



Gwinnett County Public Schools Human Resources Division

Behavioral Interview Questions –Teacher Performance Standards

Guidelines:

1. For a telephone, online, or job fair interview, choose a total of 4-5 of these questions, and add one or two questions that fit that context of your school and the job opening(s).
2. For on-site interviews, use two or more questions from each of the standards, and then add questions appropriate for your school and the job opening. (Extra questions that were suggested by administrators are grouped at the end.)
3. Once the questions are determined, create a document with those questions. This list of interview questions should be used for each candidate.

Performance Standard #1: Professional Knowledge

- Describe a lesson you have taught that addressed a curriculum standard.
- What is an example of students' higher level thinking skills in a lesson you have taught in a specific content area? (For example, in math, what have you done to go beyond just a drill or practice exercise in a lesson?)
- Give an example of how you linked what students were learning with their past or future learning.
- What should students know about the subject matter at this grade level?
- What skills should students know within this subject matter at this grade level?
- How have you kept expectations high in your subject with students' learning and understanding?
- Describe what students are like in this age group and what can be expected of them developmentally.
- When you have taught this subject in the past, how have you checked for understanding in a lesson?
- How did you learn this subject content to the point of mastery?

Exemplary

Candidate shows an example from a portfolio of a lesson that addresses standards, curriculum, and subject content. Candidate's answers indicate knowledge of subject matter, curriculum,

and students' developmental readiness. Candidate has successfully taught this curriculum to the grade level of the job opening and indicates high expectations for students.

Proficient

Candidate's answers demonstrate an understanding of the vocabulary of the questions – curriculum, expectations, and student development. Candidate's answers indicate experience teaching this curriculum to the grade level of the job opening.

Needs Development

Candidate's answers indicate knowledge of only some of the areas in the questions. Candidate lacks experience teaching the content, and/or is not articulate with regard to curriculum, student development, or own skill in the subject area.

Ineffective

The candidate does not demonstrate skills in the subject content, or knowledge of the curriculum standards. The candidate doesn't articulate students' development that is age appropriate, or does not communicate high expectations.

Performance Standard #2: Instructional Planning

- How have you used student learning data to guide your planning? (What student data have you used to guide your planning?)
- Describe the use of time in a typical lesson you have taught, telling me about pacing and transitions.
- How have you differentiated a lesson, and how did you plan for that differentiation?
- Describe a lesson or unit you have taught that aligned well with the school's curriculum and student learning needs.
- Other than lesson plans, how have you developed long-range plans. How were you able to adapt or change long-range plans?

Exemplary

The candidate shows examples of lesson plans, as well as of a curriculum map, syllabus, or unit plan that has been used. In describing planning, the candidate explains use of student data and differentiation to meet the needs of all students.

Proficient

The candidate's answers indicate skills and experience with planning. In the answers, the candidate explains use of data, objectives, and differentiation. Candidate has experience with short- and long-range planning.

Needs Development

The candidate does not evidence skill and experience with all levels of planning. The candidate's description of planning shows some, but inconsistent work with data, objectives, or differentiation of instruction.

Ineffective

The candidate cannot explain clear long- or short-range planning. The candidate does not discuss the need for objectives, data, or differentiation, or may not understand these terms.

Performance Standard #3: Instructional Strategies

- Describe a lesson where you have engaged students in active learning.
- How have you built a lesson on students' existing knowledge and skills? Describe that lesson.
- Describe a lesson where you differentiated instruction to meet students' needs. Be specific in describing what you did.
- Describe a learning goal you used in a previous lesson. How did you reinforce that goal to the students throughout the lesson? (Examples might include writing goal on board, having students refer back to the goal as they worked through the lesson, and having students summarize what they learned at the end.)
- Describe a lesson you have taught that had a lot of variety. Specifically, describe the variety of strategies you employed to teach, and resources used.
- Describe a lesson where you have incorporated technology.
- Describe a specific lesson where you checked for understanding.

Exemplary

The candidate shows sample lessons from a portfolio and uses a lesson as a visual aid to describe the points of this standard. Candidate answers should evidence goals, engaging students in active learning, differentiation of instruction, use of technology and checking for understanding.

Proficient

The candidate effectively engages students in learning, and this is evidenced by answers that include specific examples of goals, active learning, differentiation, use of technology, and checking for understanding.

Needs Development

The candidate's answers evidence inconsistent instructional delivery that has goals, active learning, and other components of this standard.

Ineffective

The candidate's answers do not indicate skill or experience in instructional delivery. Candidate may not recognize key vocabulary of the questions.

Performance Standard #4: Differentiated Instruction

- How have you differentiated the instructional content, process, product or learning environment to meet individual needs?
- Describe an example of remediation, enrichment, or acceleration to further student learning that you have used successfully.
- Tell about a time when you have used flexible grouping to encourage peer interaction and to accommodate student learning needs/goals.
- How have used assessment (diagnostic, formative, or summative) to inform your instructional modifications for students?
- Give an example of a critical or creative thinking activity that appropriately challenged students.
- How have you demonstrated high learning expectations for ALL students?

Exemplary

The candidate provides clear, concrete examples of differentiation from past teaching. The candidate's answers evidence providing students with opportunities to engage in critical thinking and creative activities, all of which are tailored to individual needs. The candidate may have shared his/her work with other teachers. Candidate expresses consistency in providing examples, such as "I build differentiation into *every* plan."

Proficient

The candidate can provide examples of challenging and supporting individual student's learning. There is consistency to the candidate's examples of appropriate differentiation of content and skills which address individual differences.

Needs Development

The candidate has limited examples of providing content or developing individual learning differences in his/her past teaching. The teacher shows inconsistency in differentiation of instruction or assessment.

Ineffective

The candidate does not use the vocabulary of differentiation and does not provide examples of challenging, remediating, or enhancing individual student learning. The candidate expresses the idea of “teaching to the middle of a class,” not individualizing instruction.

Performance Standard #5: Assessment Strategies

- Describe how you have used a pre-assessment with a class.
- How have you involved students in setting learning goals and in monitoring their own progress?
- Describe how you have used a variety of assessment strategies or instruments.
- Tell about aligning student assessment with established curriculum standards and benchmarks. What does that mean? What assessment have you used that did that?
- Describe your grading system for a content area and length of time. Example: How have you set up a grading scale for nine-weeks of 7th grade language arts?
- How have you used formative assessment to help students learn?
- Describe ways that you have given constructive and frequent feedback to students.
- If I am a student in your class, explain your grading system to me for _____. (This may be for one assignment or for a grading period.)

Exemplary

The candidate’s answers evidence skill with formative and summative assessment, as well as pre-assessments. The candidate has examples of a grading scale, criteria sheet, or rubric in a portfolio and uses these items to explain assessment to the interviewer. Candidate is experienced in providing feedback to students.

Proficient

The candidate can discuss all topics of this standard, evidencing knowledge and experience with formative and summative assessment, creation of grading scales, and use of timely feedback to students. Uses assessment to plan/modify instruction.

Needs Development

The candidate demonstrates limited experience with assessment strategies, creation of grading systems, and providing feedback to students. Limited use of assessment for planning and modifying instruction.

Ineffective

The candidate evidences inadequate knowledge of the vocabulary of assessment. Answers do not demonstrate skill in, or experience with, using assessment data to make instructional decisions or report on student progress.

Performance Standard #6: Assessment Uses

- How have you used diagnostic assessment to develop learning goals, or to differentiate instruction, or to document learning?
- How have planned formal and informal assessments to measure student mastery of instructional goals?
- Describe a specific example of using an assessment tool to inform, guide, or adjust instruction.
- How has an assessment helped you to design an appropriate intervention to help students?
- How have you shared results of student progress with students, their parents, and/or school personnel.
- How have you provided feedback to students about their progress?
- Describe a time when you helped students to self-assess.

Exemplary

The candidate provides concrete past examples of using assessment to develop learning goals, inform instruction, and guide students in their learning. The candidate shares samples from a portfolio, or describes consistent, exemplary use of communicating assessment results with parents, students, and other teachers or administrators. The candidate's answers indicate continual use of assessment to inform delivery of instruction and to help students.

Proficient

The candidate's answers indicate systematic and consistent use of assessment measure student progress and to inform instructional content and delivery. The candidate can describe past experience about sharing assessments with parents and students, and indicates knowledge of the vocabulary of uses of assessment.

Needs Development

The candidate's answers indicate limited knowledge of the vocabulary of assessment uses, and limited experience using assessment to inform practice. The candidate is not consistent in the use of feedback to students and has limited experience communicating assessment results to others, including parents.

Ineffective

The candidate does not recognize the need to use assessment tools to improve teaching practice, to measure student progress, or to provide feedback in a timely manner. Almost no experience with assessment uses.

Performance Standard #7: Positive Learning Environment

- Describe a classroom where you have worked that was very safe and efficient. What made the room arrangement efficient?
- Describe a classroom management plan that you have used, or observed, that had rules. What else was in the plan and how was it implemented?
- What classroom procedures have you used or observed for specific parts of the school day? Describe getting students into the room, transitions, activity procedures, etc.
- What routines have you used or observed that maximize instructional time and minimize disruptions?
- How have you established a climate of trust and teamwork in your classroom?
- How have you promoted cultural sensitivity in your classroom?
- What are your experiences working with, and respecting, students' diversity, including language, culture, race, gender and special needs?
- If I had been an observer in any of your previous classrooms, how would I have seen you actively listening and paying attention to students' needs and responses? Give one specific example. (Exemplary answer: I always remember to use wait time. I have students write KWL charts on poster paper, and I can address their responses to what they learned that way.)
- Give an example of how you have worked with students individually in learning time and then how you have worked with small or whole groups.
- What classroom management theorists or writers have influenced your management style? Or what books have you read to form your management plan and routines?

Exemplary

The candidate shows a classroom management plan that he/she has used and explains the positives and consequences used with the plan. The candidate describes routines and procedures for all parts of the school day or class period. The candidate's answers include work with diverse populations and successful examples of maintaining a positive learning environment. The candidate can cite the author and/or research base for their management plan and class procedures.

Proficient

The candidate describes routines and procedures for all parts of the school day or class period. The candidate's answers include work with diverse populations and successful examples of maintaining a positive learning environment.

Needs Development

The candidate is aware of the need for positive classroom climate, but the answers suggest limited experience with a management plan and procedures. The candidate may have had limited experience with diverse populations.

Ineffective

The candidate responds with stories of the difficulties experienced with managing a classroom, and makes no reference to a classroom management plan or procedures. Does not recognize terms or writers in the field.

Performance Standard #8: Academically Challenging Environment

- Describe ways that you have maximized instructional time. Specifically, what did you do to create more time for student learning?
- Tell about one topic of material or one assignment in your grade/subject area that was appropriately challenging and relevant to students.
- Give an example of how you have minimized transition time, getting students back on task more quickly.
- How have you communicated high expectations for students?
- Give an example of a topic, assignment, or activity that was academically rigorous and pushed students to achieve goals.
- With so much mandated curriculum, how have you encouraged students to explore new ideas and to take academic risks on their own?

Exemplary

The candidate shares past examples of continually creating a learning environment that is rigorous and challenges students. The candidate discusses past lessons that indicate this type of environment, showing lesson plans or activities in a portfolio. He/she provides specific examples of transitions, procedures, and routines that are used daily to create an academically engaged classroom.

Proficient

The candidate describes past examples of an academic environment that lends itself to high levels of student learning. He/she can provide examples of transitions, procedures, and routines that have been used to create an engaged classroom. The candidate evidences knowledge of the vocabulary of academic risks and academic rigor.

Needs Development

The candidate has few examples of an engaging classroom and limited use of the vocabulary of academic risk and academic rigor. He/she does not provide examples of encouraging student productivity or of challenging and relevant material and assignments.

Ineffective

The candidate does not discuss any past experiences regarding the creation of an environment where learning occurs at high levels or where students are encouraged to explore and take risks. (Make discuss just teaching from the book or from the standards; makes excuses of not enough time or not enough resources to create an academically challenging environment.)

Performance Standard #9: Professionalism

- Describe a past situation where you worked with others in the school to promote a student's well-being or success?
- Give an example of something that happened in your field experience, student teaching, or past teaching experience where laws, school policy, or ethical practice became an issue.
- Tell about a time when you took something directly from a professional development workshop or seminar (or college class) and used it.
- Tell us about a goal you have for improving your knowledge and skills.

- Describe student events or activities outside of the classroom that you have attended or led.
- What are your expectations with regard to working with administrators and other school personnel? Have you had the opportunity to work with community members, and, if so, how?
- How have you communicated and worked with parents in the past? How have you communicated student progress to parents?
- Describe any collaborations with teaching colleagues in the past, such as a professional learning community, or others.
- (Not a direct question.) Rate the candidate's use of standard English from the interview.
Note: Use of written English should be evaluated from the application paperwork – resume, cover letter, and online materials.

Exemplary

The candidate discusses positive past examples of parent communication and of work with other teachers, administrators, school personnel, or community members. The candidate can give concrete examples of taking advantage of professional development opportunities to enhance classroom work, and has specific goals for their future learning.

Proficient

The candidate discusses some past examples of working with others in the school or community, but not at the level of exemplary. The candidate has experience with professional development opportunities and sees the need for future learning. Exhibits experience communicating with parents, and expresses an interest in doing so in the future.

Needs Development

The candidate has done some work with others, but that work is inconsistent. Candidate expresses some interest in future professional development, but has no clear goals for self. The candidate discusses little evidence of experience communicating with parents.

Ineffective

The candidate has worked independently in previous teaching, and cannot articulate work with other professionals. The candidate indicates skepticism of learning more from workshops and seminars, and has no clear future learning goals for himself/herself. The candidate is negative about past experiences.

Performance Standard #10: Communication

- (Not a question, but can/should be evaluated.) In the interview, the candidate uses appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication; grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary.
- What has been your experience collaborating or networking with colleagues about improvement of student learning?
- Speaking as if I were a student in one of your classes, describe an instructional goal for a lesson, or expectations for my learning.
- Describe a positive parent communication that you have experienced – by phone or in person.
- Speaking as if I were a parent, explain a classroom, school, or district policy to me.
- How have you explained, or how might you need to explain, what happens in your classroom to a larger audience, such as a group of parents or a community group?
- Describe an experience where you listened and responded with empathy to stakeholders' concerns, such as parents, students, or colleagues.

Exemplary

The candidate communicates with excellent grammar and vocabulary; speech is very clear and understandable. The candidate can articulate multiple examples of communication with students, parents, colleagues, and the community. The candidate can clearly describe explanations given to students and to parents and may share an example from a portfolio.

Proficient

The candidate communicates effectively and consistently during the interview; evidences experience with communications to parents, administrators, colleagues, and community. Appears approachable and listens to interviewer questions and comments consistently.

Needs Development

The candidate's command of language is weak; errors in grammar or usage are noted. Candidate may provide only limited examples of communication with a parent, colleague, or administrator in his/her past experience.

Ineffective

The candidate is difficult to understand; many errors in grammar or usage. Non-verbal communication does not match a professional interview setting. No concrete examples provided of experience communicating with others; does not indicate a need to improve communication with others.

Additional Behavioral Questions: Suggested by Administrators

Some of these may be seen as repeated questions from one of the categories above. They are listed for your convenience, if you prefer to word a question this way, or feel the need to select one to three questions from these groups.

Extra Area #1: Student Progress

- Tell us about your experience setting appropriate achievement goals for student progress, based on baseline data. In other words, how have you set measurable goals for students, based on their present knowledge and skill levels?
- How have you documented student progress? How have you used a grading scale to help you explain grades to students and parents?
- What experience do you have measuring student progress with state-provided measures, such as standardized tests?
- How have you used the data you know about students' progress to develop new learning goals/targets?

Exemplary

The candidate has worked in a classroom where achievement goals for students are based on previous data, and monitors student progress with standardized and classroom-level assessments. The candidate exhibits an understanding of the need to assess, monitor, and plan new goals based on student progress.

Proficient

The candidate exhibits an understanding of the vocabulary of the questions, and has experience setting student goals, monitoring progress, and using state- and classroom-based assessments.

Needs Development

The candidate is not familiar with all components of the vocabulary of the questions. The candidate may have worked with standardized testing, but does not see the other aspects of goal-setting or monitoring student progress other than the tests.

Ineffective

The candidate does not see the value of setting goals, monitoring, and using standardized testing to measure and enhance student progress. The candidate is negative about testing and other aspects of measurement.

Additionally, the interviewer may want to include questions about "fit" and "motivation."

Sample questions for these areas might include:

Extra Area #2: Fit

1. Why have you applied to our school/system? What brought you here?
2. What type of student do you like to work with? Why?
3. Describe the students you have worked with in the past.
4. Describe your work with past teachers and administrators.
5. Tell about what you do best in the classroom.

Exemplary

Candidate's answers evidence knowledge of the school and district. The candidate has experience with students of similar demographic backgrounds as this school/district and expresses a desire to teach those students. The candidate is overwhelming positive, enthusiastic, and engaging in the interview.

Proficient

The candidate exhibits knowledge of the district and of the student demographics. He/she seems genuinely interested in these students, and is positive about past teaching experiences.

Needs Development

The candidate exhibits minimal knowledge of the district and its students. The candidate is hesitant about his/her own ability to teach in the environment of this district.

Ineffective

The candidate is negative about certain populations of students. The candidate exhibits little enthusiasm, almost to the point of seeming "burned out" about teaching.

Extra Area #3: Candidate's Motivation

1. What motivated you to be successful in student teaching/your past teaching experiences?
2. What has provided you with satisfaction in student teaching/teaching?
3. What has your previous teaching meant to you? How does it feel to be a professional teacher? What does it mean to be a teacher?

Exemplary

The candidate provides very strong evidence of his/her self-motivation and genuine desire to help students. From previous teaching experience, the candidate described satisfaction from student success. The candidate seems very positive, enthused, and motivated to work hard, even with a challenging teaching situation.

Proficient

The candidate provides evidence of self-motivation. He/she describes satisfaction from previous teaching and from student achievements. The candidate is positive and enthused, and discusses challenges, not problems.

Needs Development

The candidate is somewhat unsure of responses here. He/she discusses the need for others to tell them if their work is good enough. The candidate makes some negative comments or discusses only difficulties of past teaching.

Ineffective

The candidate is very negative about schools and students. He/she provides no evidence in answers about being self-motivated and does not seem enthused about the job.