

Build the Engine™ Teacher Hiring Scorecard

One purpose: Hire for tomorrow's culture, not today's vacancy.

Leadership stance

Do not begin with the vacancy. Begin with the students, the team, and the culture you are building.

Position

School: _____

Candidate: _____

Grade/Subject: _____

Interview Team: _____

Date: _____

Define Success First

Before interviewing, answer these questions as a team. Write the answer before the candidate enters the room.

What three competencies are non-negotiable?

What would make this candidate a great fit for our students?

What kind of teammate does our staff need right now?

Use this page first

If the team cannot name what strong evidence looks like, the interview will reward confidence instead of fit.

Build the Engine Questions

? Does the evidence support the decision?

? Are we hiring for today's vacancy or tomorrow's culture?

? Will this person strengthen our students' experience?

? Are we choosing the easiest hire or the right hire?

Starter Questions and Interview Norms

Begin with humanity. The goal is to understand the educator, not perform a scripted interrogation.

Interview norms

Thank you for being here today. We know interviews can feel stressful, and our goal is to have a conversation that helps us understand who you are as an educator. Take a moment if you need one before answering. If we ask a follow-up question, it's because we want to learn more - not because your first answer was wrong. We appreciate you spending time with us today.

Opening question

Before we ask you about your experience, we'd like to know a little about the educator behind the resume. Tell us about one student, one moment, or one experience that reminds you why you chose this profession.

Closing question

If you leave today's interview feeling like we really got to know you, what is one thing you hope we remember about you?

Team reminder

These questions lower the temperature without lowering the bar. Listen for purpose, reflection, student connection, and the kind of adult presence the candidate brings into a school.

Build the Engine Questions

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
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Competency Guide

Define the words before the team scores the candidate. This keeps the interview grounded in shared evidence.

How to use this page

Read before the interview. Scores must connect to evidence, not feelings.

Student-Centered Mindset

Definition

Makes decisions from the student experience, not adult convenience.

Example

Names how students will feel, learn, belong, and grow.

Relationships with Students

Definition

Builds trust, connection, and belonging while maintaining expectations.

Example

Explains how they learn students' names, stories, strengths, and needs.

Instructional Knowledge

Definition

Understands planning, modeling, practice, checks for understanding, and student work.

Example

Can explain what students will learn, do, produce, and how the teacher will know.

Classroom Management

Definition

Teaches routines, protects learning time, and responds to behavior consistently.

Example

Can describe the exact routines students will practice and how expectations are retaught.

Coachability

Definition

Receives feedback, reflects, adjusts practice, and keeps learning.

Example

Can describe feedback they received, what changed, and what improved.

Growth Mindset

Definition

Believes skill can improve through effort, feedback, practice, and support.

Example

Talks about learning, revision, and persistence instead of fixed ability.

Professionalism

Definition

Shows reliability, preparation, confidentiality, judgment, and follow-through.

Example

Demonstrates readiness for the trust and responsibility of serving students.

Team Collaboration

Definition

Works within shared systems and contributes to a healthy adult culture.

Example

Can describe how they plan, problem-solve, and communicate with teammates.

Communication

Definition

Communicates clearly with students, families, colleagues, and leaders.

Example

Can explain how they keep people informed before there is a problem.

Mission & Culture Fit

Definition

Strengthens the school culture, values, and student experience.

Example

Shows alignment with the school you are building, not just the job description.

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Competency Interview Questions

Use questions that require the candidate to diagnose, prioritize, explain tradeoffs, name evidence, and describe results.

Starter questions

Use these to get started. Add your own under the matching competency. Follow-up probes: evidence, student change, next move, and what they would protect if support were limited.

Student-Centered Mindset

1. Tell us about a time a student was not successful in your class. What did you believe was causing it, what did you change, and what evidence told you whether it worked?
2. A student is compliant but not learning. How would you know, and what would you do next?

Follow-up examples

What student evidence changed? | What would you adjust if nothing improved?

Relationships with Students

1. Describe a student you had difficulty connecting with. What did you learn about them, what did you adjust, and what changed?
2. How do you build relationships without lowering expectations?
3. A student shuts down and says, 'I'm not doing this.' What would you do in the moment, and how would you follow up later?

Follow-up examples

How would you know trust increased? | What would you do if the student still resisted?

Instructional Knowledge

1. You taught a lesson and only half of your students mastered the learning objective. Walk us through your thinking. How would you determine whether the challenge was the task, your modeling, guided practice, your checks for understanding, or something else? What evidence would you look for before deciding your next instructional move?
2. Our teachers use a high-quality, scripted curriculum. Walk us through how you prepare for a lesson before teaching it. What are you thinking about to ensure students are successful?
3. What does strong student evidence look like before you move on to the next lesson?

Follow-up examples

What student work would you review first? | What would you reteach before moving on?

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Classroom Management

1. Your transition routine is taking seven minutes every day. What would you inspect first, what would you reteach, and how would you know it improved?
2. What classroom behavior should be taught before it is corrected?
3. A student repeatedly disrupts during independent work. How do you decide whether this is a behavior issue, task issue, relationship issue, or skill issue?

Follow-up examples

What would students do differently tomorrow? | How would you practice the routine again?

Coachability

1. Tell us about feedback you initially disagreed with. What did you do with it?
2. A coach observes your lesson and says students were busy but not thinking deeply. How would you respond?
3. What is one part of your teaching you are actively trying to improve? What evidence are you using?

Follow-up examples

What changed because you used the feedback? | What evidence showed the feedback helped?

Growth Mindset

1. Describe a teaching skill that did not come naturally to you. How did you improve it?
2. What do you do when your usual strategy stops working?
3. How do you avoid blaming students when results are not where they need to be?

Follow-up examples

What support would you seek? | What progress would you expect to see?

Professionalism

1. Tell us about a time you made a mistake that affected students, families, or colleagues. How did you repair it?
2. A teammate begins sharing private student or family information in a casual conversation. How would you protect confidentiality while keeping the relationship professional?
3. What systems do you use to make sure you follow through on promises?

Follow-up examples

What did you repair or prevent? | What system kept it from happening again?

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Team Collaboration

1. Your team disagrees about a shared expectation. How do you help the team reach consistency without creating conflict?
2. Tell us about a time your team's results improved because of something you contributed.
3. How do you balance your own teaching style with schoolwide expectations?

Follow-up examples

What did the team agree to do? | How did students benefit from the agreement?

Communication

1. A family is upset and believes you treated their child unfairly. How would you prepare, communicate, and follow up?
2. How do you communicate hard news without becoming defensive?
3. How would you make sure families understand your expectations, routines, and how to reach you before concerns arise?

Follow-up examples

What would the family know next? | How would you document and follow up?

Mission & Culture Fit

1. What kind of school culture do you help create through your daily actions?
2. Describe the type of leader you do your best work for. What characteristics bring out your best?
3. What would students, families, and teammates experience differently because you joined our school?

Follow-up examples

What does that reveal about fit? | What would teammates experience from you?

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Interview Scorecard

Rate each competency using evidence, not feelings. A 4 should be visible in the candidate's examples.

Competency	1	2	3	4	Notes / evidence
Student-Centered Mindset	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Relationships with Students	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Instructional Knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Classroom Management	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Coachability	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Growth Mindset	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Professionalism	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Team Collaboration	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Communication	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Mission & Culture Fit	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Evidence matters

Do not score based on warmth, confidence, or urgency alone. Record what the candidate said, described, owned, or demonstrated.

Quick calibration

1 = concern or missing evidence 2 = partial evidence 3 = solid evidence 4 = strong, specific, student-centered evidence

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Best Evidence the Candidate Provided

Use this page to capture what the candidate actually said, described, owned, or demonstrated.

Evidence notes

Leave these boxes open for writing. Do not summarize too quickly. Capture the example before the team interprets it.

Student Impact

Reflection

Problem Solving

Relationship Building

Evidence reminder

Strong evidence is specific. Listen for students, actions, decisions, results, reflection, and what the candidate would do next.

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Red Flags and Final Recommendation

A concern does not always end the process, but it must be discussed directly and named before the team recommends a hire.

Red Flags

Check any concerns. A concern does not always end the process, but it must be discussed directly.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Blamed previous leadership | ☐ Could not explain student learning | ☐ Avoided accountability |
| ☐ Resistant to feedback | ☐ Poor communication | ☐ Negative toward colleagues |
| ☐ Could not provide examples | ☐ Arrived unprepared | ☐ Other |

Final Discussion

Would I trust this person with my own child? ☐ Yes ☐ Unsure ☐ No

Will this person strengthen our school culture? ☐ Yes ☐ Unsure ☐ No

Greatest Strength: _____

Greatest Concern: _____

Final Recommendation

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Highly Recommend | ☐ Recommend |
| ☐ Recommend with Reservations | ☐ Do Not Recommend |

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- | | |
|---|--|
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Look Fors: What a Strong Score Sounds Like

Use these examples to calibrate the team. Everyone should know what a 4 looks and sounds like.

Student-Centered Mindset

Look Fors

- + Talks about student growth and access.
- + Uses specific student examples.
- + Prioritizes learning over compliance.
- + Shows belief that all students can learn.
- + Connects decisions to student dignity.

Relationships with Students

Look Fors

- + Describes how they greet and know students.
- + Balances warmth with clear expectations.
- + Can repair harm after conflict.
- + Mentions students who need early connection.
- + Uses respectful language about students.

Instructional Knowledge

Look Fors

- + Explains clear learning outcomes.
- + Names checks for understanding.
- + Uses student work to adjust instruction.
- + Can describe strong first-week instruction.
- + Connects tasks to standards or curriculum.

Classroom Management

Look Fors

- + Names entry, transition, help, and dismissal routines.
- + Teaches behavior before correcting behavior.
- + Uses calm, consistent language.
- + Protects learning time.
- + Can describe a reset or reteach move.

Coachability

Look Fors

- + Speaks positively about previous coaching.
- + Can describe a mistake they learned from.
- + Accepts responsibility.
- + Asks thoughtful questions.
- + Demonstrates curiosity.

Calibration note

A strong score should be heard in the candidate's examples, not assumed from warmth or confidence.

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Look Fors: What a Strong Score Sounds Like

Use these examples to calibrate the team. Everyone should know what a 4 looks and sounds like.

Growth Mindset

Look Fors

- + Names a current area for growth.
- + Talks about practice and improvement.
- + Avoids blaming students or families.
- + Can describe how they improved a skill.
- + Seeks resources when stuck.

Professionalism

Look Fors

- + Arrives prepared and communicates clearly.
- + Protects confidentiality.
- + Owns deadlines and follow-through.
- + Uses professional language.
- + Understands the seriousness of the role.

Team Collaboration

Look Fors

- + Speaks respectfully about colleagues.
- + Shares responsibility instead of working in isolation.
- + Can use common team routines.
- + Contributes ideas without dominating.
- + Values shared expectations.

Communication

Look Fors

- + Gives concise, specific answers.
- + Uses family-centered language.
- + Can explain hard news respectfully.
- + Listens before responding.
- + Knows when to involve a leader.

Mission & Culture Fit

Look Fors

- + Understands the school serves real students, not ideal conditions.
- + Wants feedback, clarity, and shared expectations.
- + Can name how they contribute to culture.
- + Shows commitment to students and families.
- + Chooses the right work, not the easiest work.

Team calibration move

Each interviewer names the strongest evidence and biggest concern. Then compare evidence before comparing opinions.

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