

Parkrose School District Equity Recruiting & Hiring Guide

The Parkrose School District believes that racial, cultural and ethnic diversity is strength for our community. We value equity as a top school district commitment. Equity ensures that all students have an opportunity to reach their fullest potential. It closes the achievement gap and supports our district vision:

“All students read and think critically at high levels, graduating college and career ready”.

We believe that it is our moral obligation to empower the Parkrose Community by embracing, accepting and reflecting our diverse cultures, which includes hiring a work force that is as diverse as the students and families that live in Parkrose.

What is Diversity?

Diversity is the recognition and acknowledgement of individual differences such as education, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, ethnicity, culture, language, or any other characteristic that shapes an individual’s attitudes, behaviors, and perspective.

What is Employment Equity?

Employment equity is ensuring the search and hiring process is fair and equitable so that the appropriate qualifications of each candidate are the only criteria upon which a hiring or promotion decision is made. Employment equity involves hiring the most qualified candidate for any open position while ensuring that the hiring process and the qualifications required for each position are fair and equitable for all persons. Moreover, employment equity means that candidates are not advantaged or disadvantaged whether an individual is from the dominant group or a marginalized group.

The Hiring Process

A principal or supervisor is responsible for making recommendations to the Superintendent for hiring within the District. The Human Resource Department has the responsibility to ensure that fair and equitable practices are followed throughout the hiring process. A hiring process that includes all of the following steps with diversity and equity initiatives firmly entrenched will help fulfill that responsibility:

1. Identify the school or department’s needs, goals and personnel gaps.
2. Appoint a diverse hiring team. Don’t forget classified staff and parents to diversify your team.
3. Determine selection criteria based on the position’s expectations. Ask yourself “What qualities do the students need?”

Top Qualities in Teacher/Specialist Candidates

Positive Attitude (Growth Mindset)

An educator with a positive attitude inspires students to look at the world in the same way. Not afraid to take educated risks...

Good Communication SkillsWilling to discuss key concepts and explain them in more than one way so that visual, hands-on, and sensory learners all understand the idea and how to apply it to future problems. To achieve this goal, the teacher must be able to communicate clearly and effectively. Handles conflict directly and doesn’t exhibit passive aggressive problem solving skills. Great to follow up on this in reference check.

Organization Skills

Keeping track of student’s papers/e-work, who received what grade and what material has been covered and what still needs to be covered are all vital parts of running an efficient classroom. While interviewing a teaching candidate, ask questions about how the person stays organized.

A Forgiving Heart

Children make mistakes, in behavior and schoolwork. A teacher must be able to move forward and allow a child to grow. Doesn't hold grudges with kids and understands that learning is through our mistakes. Kids can start each day with a clean slate

Evident Strength in Their Subject Area

A highly qualified teacher is one who understands her subject area inside and out and who has book and real world learning. The teacher can use their knowledge to make subjects relevant and engaging. Hearing and seeing examples is critical.

Willingness to Communicate with Parents

A good teacher is open to talking with parents. Can demonstrate open communication for positive and negative behavior. Multiple forms of communication are used. Teacher can 'go to' parents vs. waiting for the parent to come to them...

Respectful of Students

Teachers want their students to respect them, but teachers who get the most respect are the ones who give the most respect to their students. Look for a teacher who fosters an atmosphere of mutual respect. Is respectful of student's home language and culture.

Inquiry Based Thinker

Critical thinking is a high value in our school. We want a teacher that encourages questions and encourages inquiry in multiple forms in their class.

Dependable

A teacher can be the most entertaining, brilliant, supportive educator ever, but if he/she does not show up for work, students will suffer. Students need the assurance that their teacher will be present the majority of the time. This keeps distractions from learning and interruptions in the natural flow of a classroom at a minimum.

Genuinely Likes Kids

This might seem like an obvious characteristic, but people do sometimes go into teaching because of the schedule and not because they genuinely enjoy children. A teacher who does not like students may become derogatory or apathetic to the needs of her students.

Culturally Responsive

Teacher's responses to how they view equity and what they believe students are capable of accomplishing in their class. The individual is seen by the teacher. The teacher possesses a reflective mindset, and is open and aware of his/her own bias.

4. Draft and post the position. Create content/position based questions using the qualities above.

You should develop questions based on the following priorities:

1. Content knowledge
 2. AVID Experience and knowledge
 3. Equity and culturally relevant teaching practices
 4. Integrating technology into instruction
 5. Using assessment to inform instruction
5. Determine evaluation formats for the criteria sought.
 6. More than one person reviews applications and rates them to create a short list.
 7. Design the interview questions based upon the selection criteria.
 8. Instruct your interview team ahead that all information is confidential. You often interview your peers. Nothing leaves the interview room. You may discuss with the team but no comments are to be made to other staff, parents or students on how well an interview went with anyone.
 9. Create a rubric for selection criteria based on expected and ideal answers and go over this with hiring and interview team.
 10. Conduct interviews (turn off cell phones & other distractions) and other assessment events.
 11. Schedule performance task. All final candidates must have a performance based task that is observed and reviewed by the interview team.
 12. Assess results, discuss and select a candidate for the position.

The challenge for the Committee is to keep biases, stereotypes, and assumptions from interfering with the assessment of a person's competence for the position. Focus on the 'bona fide requirements' of the position. Assess the value of diversity—is there a commitment under the

Faculty's equity plan and the unit's hiring goals to close the gaps in representation of the designated groups? To arrive at an objective and fair decision:

- Focus on how well candidates measured against the position-related criteria tested in each of the evaluation formats. All evaluators' comments on a candidate's suitability should be in writing.
- Ensure references have been checked and educational qualifications verified.
- Openly and thoroughly review all the documented evaluation input and scores collected to determine the best match for person to position. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses. Keep notes of the discussion.
- Summarize results on one page to facilitate the final selection decision.

13. Document the process by leaving all forms with HR.

Interview Questions

Use interviews with a structured format as these provide the same type of information on all the candidates and are less susceptible to the personal biases of the interviewer. The purpose of interview questions is to discern the extent to which candidates meet the criteria that are necessary for successful performance in the position.

- Questions should be matched to the position criteria and are subject to demonstrations of validity.
- Questions not answered to your satisfaction should be rephrased; probe firmly but with discretion.
- Know the range of answers expected as well as the ideal answer; this gives a better parameter for scoring.

Sample Questions:

1. Have you worked with communities of color?
2. What experience do you have living, working and socializing in diverse communities?
3. What experience do you have working with organizations that advocate for social justice or marginalized populations?
4. How are you going to impact your students?
5. What experience do you bring to enrich our district?

What to Ask: Behavior-based questions that ask the candidates to show they have the knowledge and skills required and how well they have used them generally are the most predictive of future behavior and of success.

Instead of asking *"What do you think is a good evaluation system?"* a behavior-based question would ask, *"Please describe the evaluation system you used in the most recent course you taught?"* Such questions usually start with: *"Describe a situation in which.... Tell me about a time when.... What was the toughest...most exciting...most difficult...most interesting....How have you assisted in...What roles have you played in the organization which... Give me an example of..."*

Speculative questions, (*"what would you do..."*) also has value in finding out how candidates would apply their skills in a particular situation and in understanding their knowledge, philosophy or vision, and relationship with others. These questions can be useful when the candidate is new to teaching and is unable to cite past performances. Don't ask leading questions that telegraph the answer you want (*"We have a team approach here...how do you feel about that?"*)

In listening to the answers, listen for: a **situation**/task (what was the situation), an **action** (what did the candidate do), or a **result** (what happened). When answers are vague, ask for a specific example.

Also, Use the BEI (Behavior Event Interview Questions) to help determine key predictors of success in the job. These questions help determine how someone will perform at work. These are important to follow up on in the reference check process. The competencies were derived primarily from a combination of research on successful teachers in high-poverty schools in the U.S.

Key info on behavior event competencies below:

Competencies, or habitual patterns of behaving and thinking, are key predictors of how someone will perform at work. Two teachers may have the same content knowledge, but achieve very different student learning outcomes. Why is this? Research suggests that competencies make the difference. Acting with initiative and persistence is an example of a competency, as are planning ahead, flexibility and self-confidence. People who have previously exhibited high levels of the competencies that determine teacher success in a turnaround are more likely to succeed as future turnaround teachers. **Unfortunately, research indicates that traditional interview techniques rarely uncover competencies that predict future performance differences.** Too often, job candidates speak in generalities about what they think they should or would do, not about what they actually do at work. Fortunately, it is possible to learn what people actually do through a specialized interview technique – the Behavior Event Interview (BEI). In a BEI, candidates are asked to describe their detailed actions and thinking in past work events. And knowing what candidates have done to achieve success at work is a strong predictor of how they will seek success at work in the future.

1 The competencies provided here are derived from the following, which are recommended as companion guides: The School Recruitment Handbook, A Guide to Attracting, Selecting and Keeping Outstanding Teachers, Hobby, Crabtree and Ibbetson (2004); Star Teachers of Children in Poverty, Haberman (1995); Competence at Work, Spencer and Spencer (1993).

Behavior Event Interview Questions

In a BEI, the interviewer’s goal is to understand in detail how candidates perform various aspects of their work. To do this, the interviewer(s) asks candidates to recall past events when they have felt successful or have dealt with specific situations at work. (e.g., a time when he or she influenced another person, participated in a group activity). The expectation is that the candidate will spend 15 minutes or more describing the incident.

- The interviewer asks first for a brief (e.g., 1 minute) summary of what led up to each situation and the critical milestones or “headlines” in the story that the person is about to tell, such as key conversations or meetings, key actions, turning points and how the situation ended.
- Then the interviewers ask the candidate to walk through the story step by step, recounting exactly what the candidates did, said, thought and felt at the time and how others who were involved responded.
- The interviewer must interrupt the candidate to probe for detail needed to understand exactly what the person was doing and thinking at the time.
- Only responses about what the person was doing, saying, feeling or thinking at that past time are valid. Current thoughts about the event and hypotheses about what the person would do next time are not as accurate at predicting what a person would do on the job.

Recommended Questions for Critical Competencies:

These questions were selected to cover competencies that:

- are likely to be most predictive of success for turnaround teachers or leaders,
- require use of other critical teacher competencies (and so will help you assess multiple competencies), and/or
- distinguish candidates who would perform well in a turnaround effort versus other school situations.

Critical Competency	Question
Achievement	Think about a time when you felt very successful or proud of something you accomplished at work, and tell me the story.
Impact and Influence	Think about a time when you influenced another person or people in a way that was satisfying to you, and tell me the story.
Initiative and Persistence	Think about a time when you accomplished something satisfying at work despite one or more obstacles. Tell me the story.

Teamwork	Think about a time when you participated in a group or team of people to accomplish work that was satisfying to you, and tell me the story.
Belief in Learning Potential	Tell me about a time when you helped another person, someone whom others were not sure could improve, to achieve or succeed at a higher level.
Interpersonal Understanding	Think about a time when someone else's feelings or emotions affected their work and you dealt with the situation to your satisfaction. Tell me the story.
Self Confidence	Think about a time when another person or people stood in your way to get something done and you addressed the situation to your satisfaction. Tell me the story.

COMMON RATER BIASES

Many interview rating errors result from perceptual biases or individual preferences. The following are the most common rating errors you should keep in mind.

- 1) First impression error is the tendency to make snap judgments based only on responses made in the first part of the interview and then attending only to those behaviors that confirm this initial judgment. The direction of this bias can be positive or negative.
- 2) Personal biases can prevent objective ratings if the rater allows his/her own non job-related prejudices and attitudes about cultural stereotypes, lifestyles, appearances, and other perceptions to affect the ratings. The direction of this bias can be positive or negative.
- 3) Contrast effect is the tendency to rate a candidate relative to the person who was interviewed immediately before them. The direction of this bias can be positive or negative.
- 4) Leniency effect is the tendency to rate all candidates high.

In reflecting on the hiring document, I wanted to pass along some of my preliminary thoughts and suggestions:

