

Tool 5: QSL-ID Interview Question Bank

Directions: For each interview question, choose the appropriate ranking: 2=essential, 1=useful, 0=not useful. Then determine where to ask the question: application essay, telephone interview, or on-site interview. Ensure that all candidates are asked the same set of questions so the hiring process is fair.

Writing good questions is an art form. To create the QSL-ID interview question bank, we asked superintendents for their best principal-candidate questions and scoured websites to locate and categorize the best questions. The most insightful questions that align with the QSL-ID rubrics are provided here.

Core Interview Questions	Pertinent to QSL-ID Domain Number	Committee's Ranking	Where to Ask the Question
		2: Essential 1: Useful 0: Not Useful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Essay • Telephone Interview • On-Site Interview
Experience and Perspective Questions			
1. What do you consider to be the most important qualities of a principal? How have you modeled these qualities in your previous administrative experiences?	1		
2. Tell us about a time when you had to make a difficult decision and you knew that whatever you decided, some people would be unhappy. What alternative approaches might have been taken, and why was this approach chosen?	1		
3. Discuss a time when your leadership approach did not appear to work. What happened and how did you adjust?	1		
4. How have you assisted teachers in their first year in the school, whether they are veterans or teachers new to the profession? What is important for the new teachers to know and do? What must be in place to assist them?	2		

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<p>5. Tell us about a difficult conflict-resolution situation that you had to deal with. Who was involved, and what methods or strategies did you use to resolve the conflict?</p> <p><i>Follow-up question: Ask about conflict-resolution strategies for student, teacher, and parent-teacher conflicts.</i></p>	4		
<p>6. Have you had to develop a shared vision for a school in which multiple visions existed? How did you go about it? Please describe the process.</p> <p><i>Follow-up question: Based on your knowledge of this school and district, what changes, if any, should occur to meet this vision for learning?</i></p>	2		
<p>7. In your current position, what steps have you taken, or advocated for, to close the achievement gaps? Explain why.</p>	3		
<p>8. How do you determine the learning needs of teachers and then assign staff to support those needs?</p>	3		
<p>9. Tell us about a difficult student-discipline situation that you have dealt with. What lessons do you take from this situation? Would you say that you use this method often?</p>	4		
<p>10. Please describe your experience in developing a schedule of classes for a school. Who or what should be involved, and when should the process begin? How do you address multiple, competing priorities in scheduling?</p>	All		
<p>11. What are your three best leadership qualities? Describe at least one situation in which one of these qualities was exemplified.</p>	All		
<p>12. What is the role of a mission statement? What should be the key elements of a good mission statement?</p>	2		

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Scenario Questions			
13. In your school, you have observed several occasions in which a highly experienced teacher has exhibited poor instructional practices, particularly with students. What is your approach to working with this teacher?	1		
14. Suppose you have a new idea for parent-school communication that you want to try. How would you go about it? <i>Follow-up question: How responsive should the school be to community pressure on curriculum?</i>	2		
15. What steps would you follow if a teacher did not comply with your recommendations after a classroom visit?	4		
16. An unexpected shortfall of 20 percent in the budget has occurred, and you are asked to take a 10 percent cut across the board. What do you do?	4		
17. If you were to take us on a tour three years from now, what would you say is significant about the educational program and philosophy of the school?	All		

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Knowledge and Attitude Questions			
18. What should a principal expect from teachers and staff, and what should teachers and staff expect from the principal?	1		
19. What are the major qualities you look for when hiring new teachers? Why are these qualities important to you and the school?	1		
20. What do you feel are your greatest assets, skills, and talents that you would personally bring to this school to enhance its academic program and school community?	1		
21. What criteria will you use to judge your success as a principal, and why are these criteria most important?	1		
22. What are the most important first steps that a principal should take in a new district? What expectations would you set for your first 100 days?	1		
23. How would you express your understanding of what our school stands for? How does this idea fit with your personal education philosophy?	2		
24. What is the impact of inclusion on the school community?	3		
25. What methods do you use to evaluate your school and its programs?	3		
26. What criteria do you use to evaluate a teacher, and why are these criteria most important? Do you have separate criteria for evaluating new versus experienced teachers?	3		
27. What instructional strategies would you want new teachers to be sure to employ? How would you ensure this usage?	3		

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28. Discuss the relationship between instructional improvement, teacher evaluation, and staff development.	3		
29. Describe how you would improve teaching and learning in our school, and indicate why your suggested strategies will make sense for this school and community.	3		
30. Describe your knowledge and experience in using data to inform decisions. What are the upsides and downsides of data use?	3		
31. What do you expect to see in quality lesson plans? How do you use lesson plans as data about performance?	3		
32. How do you determine what to do on a staff development day?	3		
33. How do you ensure an atmosphere of trust and openness to foster risk taking and change? How do you balance transparency and openness with confidentiality?	4		
34. What do you consider to be the essence of good leadership?	All		
35. Describe your leadership qualities that you think would be most beneficial to this school.	All		
36. Are there any questions that we did not ask you but you wish that we had? If so, what are they?	General closing questions		
37. Are there any final comments regarding your pursuit of this position that you would like to share with us?	General closing questions		