



## How to Interview Virtually for an Education Job

By Educator Barnes – May 28, 2020

It did not take a pandemic for me to have experience with interviewing virtually through video. Since the coronavirus pandemic, video interviews have become the norm. At my school, I am the hiring manager for English, English intervention, electives, and the building sub. I have had the opportunity to interview several teacher candidates. Some interviews have gone well, and some could have gone better. Here are some tips for adjusting to the new normal of interviewing online.

1. **Make sure your internet is stable.**

The worse thing to happen is to have your internet go in and out or completely out during the interview. I have watched people make adjustments during the interview that could have made before the interview.

2. **Find a quiet, well-lit location.**

I have interviewed two candidates who were not in the best lit location, and it made it hard to see the person's facial expressions. First, let me say if you have children, share this. Depending on your child's age, you might not be able to send him or her into another room. I had a virtual interview during winter break one year for a school that was opening up the following school year. During the interview, there was a big crash in the background. My sons had knocked over our Christmas tree. Even if your small children are noisy, they probably won't do that, but as much as possible, find a quiet location.

3. **Dress for an interview.**

Just because you are at home and have been at home for weeks, you still need to get dressed up and present your best self. It is still an interview. If you would not wear your attire to an in-person interview, don't wear it for your virtual interview.

4. **Make sure your headphones or AirPods are working properly.**

Can you hear me now? Don't be that person. Just like the internet, make sure your equipment is working properly before the interview.

5. **Learn the video platform.**

During this pandemic, I have had exposure to Zoom, Webex, and Google Meet. If you don't know how the platform works, figure it out before the interview. If you have to share a lesson you have prepared, but then have to fumble around to figure out how to share the screen, it is awkward and shows a lack of preparedness. It will make the interview committee think you are not going to be prepared for the students later.

6. **Record your lesson.**

Some candidates are being asked to teach live. You should record it at home in the place you plan to do the interview and then play it back. This will allow you to see how you look and help you identify any adjustments you need to make.

**7. Expect an interview team.**

Early in my career, I would interview with only the principal. As my career progressed, the shift was to an interview team format. Even with the shift, many times, the leader of the interview team would share how certain people were unavailable to attend because of responsibilities during the day, or the person would be in the interview but needed to rush off to handle a situation in the school building. In the virtual setting, I have been able to have every person I wanted on my interview team for each interview.

**8. Ask about the plan for reopening the school.**

There may not a solid plan in place, but school leaders have already been having the conversation about how the school might look in the fall. You need to know what the potential options are to determine if this will work for you if you are offered the job.

**9. Treat this interview like a real interview.**

Any action you would take, such as getting dressed up in a suit, commit to doing for the virtual interview. Research the school before your interview. Know simple things such as how to pronounce the school's name. Yes, I had a candidate repeatedly mispronounce my school's name even after I intentionally said the school's name in follow up questions after it was mispronounced.

Before I wrap this up, I want to provide some words of caution. Really consider if during a pandemic is the best time to switch jobs. I am a huge advocate of being loyal to yourself and not to a school corporation or a charter network. However, if for your mental wellbeing, a change is necessary, press on. If you can wait, wait. If you switch schools now, you will be on the bottom of the totem pole. Budget cuts are expected. It is much easier to let go of new hires that haven't started working for a school than returning staff. Whatever your decision, I wish you luck!