SELECTING A PRINCIPAL
Interview Questions

General Guidelines

1. The questions are clear and as simply worded as you can make them.
2. They should avoid questions that “telegraph” the answer(s) you want.
3. They do not ask about any of the inappropriate areas (race, ethnicity, gender, marriage and family status, religion, political affiliation, disability, or age).
4. The questions should include both forward looking scenarios and past experience questions.
5. They use open-ended questions that require more than a yes or no answer.
6. All of your criteria should be covered by the interview questions.
7. A good first questions is: “Tell us why you are interested in this position.”
8. A good last question is: “What questions do you have for us?”
9. Questions are agreed upon in advance and are asked of ALL applicants in the same order and by the same person (when possible).
10. If you intend to ask “specialized” questions of any applicants, they too are agreed upon in advance and are asked by the Chairperson.
11. If you intend to ask follow-up questions, all members agree to hold them until the planned questions have been asked and limit them to questions to clarify answers already given.
12. Interview questions must be approved in open session.
## Kentucky’s Goals

1. How would you explain the phrase “All kids can learn at high levels.”
2. What is the most important thing for a school to do to reach proficiency by 2014?
3. Describe your experience in closing achievement gaps.

## Mission and Vision

4. As an administrator, what do you see as your primary mission?
5. Upon what basis do you believe school priorities should be established?
6. What would be your first priority in this position?
7. What are the most important characteristics of an effective school?
8. What are the three most important goals you would want to reach in our school? Why?

## Conflict Resolution

9. Give two or three examples of strategies you have for dealing with conflict resolution.
10. How do you resolve conflict between staff members? Between students and staff?
11. How would you go about trying to resolve a dispute between opposing factions within a school?
12. If your views on curriculum differed from those of the rest of the council, how would you resolve those differences?
13. How do you resolve parental complaints when you know the teacher is in error?
14. Tell us how you would handle the following situation: An irate parent barges into your office and yells at you about the new school council extra-curricular policy.

## Leadership

15. What do you see as the major role of the principal?
16. What do you consider to be your major strengths as an administrator?
17. What do you see as the first step in initiating successful change?
18. Why are you interested in becoming the principal of this school?
19. How would you encourage a teacher who is discouraged? A student? A parent?
20. How will you motivate teachers so they will want to try new ideas?
21. What evidence can you give us from your personal experience that you support the goal of proficiency for all students by 2014?
22. What role do you see for the principal in school-based decision making?
23. What skills as a chairperson/facilitator do you bring to the school council?
24. How will you maintain staff morale when “the pressure is on” in a high stakes accountability environment?
Teamwork

25. Give your definition of collaboration.
26. How would you develop the team concept with your staff? With the community?
27. How will you work with the school counselor (or assistant principal) to improve student and staff relationships?
28. What specific steps would you take to build rapport with staff?
29. What is the principal’s role in assisting teachers in team planning and teaching?

Professional Development

30. Share a model professional development experience that you have had and explain why it is a “model.”
31. If you want to bring about change in a school, how would you use professional development to help the change process?
32. What professional qualities would you particularly encourage in your staff?
33. How have you encouraged professional development in staffs you have worked with in the past?
34. How would you help an inexperienced teacher become more effective in the classroom?

Judgment

35. Upon what criteria would you base your assessment of a teacher?
36. On what basis do you judge your success as a principal?
37. How do you ensure that you make fair decisions?

Curriculum and Instruction

38. What do you consider to be examples of appropriate instructional practices?
39. What instructional strategies would you want new teachers to be sure to employ? How would you ensure this?
40. Describe an effective classroom.
41. How have you demonstrated your belief that all students can learn at high levels?
42. Explain your philosophy on educating students.
43. Give one example of how you have carried out your education philosophy in your role as principal. (If applicable)
44. What evidence would you expect to see if a teacher is utilizing developmentally appropriate instruction?
45. What teaching techniques have you found to be most effective in helping all students learn at high levels?
### Discipline

46. What is your philosophy of discipline?
47. What connection do you see between the school safety plan and the school’s discipline policy?
48. How would you explain the connection between safe and orderly schools and student achievement?
49. What discipline plan or procedures have you used effectively in previous positions?
50. What student outcomes do you expect from a school’s discipline plan?
51. Share your method of dealing with a student who is continually disruptive in class?
52. Tell us how you would handle the following situation: A student is sent to your office because she has forgotten her homework for the fifth day in a row.

### SBDM

53. Describe your personal decision making process.
54. How do you see your role in working with the SBDM council?
55. What provisions will you make to ensure total staff and parent involvement with the SBDM council?
56. What method of communications do you feel is most effective in keeping the total staff/community informed of council decisions?
57. What do you see as the main focus of any SBDM council?
58. How do you help keep the council focused on doing what is best for improving student achievement?

### Culture

59. Explain why you think a positive school culture is important.
60. As the principal, how could you create a culture of academic excellence in a school? How have you done that in previous jobs?
61. In what ways would you encourage students who are not working up to their potentials?
62. What role do you see the Family/Youth Resource Center playing for students in this school?
63. How do you, as a principal, promote good race relationships?
64. Describe how you would go about establishing positive relations with the school community?
65. How would you involve parents more in students’ education?