

# WHAT ARE THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED BY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS?

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## Abstract

School board leaders strive to employ the most qualified administrator for their district. It is imperative, not only for all candidates to be treated equally, but also for all board members to have a common base upon which to evaluate the candidates. This article provides listings for most frequently asked questions for board membership candidacy. Though not all questions could or should be utilized for each candidate, the following listings should act as a resource for board members to draw from. Some questions may need to be adjusted to fit the available vacancy and also to more personally fit each candidate.

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Most school board members strive to employ the most qualified administrator. Many district leaders report difficulties finding strong candidates for new administrative positions. Board members must employ administrators on more than “just a feeling,” and should use valid questions to assess candidates’ past experiences and employment behaviors.

Board of education members need advanced preparation to successfully screen and interview candidates for administrative positions. Further, if all candidates are asked the same questions, board members will have a common base upon which to evaluate candidates and will be assured that all candidates are treated equally.

A survey mailed to the board of education members and superintendents of the 525 Missouri Public School Districts requested the most frequently asked questions of administrative candidates. These questions were tabulated for possible use by other board of educa-

tion members. The most frequently asked questions are divided into categories to assist board members when interviewing potential administrators. It would be impossible to ask candidates every question in one interview. The list is designed to serve as a resource from which to draw. Board members will need to adjust questions to fit the vacancy and the interview.

## **Potential Questions For Interviewing Administrators**

### General Questions

1. Why do you want to leave your present job?
2. What makes this job interesting to you?
3. If you were selected for this job, would you have any difficulty getting released at this late date?
4. What is your educational preparation?
5. What are your professional experiences?
6. What do you know about this community and school district?
7. If you were offered this job, would your present district try to entice you to stay, and if they did what would you do?
8. What do you consider to be your weaknesses as an administrator?
9. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths as an administrator?
10. We think we have several good candidates, how can you convince us that you are the person for this job?
11. How do you feel about retaining the current administrator's personal secretary versus selecting your own?
12. Would your family support you taking this administrative position and moving to this community?
13. What do you do for recreation? How do you relax?
14. What are the methods you will use to keep yourself and this board "current" on important matters?
15. What do you think the administrator's wife's role should be in the community?

### Questions Regarding Board-Administrator Relations

1. What are the standards you use for judging whether or not a board of education is doing its job?
2. Can you clearly define the role of the board and role of the administrator?
3. What should a board member do when contacted by a parent with a school problem?
4. Are you very familiar with Robert's Rule of Order-Revised?
5. Do you believe that you should make a recommendation to the board on every agenda item that requires any type of board action?
6. Have you ever written any or worked on school board policies?
7. How do you feel about teachers, administrators, and school board members attending professional meetings?
8. How would you orient new administrative staff members, teachers, and board members for their position?

### Questions Regarding Personnel

1. What is your philosophy on delegating authority? How do you then maintain accountability?

2. What can a school district do about a marginally effective teacher and/or administrator?
3. In your judgment, what are the principle things a good school principal does?
4. Describe how you would work with principals in a school this size.
5. If you took this administrative position, would you expect to have your job performance formally evaluated? How often? By whom?
6. What procedure would you use in recommending the employment of personnel to this board?
7. Have you used a formal personnel evaluation system? For certificated personnel? For non-certificated personnel?
8. In personnel evaluation, what is the role of the principal, superintendent, and board of education?
9. In the hiring procedure, what is the role of the teaching staff, principals, superintendent, and board of education?
10. Is it possible to dismiss a weak teacher? Have you done this? How would you do it?
11. What do you see as the chain of command in a school system this size, including the board of education?

#### Questions Regarding Professional Negotiations

1. What are the advantages/disadvantages of school employee unions?
2. Define the roles in the negotiation process of the principals, superintendent, and board of education.
3. Have you ever been the chief negotiator in developing a salary schedule or contract?

#### Questions Regarding Public School Finance

1. Are you familiar with the financial accounting system used in this state?
2. Have you had experience in investing school funds?
3. Have you ever built a complete school budget?
4. Have you ever been involved in deficit financing? What is your philosophy on deficit spending?
5. What is your philosophy on surplus in your school budget? How much is needed?
6. Do you understand the state funding formula for this state?
7. Are there ways a local school district can increase state funding for (a) special education, (b) vocational education, (c) general programs, and (d) others?
8. What's the most important school business function an administrator such as you would perform?
9. Do you know the financial condition of this district? How would you describe our situation?
10. Have you ever conducted a bond levy election to build a building?
11. Have you ever conducted an operating levy election to fund general operating expenses?
12. How would you conduct a campaign for a bond levy election or an operating levy election?

#### Questions Regarding Curriculum

1. Do you believe a school district has responsibility for improving the instructional effectiveness of its teachers?

2. How can this community and this board know they have an effective school program?
3. How do a principal, superintendent, and board of education encourage good teaching?
4. How would you initiate curriculum change?
5. How responsible should the school be to community pressure on curriculum?
6. How would you organize this district, curriculum-wise, so that you can guarantee improvement?
7. There is discussion about back to basics, what is your philosophy on this topic, and what would you do to see this philosophy implemented?
8. What is the role of the principal, superintendent, and board of education in curriculum development and/or innovation?
9. How should this district's curriculum be split between college prep and vocational courses or programs?
10. What is the extent of offerings a school district this size should offer?
11. What do you think the roll of extracurricular activities should be in this school?
12. How will you align and audit the district's curriculum with the state standards?
13. Have you had experience in dealing with federal programs?
14. How do you feel about Title IX?
15. What is the staff's role in curriculum development?
16. What do you think this district should do about minimal competency testing?
17. Have you developed a School Improvement Plan?

#### Questions Regarding Maintenance, Transportation, and Food Service Programs

1. What experience have you had with a transportation program?
2. Do you recommend the district contract the transportation service or be districts operated?
3. How would you organize this district's custodial services?
4. Would you have a custodial maintenance and preventive maintenance plan for the district? How long would it take you to place into operation this plan?
5. How would you operate the food service program? Should the food service program operate in the black?

#### Questions Regarding School/Community Relations

1. How would you go about establishing good public relations in this school district?
2. What's the most important "first step" a principal or superintendent should usually take in a new district?
3. What is the board's role in school/community relations with respect to committees in the school?
4. What is the role of the community with respect to committees in the school?
5. What communication methods would you use between the school and the parents?
6. What do you think the principal's role is in the P.T.O.?
7. What is your philosophy on parent-teacher conferences?
8. How do you feel about the community using school facilities? Equipment?
9. What is your position on field trips for students into the community? Outside of the community?

#### Questions Administrators May Ask Board Members

1. What is the major task to be accomplished by the new administration?

2. How has the community support for the school been, and what pressure groups are active in the community?
3. What are the board's expectations for the principal and superintendent?
4. Is there an internal candidate for the position?
5. How stable has the staff and administration been in this district?
6. What is the board's perception of curricular strengths and weaknesses?
7. What are the conditions of the physical facilities?
8. What is the financial condition of the district?
9. What roles do the principal, superintendent, and board play in the bargaining process?
10. What is the board's philosophy toward the use of lay advisory groups on committees in the school?
11. What are the population trends of the district?
12. What are the current evaluation procedures of the district?
13. Does the board have any expectations for you or your family's personal involvement in community activities?
14. How does the board view its role as it relates to the principal and/or superintendent?
15. How does the board feel that the proper role-playing between board and superintendent should be ensured and maintained?
16. How would the board describe the community power structure?
17. What are the board's expectations for staff involvement in decision-making?
18. Is the board committed to allowing the professional staff to make the professional decisions?
19. What commitments does the board have to make themselves an effective board?
20. Is the board supportive of the administrative staff being active in their professional associations?
21. How does the board view student discipline in the schools?
22. What is the board's source of pride in the schools?
23. Is there a congenial working relationship between the board members?
24. What is the normal length of board meeting and how are they attended?
25. If I am a serious candidate, will the board members allow me to review several past board meeting agendas and minutes?
26. How has the community voted in the past on bond and tax referendums?
27. What are the attendance figures for the district?
28. Have there been any special problems between the board members and the teachers organization?
29. What are the terms of each of the board members?
30. What is the socioeconomic makeup of the student body?
31. What are the board's residency requirements for employees?
32. What kind of contract does the board plan to enter into with the new administrator?
33. What are the salary and benefits for this position?

It takes time and energy to conduct a job search and to interview prospective administrators, so it is important to be as efficient as possible. Finding administrative leaders to lead school districts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will become more and more difficult. Board members must develop procedures and questions to meet the needs of their districts.

