know my students and fellow staff members.

6. How would you address cultural/religious concerns of your community in programming curriculum while adhering to standards?

- a. Speak how to explain to parents if there is a piece that you have chosen that has a religious nature when it is a part of the curriculum (historical) that must be taught
- b. Speak to your familiarity with the curriculum/standards of the grade level you are interviewing for

Some musical questions you may encounter...

- What is your vision for a comprehensive music program?
- Where do you see the music program in five years?
- How do you accommodate students with diverse interests, backgrounds and experience levels?
- How would you attract more students to the music program and put a public face on the program?
- Do you have strengths in other areas of the arts?
- How would you utilize technology in your classroom?