

A Process for Hiring Teachers



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2016

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INTRODUCTION

An excellent Catholic School has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills, and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction. That effective instruction in a Catholic school is delivered by a highly qualified teacher.

It is then imperative that all principals and members of the board of education at each school give highest priority to the hiring and development of Catholic school teachers. Catholic schools pay attention to the vocation of teachers and their participation in the Church's evangelizing mission.

A Catholic educator is a role model for students and gives testimony by his or her life and commitment to the mission of the Church. Preference should be given to teacher recruits who are practicing Catholics. However, it is understandable that Catholic applicants are not always available. Non-Catholic applicants must understand prior to hiring that they may be called upon to model certain Catholic actions for their students. If they feel uncomfortable doing so they may not wish to teach in a Catholic school. A program of orientation specific for non-Catholic teachers must be developed at each local school to cover at least the basics of the Catholic Faith and the Mass prior to their first day with students.

All teachers while employed by a Catholic School must understand and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church and the moral demands of the Gospel, and contribute to the school's Catholic identity and apostolic goals, including the schools commitment to social justice and evangelization.

Each of the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Davenport has an elected board of education/faith formation committee which includes the pastor, representative of the parish community, which has the responsibility to hire competent administrators. The administrators shall form a search committee to interview potential teachers, then the principal will recommend the candidate to be hired to the board of education. The Board of Education must approve any contract with a potential new teacher hire before it is official.

The hiring process is be guided and monitored by the Office of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Davenport with the Superintendent offering counsel as needed in each step of the hiring process. The process itself is detailed in the Policies for Faith Formation and Education Programs in the Diocese of Davenport, policies 402 402.1. , and 402.21.

The minimal requirement for school teachers in the Diocese is a Bachelor's Degree that meets the requirements necessary for certification by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners.

This manual is to be used as a working instrument with parish and regional boards when there is a need to search for a new teachers.

Recruitment and Selection of Teachers

When vacancies become known at a local school or a new position is created for a teacher, the principal shall follow this procedure:

1. Advertise the teaching position on the Teach Iowa Website and the NCEA Jobs Bulletin site, which are both free to non-public schools. The principal may choose to also list the teaching vacancy in *The Catholic Messenger* or the local newspaper.
2. It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Board of Education that the administrator utilize a committee to assist in interviewing candidates for teaching positions. Committee membership might include the counselor, current teachers in the building and a teacher from the grade level in which the vacancy exists. The pastor, a member of the Board of Education/Faith Formation and parent could be involved in the process. Pastors and board members have hired a principal to do this important function of hiring teachers, so only in rare instances will they participate in teacher interviews. Parents might be utilized only if they clearly understand the mission of your Catholic school, are practicing Catholics and understand the qualifications you seek in a specific teaching assignment.
3. The principal/search committee will review and select applicants for interview.
4. The principal/search committee will select interview questions from the teacher interview question bank that best suit the needs for the position to be filled.
5. The principal or his designee will select the proper location for the interviews to be conducted and make a schedule to follow for the interviews.
6. The principal or a staff member shall offer the applicant a tour of the classroom to be occupied by the teacher to be hired and the rest of the building.
7. The principal or his/her appropriate designee will conduct all correspondence between applicants and the local Catholic school.
8. Responsibility for recommending to the Board of Education/Parish Council a candidate for a contract rests solely with the administrator. Search committee members shall share strengths and areas of concern for each applicant and point out how certain applicants might possess the skills needed for the current vacancy.
9. The principal will offer the position to an applicant and upon confirmation of acceptance of the offer, begin the background check procedure and start the new hire on the Protecting God's Children program which must be completed before an initial contact with students.

Job Description for a Catholic School Teacher

CATHOLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS "Teachers must remember that it depends chiefly on them whether the Catholic school achieves its purpose.

Teacher Position Description

Community of Faith

1. Supports and implements the mission/philosophy of Catholic education and the school.
2. Gives evidence of lived Gospel values.
3. Participates in building faith community.

Instructional Process

4. Demonstrates evidence of prior planning and preparation.
5. Presents classes clearly and effectively.
6. Assesses student progress effectively.
7. Provides for individual differences.
8. Demonstrates ability to motivate students.
9. Maintains an atmosphere conducive to learning.
10. Knows and uses technology appropriately.

Interpersonal Relationships

11. Works cooperatively with administration.
12. Works positively with colleagues, support staff, and parish staff.
13. Demonstrates positive interpersonal relations with students.
14. Maintains positive interpersonal relations with parent(s)/guardian(s).

Other Professional Responsibilities

15. Maintains a professional manner in the classroom and other related settings.
16. Demonstrates a sense of professional responsibility and leadership.
17. Reports any knowledge or suspicion of child abuse as required by law.
18. Accepts, willingly, extra assignments and supervisions.
19. Attends all faculty meetings, in-services, and other meetings as specified by the principal unless excused by the principal prior to the meeting.
20. Is responsible for the care and use of instructional materials, equipment and school facilities.
21. Reviews emergency procedures and practices with students regularly.
22. Provides necessary documentation for personnel file.
23. Follows directives regarding collection of monies.
24. Communicates with parent(s)/guardian(s) in an effective and timely manner.
25. Supports and implements diocesan policies.

Professional Growth

26. Keeps abreast of developments in curriculum and methodology and authentic assessment.
27. Interacts with colleagues to further professional growth.
28. Takes advantages of opportunities for professional improvement.
29. Completes necessary work toward obtaining and/or maintaining a valid license.

Interview Committee Orientation

Review and check each item at the first meeting of the Interview Committee. Sign and keep on file.

Importance of Staff Selection

Thank you for agreeing to serve on this Interview Committee. Staff selection is one of the most important responsibilities we have. You bring an important perspective to this process, and I appreciate your willingness to give your time.

Roles and Responsibilities

The decision regarding which candidate to recommend for hire rests solely with administration. As a member of the Interview Committee, you must be aware and understand that your role is to *provide input*, not to make the hiring decision.

Administrators (I) will consider the input provided by the Interview Committee along with other information such as telephone reference checks, written recommendations, performance observations, artifacts, and specific requirements of the assignment. Selection of new staff must take this other critical information into consideration. Because you may not have access to this information as a member of the Interview Committee, it is important that you limit your observations about the candidates to the information obtained during the interview process only.

Importance of Confidentiality

As a participant in the interviewing process, you must be respectful of the rights of applicants, and you are expected to treat the information you obtain and the opinions you form in a confidential manner. Outside the committee discussion, it is inappropriate for you to comment, to the candidate or anyone else, about the process, including your perception of a candidate's interview performance or chances for a job offer.

Legal Requirements

This process is more than a committee meeting. There are many requirements of the law that interviewers must strictly follow (for example, types of questions and consistency of process). The district expects you to abide by these requirements at all times.

Asking Questions

We will ask the same questions (exactly as written) of each candidate. It is permissible to ask appropriate probing questions for clarification or elaboration.

Record Keeping

You will be given a note-taking form for each candidate on which to document apparent strengths and weaknesses observed, evidence that desired attributes are present, and overall impressions regarding the job fit. Record your notes in narrative format and *do not* use a rating or ranking system. Your notes should include job-related comments only. Other extraneous observations (e.g. references to appearance, mannerisms, etc.) are not to be included. Information that is volunteered by the applicant that is not job-related is not to be documented – such subjects are not to be pursued. You will be asked to turn in your notes at the conclusion of the process.

Reviewed by: _____
Administrator's Name

Date: _____

“Do’s” and “Don’ts” of Interviewing

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take written notes; include only job-related comments. Give notes to administrator in charge. • Ask all applicants the same questions. • Use a written list of interview questions that directly relate to the job description. • Work at making the applicant feel at home. If the candidate is nervous or ill at ease, it is probable that you are only going to get surface-level information and not the true picture of attitudes, feelings, motivation, etc. • Be aware of your own biases or preferences. Some people tend to accept or reject someone automatically because of a certain background factor or personal characteristic. • Let the applicant do most of the talking. If you are doing much of the talking, you will learn very little about the candidate. Rule of thumb: interviewer(s) should talk about 20% of the interview. • Phrase questions in a way that does not suggest the answer you are looking for. Candidates want to please you. If your point of view is implied in the question, you may not get a totally frank response. • Avoid asking questions that can be answered with ‘yes’ or ‘no’ (unless this type of answer is sufficient). Yes/no questions may force you to explain or ask another question in order to get more information from the candidate. • Be careful of your non-verbal communication. Non-verbal actions can “turn-off” or make a candidate nervous. • Pause a few seconds after a candidate appears to have completed a response. The pause may encourage the candidate to continue and reveal useful information s/he might have withheld. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include extraneous observations in your notes (e.g. references to appearance, mannerisms, etc.). • Prejudge a candidate. This occurs when the interviewer develops positive or negative expectations of the applicant before the interview based on the written materials or a verbal comment from someone else. • Rely on first impression. Some people unconsciously ‘lock in’ their first impression and, during the interview, look only for the information that will back up that initial impression. • Compare candidates with each other until all have been interviewed. Research has found that if you rate an ‘average’ candidate after evaluating 3-4 unfavorable candidates, you tend to rate the average one very high. • Make the “halo effect” error. The “halo effect” occurs when the interviewer is overly impressed by one positive or negative factor and then judges all other factors in the same light. • Rely on your intuition. Some interviewers feel that their “intuitive feel” is more reliable than objective factors or evidence. Research has shown that this is not a desirable practice. Our memory conveniently allows us to forget the number of times our intuition let us down. • Waste time by asking questions that are answered on the application form or other written information. • Ask trick questions or questions designed to trap the candidate. • Ask questions that violate the candidate’s civil rights. • Contradict or argue with the candidate or appear to cross-examine him/her. These things can cause the candidate to “clam up” or be deceptive about his/her true feelings.

Catholic School Teacher Commitment to the Students of the Diocese of Davenport

As Christian Catholic educators, we have a responsibility to encourage each student to achieve his/her maximum potential. We work to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and the thoughtful formation of worthy goals. In fulfilling our obligation to the student we are called to:

1. Help students see the relevance of a Christian value system in their daily lives.
2. Help students learn to relate human culture and acknowledge to the news of salvation.
3. Show Christian concern about the joys and problems of each student.
4. Speak with charity and justice about students even when called upon to discuss sensitive matters.
5. Work with students preparing liturgies, Para liturgies and other religious programs.
6. Respect confidential information concerning students and their homes.
7. Plan appropriate service projects for students that will develop their sense of responsibility to the community.
8. Enable students to grow in a sense of self-worth and accountability by selecting activities that promote the positive self-concept as becomes a maturing Christian Catholic.
9. Develop the student's knowledge and understanding of the subject(s) for which we are responsible, without suppression or distortion.

Catholic School Teacher Commitment to the Parents of Catholic School Students in the Diocese of Davenport.

As Catholic school educator we believe children are influenced by home, community, and the society in which attitudes toward Christian values are often challenged. Parents, the source of whom children and youth derive their values, entrust their children to the Catholic school to instruct, complement and intensify the education and formation begun in the home. We are called to assist these parents in fulfilling their obligation for the Christian formation and education of their child; therefore we will:

1. Respect parents' fundamental right to know, to understand, and to share in decisions that affect the education of their child by:
 - Keeping parents apprised of the curriculum and methods of instruction.
 - Provide opportunities for parents to help shape school policies and keeping them informed of all current policies.
2. Develop educational programs and activities to enhance family life as well as the home-school relationship.
3. Respect any confidential information that parents share.
4. Report to parents their child's progress regularly and as needed, in a spirit of charity, with professional accuracy and honesty.

Commitment to the profession as a Catholic School Educator:

We seek and encourage persons who live a life consistent with the Gospel values and Catholic Church teachings to pursue the apostolate of teaching by:

- Modeling the faith life and witnessing to the Faith community on the parish, and diocesan levels.
- Exemplifying the teachings of Jesus Christ by dealing with children and adults in true love and justice.

THE APPLICATION

An application is completed only when the following materials have been uploaded electronically to Teach Iowa or sent to the Principal at the school address. They should include:

1. Diocesan Professional Application Form (Pg. 8)
2. Official transcript of grades/credits
3. Copy of Iowa certification (if available)
4. Three recent letters of recommendation.

Diocese of Davenport, Iowa

Application for Teaching Positions

Instructions: Complete all four pages of application. Attach an original copy of official transcripts and licenses documenting qualifications shown in Item II. Upon completion please send to the Search Committee or BOE President at the school address you are applying too.

Date of Application: _____ Social Security # _____

PERSONAL

Name _____

(Last) (First) (Middle)

Permanent Address _____
(Number & Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Mailing Address (if different from above) _____

Telephone: Home _____ Cell _____

Employment:

Are you presently under contract? _____ If yes, can you secure a release? _____

Earliest possible start date? _____

EDUCATION

Institutions Attended Including High School

Dates of Attendance	Name of Institution	Location (City/State)	Major Area of Concentration	Degree Received

Iowa Certificate

Folder #	Class	Expiration Date
Approvals	Endorsement	

Other Professional Certificates/Licenses Issued to You

State/Folder #	Subject or Area of Responsibility

Professional Memberships:

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**Teaching Experience**

Dates	School/Parish/City	Role	Responsibilities

Administrative Experience (Principal, Diocesan Office, DRE etc.)

Dates	School/City/Diocese	Role

Present Personal Professional Growth

List professional growth experiences during last 2 years (seminars, courses, professional reading, etc.)

Dates	Title

Work Experience (Any position held in fields other than education)

Dates	Position	Comments

Community Activities and Leisure Interests:

REFERENCES (Give recent *professional* references. At least one must be an immediate supervisor.)

	Name	Address	Telephone	Role
1.				
2.				
3.				

Local Boards of Education may choose to have candidates respond to these or other narrative questions if they choose.

Regarding your philosophy of education: All those involved in a Catholic education must earnestly desire to make the parish a community of faith, which is, indeed, “living, conscious and active”. The faculty is the crucial group if the school is to function as a unit. By answering the questions below, you will demonstrate your ability and willingness to meet the school’s goals and objectives.

1. Why are you interested in teaching in our Catholic school?
2. What do you consider as your greatest asset as a teacher?
3. What role does technology play in instruction in a Catholic school setting?
4. How do you know that students are learning in your classroom?

I certify that answers given in this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I authorize investigation into all statements I have made on this application as may be necessary for reaching an employment decision. In the event I am employed, I understand that any false or misleading information I knowingly provided in my application or interview(s) may result in discharge and/or legal action. I understand also that if employed, I am required to abide by all rules and regulations of the employer and any special agreements reached between the employer and me.

Signature of Applicant

Applicants may upload this application to Teach Iowa or mail directly to the Search Committee or BOE President at the school address you are applying.

Letter Acknowledging Receipt of Application

SAMPLE

Date

Full Name

Address

Dear

Thank you for contacting us regarding the teaching position at _____ School.

A job description and application form is enclosed which must be completed and returned to me along with your transcripts of credits, three recent letters of recommendation, and a copy of your Iowa certificate (if you currently have one).

We hope to make a decision by _____ about possible interviews. Applicants will be considered for interview only if all items listed above are received prior to the date.

Please feel free to call me at _____ if you have any questions.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Very sincerely,

Principal

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Enclosures

SCREENING AND REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

I. Review of Applications and Credentials:

The entire Search Committee must meet to review the applications and credentials and to determine any additional information which is needed. A criminal background check will be performed for the candidate selected for the position. Each member of the Search Committee shall take time at this meeting to review all of the materials for each applicant. The form for screening applications (Pg. 24) will be helpful in the meeting. The committee must decide who will pursue necessary additional information and what procedure should be used to gain it (i.e., telephone call to present employer, etc.).

II. Letters of Recommendation:

Letters of recommendation should be read carefully. Persons who wrote the letters should be called if:

- A. there are any questions or any need for clarification or elaboration,
- B. there is no letter of recommendation from the present employer; or
- C. the committee perceives the need to gain additional information to supplement an apparently good recommendation.

III. Selection of Candidates for Interview:

A decision is made by the Principal with input from the search committee in regard to those candidates to be interviewed, as well as the time and location of such interviews. Review (Pg. 25) for observance guidelines and Bona Fide Occupational Qualification (BFOQ).

IV. Number of Candidates to be Interviewed:

There is no magic number regarding the number of candidates to be interviewed. This decision obviously depends on the quality of the applicants.

Screening Applications Things for the Search Committee to Consider

Has the applicant:

- Had any experience in a Catholic school setting?
- Had any gaps in the applicants work history which are not well explained.
- Been employed in several short term positions with no explanation as to why he/she left the position?
- Had inconsistencies in the application?
- Provided reference letters fairly recent and written by someone who had close contact with the candidate in a similar work situation?
- In reading the letter of reference are there any phrases that suggest or signal that you should get more information?
- References speak to specific job qualifications or just peripheral talents and abilities?
- Provided an application with professional material in presentation and are narrative well thought out?

SCREENING APPLICATIONS

As individual from the screening committee review applicant materials ask yourself some of these questions as you decide who to interview.

Candidate Name_____

1. Are there any gaps in the applicant's work history which are not explained?
2. Has the applicant been employed in several short term positions with no explanation of why he/she left the position?
3. Are the candidate's college grades average or better?
4. Are there inconsistencies in the application?
5. Are the reference letters fairly recent and written by someone who had close contact with the candidate in a similar work situation?
6. Is the reference written for a closed or open file? (Most are open)
7. If the reference is written for an open file, are there any phrases, which suggest that the source is, signaling you to get more information?
8. Does the reference speak to the important qualifications for this job or just too peripheral talents and abilities?
9. What is lacking in the reference --- What is not commented upon?
10. Do the reference letters describe specific abilities and precise job success indicators or are they general and non-specific?

THE INTERVIEW

I. Location:

Usually interviews will be in an area in the school or a location with easy access to the school. The room should be comfortable but arranged for a formal interview to be conducted around a table.

II. Number:

It is recommended that candidates be interviewed on the same day or on two consecutive days. This will provide the Search Committee with a better picture of how each candidate is perceived in relation to the others, as well as how well the individuals will meet the expectations of the position. Depending on the schedule of the Search Committee it is possible to plan four interviews in one day.

III. Length:

The interview will usually last approximately one hour. It is recommended that the Search Committee devote about forty-five minutes to questions and allow the candidate about fifteen minutes to ask questions of them.

IV. Interview Tips/Pitfalls:

A list of interview tips is included in this manual to be used as a checklist for those involved in the interview process. Review the following: *Interview Pitfalls*.

V. Spouse

It would be wise to invite spouses of the candidates from outside the community to accompany them. Support of family is very important as an educator considers a new position. However, the spouse is not included in the formal interview.

LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL INTERVIEW INQUIRES

Lawful

- Asking the applicants if they have ever worked under another name.
- Asking the applicant for his/her religious affiliation, name of church, or religious holidays observed
- Asking the applicants if they are citizens of the U.S. their citizenship
- Asking the applicants if they have ever been arrested for any crimes and to indicate when and where
- Asking the applicants to indicate what foreign languages they can read, write, or speak fluently
- Asking the applicants about their past work experience.
- Asking the applicant is there any belief or reason why they could not work in a position that required them to publicly support the decisions of the office of the bishop?

Unlawful

- Asking the applicants to name their birthplace.
- Asking for the birthplace of the applicant's parents, spouse, or other close relative.
- Asking the applicants to submit proof of age by supplying birth certificate or baptismal record.
- Asking the applicants if they are naturalized citizens.
- Asking the applicants how they acquired their ability to read, write, or speak a foreign language.
- Requesting the applicant to provide names of three relatives other than one's father, husband or wife, or minor-age dependent children.
- Asking the applicant for wife's maiden name.
- Asking for the maiden name of the applicant's mother.
- Asking for full names of the applicant's brothers/sisters.
- Asking the applicant for a list of all clubs, societies, and lodges to which s/he belongs
- Asking the applicant to include a photograph with the application for employment.
- Asking the applicant to supply addresses of relatives (cousins, uncles, aunts, nephew, grand parents) who can be contacted for reference.
- Asking about marital status, ages of children, and spouses occupation.

THE INTERVIEW

Prior to the Interview

The interview is probably the single most important phase of the teacher selection process and is generally the decisive step. The candidates to be interviewed have been chosen on the basis of information from his/her application materials. The interview will supplement the written materials and give the committees a chance to better know the candidate personally and envision whether or not this person is the right fit to be the leader of this school. Before you begin an interview, you must decide what you are looking for in each candidate. These characteristics must be firmly fixed in your mind before the interview begins.

Be looking for Faith and vision, Initiative and perseverance, Reliability, stability, willingness to work hard, willingness to absorb pressure, and tolerance for discouragement.

Opening the Interview

The first few moments of the interview should be devoted to establishing a warm, friendly risk free environment where the applicant feels comfortable to openly share their thoughts and ideas. Remember even if you do not plan to hire the individual, you want them leaving the interview feeling they were given a fair shot and a good candidate must have received the final offer.

- Plan your interview ahead of time. Base questions on established criteria.
- Ask all candidates the same questions.
- You may ask a follow-up question to clarify a previous response.
- If you want specific information and it is legal, ask them.

How do We Ask Questions

- Never argue with the applicant or badger them in any way.
- Determine who asks what questions.
- Don't ask similar questions too close together. Mix up questions so the interviewee can come at the same issue with different angles.
- Ask your questions then listen. If you talk more than 10 percent of the time, you are probably talking more than is necessary.
- As you listen, be accepting, responsive (non-verbal), and non-judgmental.
- Do not interpret the terms in your questions to the interviewee. It's their interpretation that is important.
- Do not probe or cross-examine. If you have developed good job specific, straightforward, thought provoking, open-ended questions, they will reveal the interviewee's thoughts and feelings.

How do I Listen?

- With both ears intently.
- Know what you are listening for.

Summary

- In evaluating the applicant's replies, try to be objective and unbiased. If you have a personal prejudice, don't allow that feeling alone to be the cause or reason for rejecting an applicant.
- After the interview is completed, immediately record your impressions. Avoid hiring on the first interview if the committee feels the need to clarify issues or further interact with the applicant.
- Never hire without checking and verifying the references. In most cases, the best source of information is the prior employer. The least revealing sources are personal friends.

Stay on schedule!

INTERVIEW PITFALLS

1. **ALLOWING INTERRUPTIONS:** If at all possible, avoid interruptions. Failure to do so will generally tell the candidate that he or she is not as important as the interruption that interfered with the interview.
2. **NOT TREATING INTERVIEWEES AS INDIVIDUALS:** A natural tendency when interviewing a number of candidates for a given job is to begin treating everyone as if they were the same. No two people have ever been found to be alike. Each is distinctly unique in many ways.
3. **NOT PROVIDING A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION:** Someone once said: "No one has ever found a successful way of getting a second chance at making a good first impression." Your promptness will indicate the importance of being on time to your candidates. Your being late will indicate that things are hectic, or that being late for work might be all right too. Try to provide a neat, quiet, and orderly environment for the interview. Be friendly and warm. Provide a good first impression of your parish to each candidate you interview.
4. **NOT LISTENING PROPERLY:** Avoid the temptation to frequently introduce your own thoughts during the interview. The applicant is not there to hear about your experiences. Remember, you have a limited period of time to learn as much as you can about each candidate, and you won't get as much information if you are doing all of the talking.
5. **USING NON-JOB-RELATED QUESTIONS:** Not only can asking these questions be unlawful, but it wastes time and won't provide you with much in the way of useful, selection/decision information.
6. **ARGUING:** An effective employment interview is not a contest. It is an important job. The interviewer who allows his own pride to get in the way of getting the relevant information will have to unlearn the trait.
7. **MAKING PROMISES YOU CAN'T KEEP:** If you know what the exact salary will be, or what benefits your parish will offer, you might want to discuss these. But never make a promise you or your parish can't keep. Also, it is generally a good idea never to make a job offer during or at the end of the first interview with any candidate. Give yourself some time to think it over; to study what you've learned. A hurried job offer can backfire on you quickly.
8. **LACK OF PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY:** A closed door, a private or quiet environment, your own sensitivity will all go a long way to assuring the candidate that you will treat information he or she is sharing with you confidentially.
9. **INSUFFICIENT TIME FOR EACH INTERVIEW:** Don't try to squeeze too many interviews into a limited period of time. The time you allot should be governed primarily by the complexity of the job. An hour and a half is considered about right for an average job of average complexity.
10. **USING DIRECT QUESTIONS ON CANDIDATE'S ATTITUDE:** Using the phrase "your attitude" can be potentially negative or caustic. Use substitute terms like "What is your philosophy about..." or "Describe some of your specific behaviors that..." (making certain that these are always job-related questions), rather than asking, "What is your attitude about..." The candidate will feel more fairly treated if you do this.
11. **TAKING NOTES:** Some find it helpful to take brief notes during an interview. It is of value in re-constructing information after the interview. But avoid the temptation to appear as if you are taking exceptionally careful notes when a candidate is discussing something sensitive or personal. Doing so can discourage the candidate from opening up during the remainder of the interview.
12. **LIMITING YOURSELF ONLY TO QUESTIONS:** Use comments too. A well-placed comment can "echo" or appear to provide support for something an applicant has just said – thus encouraging him or her to further amplify on that or other issues in the interview. Using only questions to get needed information will give the candidates the impression they are under "interrogation."
13. **IMPROPER LANGUAGE LEVEL:** This is a judgmental area, at best. But in general, try to pitch your language, your questions, your comments at the level of the candidate, and the appropriate level of the job being filled. Don't speak down; don't speak up. Be natural.

14. THE HALO AFFECT: The halo affect causes us to feel generally good or generally bad about a candidate, usually because of one thing we've observed early in the interview. It can be damaging if we don't give the candidate a chance to change that impression. Strive to keep from making judgments too quickly – especially in areas where we generally have strong, personal biases – such as with a person's appearance.
15. IMPATIENCE: Sometimes a candidate won't go in the direction you want immediately. Be patient. Through proper use of open-ended questions, silence and listening on your part, the interviewee will come around. Your impatience will inevitably lead to the applicant's anxiety and tenseness – as well as your own failure to get the relevant information.

Diocese of Davenport Sample Teacher Interview Questions

There are no right or wrong answers, but the answers can be very revealing...

Know what you seek in a new hire and interview for those qualities...

Pick 20 -25 questions that will identify the person you seek for the position you wish to fill...

It is good to begin with asking the candidate to tell you about themselves.

“Describe yourself, your background and why you are interested in teaching in a Catholic school.”

Or

You have been hired as the newest member of our teaching team. In fewer than five minutes, how would you introduce yourself to a group of parents, students, and teachers from our school? The only thing you want to be sure to do is to indicate how your education, training, and work experiences have trained you for this new role in our Catholic School.

Getting Started

1. What can you bring to our Catholic school that another applicant will not?
2. Tell me a bit about yourself?
3. I've read your application and resume, but what are the most important things I should know about you, your life, and your experiences?
4. Why did you choose teaching as a career?
5. Who influenced you to become an educator, and how did they influence you?
6. If you were not a teacher, what would you be?
7. What methods besides lecture, would you use to present material to your students?
8. What book is at your bedside table presently?
9. What have you read lately that led you to change the way you teach?
10. If your greatest supporter was in the room with us today, what five words would he/or she use to describe you as a person, a teacher, or a colleague?
11. What would your previous employer or college advisor say were your greatest strengths for teaching, and what areas would they suggest were areas that need growth? And do you agree with those assessments?
12. What have you learned from your mistakes?
13. What are the most important or worthwhile qualifications of a good teacher?
14. What is your greatest strength? How would you use that in your teaching?
15. You are going to teach _____ topic this period. And the bell has just rung to begin class. Describe what the next 15 minutes are like. What are you doing? What are the students doing?
16. What do you hope to accomplish in the first week of school?
17. What is your area of growth? How will that affect your effectiveness as a teacher?
18. How would you describe your organizational style?
19. Describe your most significant contribution in your last job or student teaching.
20. Tell me about an interesting article you have read recently in a professional journal.
21. Why do you want to teach in a Catholic school?
22. What is your philosophy of Catholic education?
23. What excites you? Annoys you? Bore you? Motivates you? In general?
24. What are you looking for in a teaching position? What do you expect from leadership as you start a new position?
25. What do you plan to be doing in 5 years? What are your career goals?

First Year Teacher

1. Tell us about your student teaching experience.
2. What were you not prepared for when you began student teaching?
3. Please describe a lesson plan that really worked for you. What made it successful?
4. As you begin teaching, how will you improve your handling of student discipline?
5. How would you describe your level of friendship with students?
6. What opportunities did you have to work with students in school activities?
7. Tell us about your interaction with teachers or staff members other than your supervising teacher.
8. You learned how to write a lesson plan in college. With student teaching behind you, how has that planning changed?
9. Which discipline did you feel most comfortable teaching? Least comfortable?
10. How did you handle grading of student work? Will you use the same or different approach in your own classroom?
11. Tell us about your interactions with parents. What did you learn?
12. Describe a conference you had with a parent regarding a student's behavior or grades. In reflecting on that conversation, what went well? What could you have done to improve on the conference?
13. As you listen to your college colleagues describe their student teaching, how do you feel about your own experience and your capability?
14. Looking back at your total student teaching experience, what would you do differently?

Faith Based/ Religion Questions

1. How important is your faith in your life and how comfortable are you sharing your belief with children and adults?
2. What classes, workshops or study groups have you attended as an adult that enriched your faith life?
3. What specifically interests you about teaching in a Catholic school?
4. Have you had any experience teaching Faith Formation classes?
5. What would it mean to you as a new teacher if I were to tell you the Gospel values must permeate the classroom all day long in our school?
6. How comfortable are you about planning a liturgy?
7. How do you make prayer a part of your life, and how would you integrate prayer into the classroom?
8. Have you participated in faith-based or community service? What did you personally gain from that experience?
9. Why do many schools today have students do community service as part of the school experience?
10. How comfortable are you with teaching the morals and beliefs of the Catholic Church?
11. What are the unique characteristics of a Catholic education?
12. Would it bother you to participate in the mass as a non-Catholic if you have to model participation in the mass for a class of younger students?

Student Centered /Teaching and Learning

1. Describe your classroom management style and how you maintain student discipline.
2. How have the Common Core State Standards guided your lesson preparation?
3. How have state or local standards guided your lesson preparation?
4. What is the difference between a good teacher and a great teacher?
5. What are the rules of your classroom? How are they established?
6. Tell me what I would see when I come into your classroom. How would it look? What would I see students doing?
7. If I were to visit your classroom and take a photo with my iPhone, what would I see in that photo?
8. At the end of the school year, what will your students remember most about being in your class?
9. How would you handle a child who is two grade levels or more above (or below) the rest of the class?
10. How do you individualize your teaching?
11. Share your experience with FAST testing and progress monitoring in the ELA classroom?

12. With so much content to cover with standards, describe your approach to
13. Tell us about a very successful lesson you taught. What made it successful? Long-term planning.
14. Describe for me a lesson that you taught that went very well? Why did the lesson work so well?
15. What techniques do you use to keep students actively involved and motivated during a lesson?
16. How have you used student data to inform planning or assessment?
17. Give an example of differentiation in a classroom where you have worked?
18. Professional learning communities (PLCS) have become more and more common. Describe any experience you have had with a PLC.
19. What kind of students do you like to work with? What type of students could you teach most effectively?
20. How do you help students experience success?
21. How would you use standardized test data to improve classroom instruction?
22. What procedures do you use to evaluate student progress besides tests?
23. How would you identify special needs of students?
24. With so much content to cover with standards, describe your approach to long-term planning.
25. Describe a specific lesson you might teach and how you would incorporate Bloom's taxonomy.
26. What is your minimum expectation when you send a child to the office for disciplinary reasons?
27. A typical classroom in our school includes students with a wide range of abilities. How do you meet the needs of each child, including gifted, at-risk, and special needs learners?
28. Tell us about a time you met with a parent regarding their child's behavior
29. Is a student's failure the fault of the teacher? Why or why not?
30. How do you respond if a student informs you he has been bullied or harassed?
31. What is your experience using detention as a consequence? Do you find detention to be effective?
32. At what point is a detention necessary?
33. When would you find it necessary to send a child to the office? What would your expectations be of the principal in this situation?
34. How can you as a teacher proactively prevent discipline issues in your classroom?
35. What experience have you had with Block-scheduling or advisor-advisee programs?
36. A student has failed three of the first four exams and shows little sign of effort to improve the situation. What action steps will you take?
37. What are your thoughts and experience on inclusion and mainstreaming?
38. How have you served as an advocate for students who are at risk in your school?
39. How have you incorporated critical thinking skills into your instruction?
40. How have you implemented multicultural/gender-free practices in your teaching?

Integrating Technology into the Classroom

1. What type of training have you had in the area of technology?
2. How does technology enhance learning in the classroom?
3. What types of technology have you used in your teaching?
4. If you are using technology, is it making your job easier and you more efficient as a teacher and classroom-manager?
5. If you had your choice, would you like a computer in the classroom for each student or would you rather the students go to a computer lab to work on computer-related assignments?
6. Have you had unsuccessful technology-related projects? Why do you feel these projects failed?

Community and Parents

1. What do you feel is the most effective way to communicate with parents? Describe how you have used this/these techniques.
2. Describe some of the reasons why you would contact parents or your goal in contacting parents.
3. What type of feedback do you provide students and parents? How often?
4. How do you communicate to parents about how a student is performing?
5. Catholic schools encourage parent volunteers. How would you encourage volunteers in your classroom?

6. What would you think is important to present at an Open House?
7. In what ways do you involve parents in the learning process or in your classroom activities?
8. How do you handle an angry parent, or a parent who feels you have not treated their child fairly?
9. Tell me about a difficult circumstance you handled. What action did you take? What were the results?
10. How would you become involved in school/parish/community activities?
11. Why/not are parent-teacher conferences important?
12. What recreation, community activities or organizations are you interested or active in? What have you learned as a result of your involvement?

Teacher Relationships with Colleagues

1. What kind of teachers would you prefer to work with? Why?
2. What is your preferred mode and frequency of working with other teachers at your grade level or department level?
3. Explain what professionalism means to you within the school climate and outside of school?
4. What activities would you like to be in charge of and bring to the school?
5. Who should be responsible for discipline in a school? Why?
6. What needs and/or expectations do you have of the school administration?
7. As you enter a new job in the fall you will most likely be meeting a new staff for the first time. What kinds of things will you do to acclimate yourself and what would you want from others to help you settle in?
8. Are you a team player? If so, please give an example.
9. What are your expectations of your principal?
10. How do you see your personal role on the school's educational team?
11. If you had an idea for improving the school, how would you sell it to colleagues and the principal?

Teacher Literacy

1. What are the elements of a comprehensive and balanced literacy program?
2. How can we best teach the writing (or reading) process to students in grade(s) ____?
3. How do you teach speaking and listening skills?
4. Please give us the titles of two books that you have found to be most successful with [elementary/middle/high] school students. What made them successful?
5. Please give us your recommendation of four books that every student should be required to read prior to leaving our school. Why did you select these books?
6. Tell us about a time you gave assignments to coordinate with a social studies or science unit. Why did you do this, and how did it work?
7. What impact does the computer and word processing software have on students' work?
8. How do you incorporate rigor and relevance in your lessons?
9. How can we improve our students' use of grammar? (secondary)
10. What are your thoughts about the use of diagramming? (secondary)
11. Talk about your experiences teaching speech, drama, or debate. (secondary)
12. What experience have you had using the Iowa Core Curriculum? What are your views about this curriculum? (secondary)

Hypothetical and Situational

1. You disagree with the principal's method of dealing with a student discipline situation. How do you handle this with the students, principal, parents and fellow staff?
2. Visualize an ideal classroom. What does it look like? Who's in it? What resources are you using? What are your goals? What are the students accomplishing?
3. Religion is incorporated into all parts of the Catholic school curriculum and classroom atmosphere. How will you help students learn the importance of living a life based upon the gospel values?
4. Tell how you were able to make a difference in a student's attitude or learning problem that made their experience with you a success.

5. Tell in detail a (or other subject) you developed, the reason why you planned this lesson, the children's reactions, specific learning tools utilized and things you taught through the lesson.
6. You give an assignment. A student ridicules the assignment, saying it doesn't make sense. What would you do?

Elementary School Specific

1. What type of reading program did you use in student teaching?
2. How would you describe the ways that children learn from birth to age 9?
3. If you could design the ideal classroom for the elementary grades what would it look like?
4. We know that children learn by making connections. What implications does this have for curriculum at the elementary level?
5. Which subject area do you believe is your strength, which is your weakest? What steps will you take to improve in this area?

Middle School Specific

1. A lot has been discussed regarding motivation of students at this age. What do you think contributes to the lack of motivation students feel? How do you motivate students?
2. What do you think is an appropriate amount of homework for this age student? How much weight would homework hold in your consideration for grading on report cards?
3. What do you think are the top three qualities needed to be a successful middle school teacher?
4. What is meant by "teaming" at the middle school level? How does it support instruction?
5. What are some characteristics of middle school aged students that need to be considered when planning middle school programs?

Secondary School Specific

1. What do you believe is an acceptable failure rate in courses at the high school? What do you believe causes school failure?
2. How would you get a student to do their work when they absolutely refuse to do anything? (I.e. A senior who says, "I don't care if I flunk, I have enough credits to pass anyway.")
3. Share a difficult discipline challenge and how you handled it.
4. Describe your grading practices. What ingredients go into grades and what percent would you give to each?
5. What are some alternative scheduling configurations being used at the high school level? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?
6. Which should be the primary concern of high school teachers: the content or the kids? Provide a rationale for your choice.

Wrapping Things Up/Closing Questions

1. Is there anything you want us to know that we haven't asked that might help us as we make our hiring decision?
2. Why should I hire you over all the other applicants who have the same educational background, attitude and experience?
3. Do you have any questions for us?
4. What contribute to the success of our school if you were to join our staff?

Instructional Strategist or special education Teacher

1. Which areas of special education are you certified to teach?
2. Which subjects are you most comfortable teaching? Why?
3. Which subjects would you prefer not to teach? Why?
4. How could general education teachers better meet the needs of all students so there would be fewer students who need special education support? What might your role be in making this happen?

5. How do you work with general education teachers to ensure that they are complying with the provisions of a student's IEP?
6. If one of your colleagues, a general education teacher, refused to follow a student's IEP, what would you do?
7. Describe a serious problem you encountered with a parent of a student assigned to your class, what position you took, and how the situation was resolved.
8. What is your opinion of the IEP process?
9. What do you know about Response to Intervention or Instructional Decision Making? What is your opinion of these approaches?
10. How do you integrate technology into your special education classroom?
11. How do you use paraprofessionals? What qualities do look for in a paraprofessional?
12. How do you monitor the progress of your students? How do you document progress?
13. Describe your experience with co-teaching. What are your opinions about the effectiveness of this approach? (secondary)

Teacher – Science

1. What is the role of inquiry in a science classroom? What does inquiry mean to you?
2. What experience have you had using a kit-based approach? What have you learned from that experience?
3. What is your experience using science logs or journals? What is the reason for using them?
4. How do you use the computer as a part of your instruction?
5. What strategies have you used to help students connect classroom work to the “real world?”
6. What are your minimum expectations in the areas of physical facility and classroom equipment in order for you to teach science properly?
7. Tell us about a time a student refused to follow safety procedures or caused an accident in a classroom or lab. What did you do and what was the outcome?
8. How do you incorporate rigor and relevance in your lessons?
9. Tell us about a time you collaborated with a teacher outside the science department regarding some aspect of instruction. Why did you do this and how did it work? (secondary)
10. What should be the relationship between the work of the math and science departments? How can this best be achieved? (secondary)
11. What experience have you had using the Iowa Core Curriculum? What are your views about this curriculum? (secondary)

Teacher – Math

1. What suggestions do you have for a school whose standardized mathematics test scores are below the proficiency level?
2. If you were invited to address a PTA meeting on mathematics curriculum or testing, what points would you cover?
3. Describe your experience teaching mathematics using a “traditional” approach. Describe your experience teaching mathematics using a “problem solving” approach. Which do you prefer and why?
4. At which grade level should algebra be introduced? Why?
5. What is your approach to the use of calculators for homework and on tests? Why?
6. How do you incorporate rigor and relevance in your lessons?
7. How do you answer the criticism that high school graduates don't know how to make change? (secondary)
8. Tell us about a time you collaborated with a teacher outside the math department regarding some aspect of instruction. Why did you do this and how did it work? (secondary)
9. What should be the relationship between the work of the math and science departments? How can this best be achieved? (secondary)
10. What experience have you had using the Iowa Core Curriculum? What are your views about this curriculum? (secondary)

Pre-school teacher

1. Tell us about your experience with preschool programs and your experience with elementary schools.
2. What constitutes a properly developed preschool program?
3. What elements are necessary for an early childhood program to succeed?
4. Tell us about the classroom environment necessary for early childhood programs.
5. How should a school and town determine the need for preschool programming?
6. How do you ensure the lessons you develop are aligned with standards for preschool programming?
7. Share your knowledge of the QPPS Standards?
8. How do you determine the appropriate curriculum for a preschool program?
9. What interaction do you expect to have with kindergarten teachers in this school?
10. What differences would be evident in your preschool classroom as opposed to a kindergarten classroom?
11. How do you organize your classroom management for young children?
12. Please take us through the daily routine of a preschool classroom.
13. Please describe how you assess the learning needs of the children in your classroom throughout the year.
14. What is the role of parents in your preschool program?
15. Please describe a visit you have made to a child's home. Please assess the total experience both from the parents' perspective and your expectations.
16. Please give us an example of a typical problem a teacher might encounter with a preschool child and tell us how you would approach the parents to notify them of the problem.
17. What makes teaching preschool children unique?

POST-INTERVIEW PROCESS

I. After Each Interview:

Allow time for the Search Committee members to list the apparent strengths and weaknesses of each candidate.

- A. Each member of the Search Committee completes the form indicating "pros" and "cons" (Pg. 36) in regard to each candidate's potential.
- B. The Candidate Assessment Form (Pg. 37) should be completed by each member of the Search Committee after each interview. It will be used to assist in determining the most suitable candidate only after the field has been narrowed to two or three finalists.

II. After All Interviews:

- A. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate as perceived by the members of the Search Committee.
- B. Each member of the Search Committee should then indicate their choice of candidate for the position and the reasons supporting that choice.
- C. If there is no consensus within the Search Committee in regard to the choice of candidate to fill the position, the Search Committee may:
 - 1. Decide to schedule a follow-up interview with one or more candidates; or
 - 2. Decide to advertise the position again and begin the search process again.

THE CONTRACT

I. Process

- A. The principal makes the initial offer to the successful candidate pending completion of the diocesan safe environment program (Protecting God's Children video and background check) and seeks confirmation of acceptance of the offer.
- B. The principal informs the unsuccessful applicants that the vacancy is filled.
- C. The Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Education to approve the contract.
- B. The Board of Education officially approves the contract.

II. Contract Form:

- A. The probationary period for teachers new to any Diocesan school is three years. If the teacher has verifiable successful experience from another accredited school, the board may waive of year of the probationary period at the recommendation of the principal.
- B. The Diocesan Contract form is to be used
- C. Three copies of the contract should be prepared immediately and forwarded to the candidate.
- D. The candidate should be given a maximum of one week (preferably shorter) to sign the contract and return all three copies to the Board of Education. You do not want to lose other good candidates which has great potential if the candidate selected takes too much time deciding to accept or reject the board's offer.
- E. Designated representatives of the Board of Education sign the contracts after the contracts are returned by the candidate. One copy is sent to the new teacher; one is, one is maintained on file by the Board of Education.

Probationary Teacher Contract

This agreement is entered into between _____ (hereafter designated as the employer) and _____ (hereafter designated as the employee).

IT IS HEREBY AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **RESPONSIBILITY.** The employee represents that the employee is qualified to fulfill the professional services required in this contract, and that a copy of certificates, qualifications, transcripts, or other required documents are on file in employer's administrative offices.
2. **TERM.** The term of this contract shall begin on _____ and terminate on _____ and includes _____ days of service. Specifically, the agreement is for services rendered from _____ to _____ with payments from _____ to _____.
3. **DUTIES.** The employee promises to support and model the Catholic mission and philosophy of the school, the policies and regulations of said employer and the Board of Education of the Diocese of Davenport, and will faithfully perform the duties of _____ as stated in the job description. Employee will observe the policies, regulations and directives of the Diocese, the local Board of Education, the State Department of Education (with the understanding that when applicable the Faith Formation Guidelines is overriding), and abide by the policies and procedures specified in the Diocesan and local school/parish **handbooks**.
4. **COMPENSATION.** The employer shall pay the employee a salary of \$_____ a year, payable in equal (semi-monthly, monthly) installments, less the deductions which are either required by law or authorized under the terms of this contract. Compensation for less than a full year of service will be based on the percentage of days served less any allowed deductions. Unauthorized or leave exceeding that allowed by contract and benefits attachment shall be without pay and may affect job performance reviews.
5. **BENEFITS.** The following benefits shall be provided by the employer: (If using an attachment note that here e.g. see Attachment 1).
6. **DISCHARGE.** The employer shall have the right to discharge, or temporarily suspend the employee during the term of this contract for reason, which may include, but not limited to:
 - a. inefficiency or incompetence;
 - b. insubordination;
 - c. disability, as shown by medical evidence resulting in an inability to teach effectively;
 - d. immoral conduct as identified in Policies for Faith Formation and Education Programs series 365.
7. **BREACH OF CONTRACT.** If principal terminates this agreement prior to the expiration date, the teacher maybe required to pay an amount not to exceed _____ for associated costs. Principal recognizes the disruptive effect of this breach and will make every effort to continue administrative duties until a suitable replacement is obtained.

8. AGREEMENT. This contract is the entire agreement between the employer and the employee and extends for only this term. Issues and timelines related to future contracts are governed by Policies for Faith Formation and Education Programs. This contract supersedes all prior written or oral agreements; there are no agreements outside of the contract other than those as specifically set forth herein; and this contract may not be amended, changed, modified or altered without the written consent of both the employer and the employee.

This contract must be signed and returned by _____.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have affixed their signatures on the date set forth opposite their signatures.

Official title of corporation (parish/school institution)

Date

Signature Pastor or Canonical Administrator

Date

Signature Board of Education President

Date

Signature Superintendent of Schools

Date

Signature Principal

Date

Policy Adopted: March 15, 1989
Policy Revised: June 5, 2002
Policy Reviewed: May 17, 2010
Policy Revised: December 2015

Teacher Contract

This agreement is entered into between _____ (hereafter designated as the employer) and _____ (hereafter designated as the employee).

IT IS HEREBY AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **RESPONSIBILITY.** The employee represents that the employee is qualified to fulfill the professional services required in this contract, and that a copy of certificates, qualifications, transcripts, or other required documents are on file in employer's administrative offices.
2. **TERM.** The term of this contract shall begin on _____ and terminate on _____ and includes _____ days of service. Specifically, the agreement is for services rendered from _____ to _____ with payments from _____ to _____.
3. **DUTIES.** The employee promises to support and model the Catholic mission and philosophy of the school, the policies and regulations of said employer and the Board of Education of the Diocese of Davenport, and will faithfully perform the duties of _____ as stated in the job description. Employee will observe the policies, regulations and directives of the Diocese, the local Board of Education, the State Department of Education (with the understanding that when applicable the Diocesan Handbook is overriding), and abide by the policies and procedures specified in the Diocesan and local school/parish handbooks.
4. **COMPENSATION.** The employer shall pay the employee a salary of \$_____ a year, payable in equal (semi-monthly, monthly) installments, less the deductions which are either required by law or authorized under the terms of this contract. Compensation for less than a full year of service will be based on the percentage of days served less any allowed deductions.
5. **BENEFITS.** The following benefits shall be provided by the employer: (If using an attachment note that here (e.g. See Attachment A).
6. **DISCHARGE FOR CAUSE.** The employer shall have the right to discharge, or temporarily suspend the employee during the term of this contract, for just cause as defined and provided for in the Diocesan Educators' Handbook and Local Handbook or policies of the employer. In the absence of such definition, "just cause" shall mean violations of the terms and conditions of this employment contract (which would include Diocesan and Local Handbooks and policies), or performance, conduct or behavior on the part of the employee which, in the opinion of the employer, adversely affects the desirability of continued employment in a Catholic School. The employee shall be entitled to earn salary to the termination date on a per diem basis.
7. **BREACH OF CONTRACT.** If teacher terminates this agreement prior to the expiration date, the teacher maybe required to pay an amount not to exceed _____ for associated costs. Teacher recognizes the disruptive effect of this breach and will make every effort to continue teaching until a suitable replacement is obtained.

8. AGREEMENT. This contract is the entire agreement between the employer and the employee and extends for only this term. Issues and timelines related to future contracts are governed by Policies for Faith Formation and Education Programs. This contract supersedes all prior written or oral agreements; there are no agreements outside of the contract other than those as specifically set forth herein; and this contract may not be amended, changed, modified or altered without the written consent of both the employer and the employee.

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Date

Signature Superintendent of Schools

Date

Signature Principal

Date

Policy Adopted: March 15, 1989
Policy Revised: June 5, 2002
Policy Reviewed: May 17, 2010
Policy Revised: December 2015

Letter of Regret for Individuals not selected for the position.

Sample

Date

Full Name

Address

Dear

We have completed our selection for the teaching position at _____ School. We want you to know that your interview responses and background materials were carefully considered. We have hired a person whom we believe will best meet the needs at this time.

I speak for the Search Committee in extending appreciation for your interest shown in the position at our school. I know with your background you will be called to service elsewhere and I offer you every good wish as you search for the next phase of your ministry.

Very sincerely,

Principal

All Diocesan Principals Should Provide New Teachers with a Handbook that answers the following questions.

Faculty Handbooks Should Answer...

Many of these ideas are taken from SCHOOL HANDBOOKS: SOME LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS, by Sister Mary Angela Shaughnessy, SCN, Ph.D. Here are some questions to consider as you review and revise your handbook:

1. **Philosophy:** Include the philosophy and/or mission statement at the beginning of the handbook answer the questions, “What do we as Catholic educators say that we are doing in this school?” Read your philosophy critically. Ask yourself if any of the policies that are in your handbook are inconsistent with your philosophy. Courts will expect that they are consistent.
2. **Accreditation:** Goals and Student Expectations
3. **General Information:** timelines, dates, etc.
 - School hours (when must teachers arrive and depart)
 - Information about how to learn of school delay due to weather or other difficulty
 - Bell schedule
 - Calendar
 - Early dismissal
 - Immunization records
 - School Mass schedule (noting which class is leading)
 - Staff Development responsibilities and opportunities
 - Library policies and procedure
4. **Instruction of Students:** The handbook should include a job description of a Catholic School teacher. There is a copy in the Catholic Schools Policy and Procedure Manual. Does the handbook discuss the instruction of students:
 - what is to be taught;
 - who is available for teacher consultation;
 - amounts of time given to seatwork and independent study;
 - retention of students – criteria and process;
 - minimum and maximum times for homework assignments;
 - guidelines for tutoring students outside the school day

Supervision of Students: supervision of students should include

- supervision is a mental as well as physical presence, conscious, active supervision as opposed to standing talking with someone or correcting papers.
 - procedures for leaving students unattended (in emergencies only);
 - expectations of students when the teacher must be absent;
 - building wide behavior expectations;
 - procedures for reporting and recording accidents;
5. **Record Keeping/Grading:** Have these areas been covered:
 - criteria and the factors to be considered in grading;
 - definition of letter grades and numerical equivalencies;
 - requirement that teachers keep grade books and lesson plan books on file either in the office or in their homes as long as they are employed at school
 - statement for requesting a consideration of a grade change, and time allowed for this process;

- guidelines for filling out attendance records, reporting absences to the office, and for permanent retention of these records;
 - policy regarding electronic record;
 - policy regarding parents requesting to view their student's files;
 - policies for maintaining student permanent records;
 - guidelines for parent / teacher conferences (students included?)
 - guidelines for teachers in maintaining their own professional portfolio;
 - guidelines for recognizing student health challenges and procedures for medical alerts
6. **Professionalism:** A statement reminding teachers of their obligation to act in a manner that is professional, loyal, keeping confidences, and to live a lifestyle within the moral guidelines of the Catholic Church.
- Guidelines for teacher use of cell phones, gum chewing and/or smoking, having food or drink in the classroom;
 - Professional dress for teachers
 - Policy for Contractual Responsibilities:
 - State Certification and renewal
 - Catechetical Certification
 - Background Clearance
 - Safe Environment Workshop and updates
7. **Non-teaching Duties:** Description of expectations for non-teaching duties:
- procedures for accidents;
 - cafeteria duty;
 - carpool duty or recess supervision;
 - procedures for handling money collected in the classroom;
 - review of policies for clean – up of body fluids;
 - class and teacher participation in assemblies;
 - guidelines for class parties;
 - procedures for : fire drills, earthquake drills, intruder alert;
 - expectations for maintaining common spaces; store rooms, faculty lounge, work rooms, etc.
8. **Discipline:** Is there a school-wide discipline policy?
- When does the teacher turn a discipline situation to the principal;
 - Procedures for alerting parents;
9. **Field Trips:** Refer to the Catholic Schools Policy and Procedure Manual (2.8) School Sponsored Activities and Field Trips. Include guidelines for activities and expectations for drivers.
10. **Attendance at Meetings:** A list should be given of the meetings and events (outside the school day where teachers are expected to be in attendance. The administrator may reserve the right to require attendance at other meetings that come up during the year, given advance notice.
11. **Supervision and Evaluation of Teachers:** Give teachers have a clear understanding of how they will be supervised and evaluated.
- who will evaluate and supervise;
 - what format will be used for formal observations;
 - frequency of evaluation;
 - definition of formal and informal supervision; (The principal reserves the right to observe classes at unscheduled times.)

- areas in addition to teaching skills that will be included in evaluation (the teacher will be evaluated on how s/he is supportive of school policy, looks after the safety of the children, cooperates with staff and administration, etc.
- what documentation becomes part of the permanent file;
- what options the teacher has to respond in writing to an evaluation.

12. Personnel Policies:

Include a reminder that faculty are to follow the personnel policies in the CATHOLIC SCHOOLS POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL. While the Diocesan manuals address many of the personnel issues, it may be necessary to define some local policies. (For instance, the school allows personal days, must there be a request ahead before taking the day? Are there certain dates the personal days may not be used?)

- Procedures for requesting a leave or sick day;
- Procedures for tracking leave and maintaining records;
- Family Medical Leave policy;
- Outside employment;
- Hours expected to be at work;
- Leaving the building during the school day

13. Catholic Witness: Include a statement such as “All teachers must uphold the teachings of the Catholic Church. Failure to do so may result in dismissal.”

14. Grievance Procedures: These are outlined in the Catholic Schools Manual. Either reproduce this in your handbook, or indicate where teachers can find these procedures.

15. Contracts and Work Agreements: Include a copy of the Contract form; stipulate that “the contract is a year-to-year contract which grants no expectation of continuing employment.” Include a copy of the Work Agreement, for non-certificated staff.

16. Forms: Include samples of whatever forms are used in your building. This insures that teachers have easy access and are clear about what forms are official in the building.

17. Technology and Equipment: Have clear guidelines for staff using technology.

- Electronic mail and Internet Use Agreement Form is included and is to be signed by all faculty
- Procedures for using electronic equipment;
- Procedures for and limits on using copy machines;
- Guidelines for supervision of students using technology; (including cell phones)
- Use of email for communicating with parents;
- Use of computer for personal reasons
- Guidelines for using copy machines, passwords and limits

18. Classroom management expectations: Policies providing guidance on teacher day-to-day tasks and maintaining orderliness.

- Bulletin Boards: frequency of change and topics displayed;
- Faculty communication expectations (example: teacher bulletin published on Friday afternoon, teacher is responsible for knowing the contents);
- Procedures of principal reviewing lesson plans;
- Procedures for manuals left for substitute for calling for a substitute teacher;
- Maintenance of classroom space
- Procedures for handling money coming into the classroom
- Procedures for students accessing lockers

- Procedures for issuing and monitoring textbooks in the classroom
- Procedures for classroom parties
- Working with volunteers

19. **What Else?** There are other areas that could be included in the handbooks.

- End of year procedures
- Job descriptions of teacher, department chair, vice-principal, etc.
- Student progress reports
- Building security / keys / alarms
- Lesson plans
- Parent/teacher communication
- Classroom maintenance
- Guidelines for student written work

A Checklist for New Teachers in the Diocese of Davenport

This list is not all inclusive but should be helpful in establishing the daily routines for new teachers. The building principal, pastor, campus minister or department chair or grade level colleagues are responsible for providing the materials or answers for new teachers.

1. Catholic Identity questions you will need answered.
 - Opportunities for celebration of the liturgy
 - Prayer Buddy system
 - Opportunities for the sacraments
 - Daily Prayers-School-wide
 - Prayer is a regular part of daily school life in the classrooms
 - Sacred Space Required or not
 - Catholic symbols and their meanings available to all teachers
 - Parts of the mass available for all teachers.
 - Catholic social teaching is evident throughout the school program. (Copies available for Teachers)
 - A welcoming spirit exists in the Catholic school.
 - What are the basic tenants or beliefs of the Catholic faith? Made available to all teachers
 - How do student prepare for the liturgy
 - How do the students participate in the liturgy
2. **Orientation to computer systems**
 - Make sure every teacher has a login for computers, email and the student information system.
 - Minimal training should be provided for all three.
 - Acceptable use policy
 - Available equipment and checkout procedures
 - Passwords
 - Email etiquette/suggestions
 - Computer maintenance and routine maintenance
3. **A list of “ go to” people for different issues**
 - Supply needs
 - Computer problems
 - Catholic Church teachings and understanding
 - Custodial staff and services
 - The proper roles of volunteers and paraprofessionals
 - Office personnel
 - Pastor
 - Campus minister if you have one
4. **Building Tour**
 - Have department chair or veteran teacher give a tour of the building
 - Show new teachers offices and resources
5. **Supervision duties—what is the new teacher’s role?**
 - Lunch
 - Indoor recess
 - Playground
 - Bus Duty and Line up procedures
 - Locker Rooms if secondary school setting

6. Information about special education services and how the process works-

- Student assistance teams
- Student referral process
- Inclusion programs and adaptations
- 504 plans already in place and adaptations required

7. A list of services available to students

- Special education
- Social work
- Health and nursing
- ELL services

8. Curriculum-

- Time to look over it and have someone from the department or grade level help new teachers with any issues, especially with the material for the first month of school.
- Time should be given to review pacing and homework expectations with grade level colleagues
- Diocesan and local building mission statements should be available to new staff
- The School Improvement Plan for the local school.
- Core curriculum and resources from Iowa Learns

9. Assessments that your school may or may not participate in.

- Iowa Assessments
- Diocesan Assessments or second assessment
- Grade level assessments and timeline for all assessments
- Preparation, rules, procedures, materials
- AYP target Goals
- Building specific-Aspire, Plan, FAST, Dibels, Star etc.

10. Class schedules

- Master Schedule
- Early release schedule
- Specials schedule and recess schedule if elementary

11. Student Information System

- Set up/use
- Grading scales/practices/rubrics
- Weighting
- Terms
- Attendance-absences and tardies
- Reports including use and format

12. Handbooks Available to New Teachers

- New Teacher handbook
- Faculty handbook
- Student Handbook
- Faith Formation Guidelines
- Board Policy Manual

13. Staff Absences

- Types
- Forms
- Securing a substitute or guest teacher
- Professional development and related leave

14. Access to Buildings for staff

- Procedures for visitors (entry into the building or badges etc.)
- Keys
- Alarms/access points/codes
- Name badges/ID
- Reserving facilities (gym, auditorium, conference rooms, computer rooms or carts
- Parking

15. School Safety Plan Building Specific

- ALICE program
- Intruders
- Weapons
- Tornado
- Fire
- Evacuation
- Crisis Plan and class rosters
- Emergency contact person
- Bully/harassment reporting procedures

16. Business procedures to follow

- Lunch accounts
- Money collection and deposit procedures
- Purchase requests

17. Professional responsibilities and expectations-

- Dress Code
- Arrival and departure times
- Leaving the building during the day
- In-service expectations
- Faculty Committee participation
- Community Learning time
- Maintaining teaching certificate and license
- Keeping current with Virtus online learning
- Faith lived both inside and outside of the community.

18. Evaluation Procedures-

- Tier I and II
- Intensive Assistance
- Informal observations
- Formal observations
- Timeline
- Tenure
- Areas for Improvement

- Personnel file
- Access
- Content

19. Classroom Procedures-

- Lesson Planning requirements
- Format
- Requirements
- Shorter
- Long term
- Incorporation of core standards

20. Optional extra duties for staff

- Coaching or sponsoring a club or organization
- Before and after school programs
- Summer school
- Substituting during your planning period.

21. Grade book requirements

22. Building Level Discipline Plan or procedures.

23. General Classroom Procedures

- Basic Classroom Rules
- Attendance/Tardies
- Classroom roles or jobs for students
- Bell-work, warm up or sponge activities.
- Passing out supplies
- Collecting Work
 - Turning in Assignments to the teacher.
 - Returning Graded work to students.
- Assignment policies and procedures
 - Headings
 - Rubrics for projects
 - Use of pen, pencil, key board, calculator
 - Writing on the back of paper
 - Neatness/handwriting
 - Incomplete work
 - Late work.
- Student movement in and out of the classroom-
 - Hall pass
 - Restrooms
 - Traveling to PE, music, library , lunch, bus line-up
- Signals for student attention
- Assembly procedures and behavior
- Mass procedures and behavior.
- Student talking during:
 - Class discussion
 - Group work
 - Independent work

- Procedures and expectations for cooperative learning and independent work.
- Does the school use daily five or CAFÉ?
- Monitoring student progress
- Re-teaching/re-testing procedures
- Keeping students up-to-date with grades/progress
- Contacting parents (positive and areas of concern)
- End of Day dismissal procedures

24. Classroom party guidelines

25. Use of Classroom volunteers.

26. Organization and storage of classroom materials and textbooks.

27. Teacher filing system-

- Communications
 - Diocesan Office
 - Business office
 - Principals Office
 - Grade Level colleagues
 - Parents
- Student records
- Behavior records
- Reading groups and records
- Academic
- Professional Portfolio
- Lessons, activities, resources
- Electronic documents teachers may keep
 - Naming Documents
 - Using File folders
 - Backing up storage
- Personal records that individual teachers should keep
 - Pay
 - Leave
 - Evaluation
 - Letters/Notes/mementos

28. Individual school climate and culture

- Realities of the school system-budget issues, behavior, building etc.
- Parental support
- Local norms and expectations.

29. Nursing services-

- Nurse available or not
- Medications policy
- Routine screenings
- Services offered
- Referral procedures
- Emergencies

30. Resources for use by teachers

- Photocopies/paper/rules
- Video/AV
- Textbooks/workbooks
- Available instructional programs
 - Accelerated reader
 - Academy of Reading/math
- Library Media Center and Staff
 - Online resources
 - Card Catalog
 - Equipment
- Medical, dental, and clothing (uniforms) for students

31. Student Dress Code

- Uniforms/enforcement/out of uniform days