
52 PRACTICE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS



THE PRINCIPAL CENTER

ABOUT YOURSELF

FRAMING YOUR LEADERSHIP

Tell us about your professional background, and why you are interested in becoming a school leader.

Why are you interested in this particular position?

What strengths would you bring to this position?

What approaches do you use to manage your time effectively?

What do you see as your greatest weaknesses, and what have you done to address them?

YOUR ENTRY PLAN

CREATING CONFIDENCE

What would you plan to accomplish by the end of your first 30 days on the job? First 60 days? First 90 days?

What would you do to ensure a successful start to the school year?

How would you build a positive school culture and climate?

How will you build relationships with students?

VISION FOR LEARNING

YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF INSTRUCTION

What does the ideal school culture look like, and what would you do to create the kind of culture you envision?

What does effective instructional leadership look like?

How have you demonstrated instructional leadership in your most recent roles?

What is your philosophy of education?

What books have had the most influence on your professional growth in the past five years?

STAFF CULTURE

CULTIVATING PROFESSIONAL CLIMATE

What steps would you take to create a high-performing administrative team?

How do you involve staff in decision-making?

What does distributed leadership mean to you? How have you facilitated distributed leadership among your staff?

How would you celebrate the contributions of all staff members?

What do you believe are the most important contributors to a positive working relationship with school secretaries and other office staff?

What do you look for when hiring a new staff member?

MANAGING CONFLICT

HELPING PEOPLE MOVE FORWARD

Give an example of a situation in which you dealt with a conflict between two staff members. What did you do to resolve the conflict, and what did you learn from the experience? What would you do differently if you could do it over again?

How would you respond if a parent complained about the difficulty of homework assignments?

Describe a challenging situation involving an irate parent or family member. How did you handle it, and what did you learn from the situation?

How would you handle a conflict between a parent and teacher in which the teacher was clearly in the wrong?

How would you communicate with your staff about a district decision with which you disagreed?

MANAGING STAFF

SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY

Describe your approach to supporting teachers in improving their practice.

What would you do if you had a non-teaching staff member who was not meeting expectations?

What would you do if you had a classroom teacher whose performance was below expectations and not improving?

What would you do to work with a teacher struggling with serious classroom management issues?

How would you deal with a teacher who was resistant to a new initiative and was discouraging others from participating?

STUDENTS

CLIMATE & RELATIONSHIPS

What is your experience working with students from diverse backgrounds? How does diversity impact student learning?

What is your approach to working with students with special needs?

How do you build relationships with students and encourage student leadership?

Why do you want to work with (elementary/middle/high school) students?

STUDENTS, PART II

CLIMATE & RELATIONSHIPS

What action would you take to deal with hallway discipline issues?

How would you respond if a teacher came to you to report suspected abuse of a student at home?

What is your philosophy of student discipline? How does it relate to students receiving special education services?

Describe your process for handling a disciplinary referral in which a student has been sent to the office for being disruptive and disrespectful in class.

OPERATIONS

RUNNING A SCHOOL EFFECTIVELY

What experience do you have creating and maintaining a budget?

In this position, you will be expected to make regular reports to the superintendent (or designee). What do you believe will facilitate a positive working relationship with the superintendent?

Give an example of a situation in which you worked effectively with a non-instructional staff member, such as a custodian, to solve a problem. What did you learn from this situation, and what would you do differently?

Describe your approach to hiring and retaining talented staff.

PARENTS & COMMUNITY

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR LEARNING

Describe your approach to engaging families from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds.

How will you engage the community to support bond issues?

How would you handle a disagreement between parent groups (such as PTA) and staff?

How would you engage parents and community members as active participants in the school?

IMPROVEMENT

MAKING TEACHING AND LEARNING BETTER

How would you create a professional development plan for the year? What information would you gather, and what steps would you take to create the plan?

What do you believe are the key characteristics of effective teaching?

How do you support technology integration in the classroom?

Describe your experience with involvement in curricular change.

What do you envision doing to contribute to the quality of curriculum in this role?

How will you encourage effective collaboration between teachers?

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If you're currently applying for a new leadership position, you'll benefit from our additional services that are available exclusively to leaders seeking their next role, including:

- Search Strategy

We'll work together 1-on-1 to map out a winning job search strategy, so you can apply for the right positions at the right time

- Practice Interviews

We'll do 1-on-1 practice interviews, so you can hone your responses and your interview skills.

- Application Review

You'll get detailed feedback on your résumé, cover letter, recommendation letters, and other application materials, which we'll review with our proprietary rubrics.

- Video Feedback

We'll provide timestamped feedback on your practice interview videos, so you can see exactly where to focus.

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ABOUT
**JUSTIN
BAEDER**



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**I BELIEVE IN HIGH-PERFORMANCE
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP.**

As Director of The Principal Center, it's my professional mission to help school administrators transform their productivity and maximize their impact on student learning with strategies, tools, and habits for high-performance instructional leadership. You can find my latest articles, Principal Center Radio interviews, online courses, and more resources like this guide at PrincipalCenter.com.

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