

TEHAMA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Guidelines for Interview Panels

I. FUNCTION OF THE INTERVIEW PANEL

The basic function of the interview panel is to evaluate the candidates' qualifications to perform the duties of the job for which they are being interviewed. In order to achieve this purpose, it is necessary that panels:

- A. Help the candidates present their qualifications fully.
- B. Identify and evaluate their capacities and limitations.
- C. Determine whether or not they are qualified.

An interview should leave the candidates with the feeling that they have been given friendly and skillful assistance in developing their case before the panel.

II. PROCEDURE FOR THE INTERVIEW PANEL

A. Use of the Interview Form

- 1. The interview form is the official record of the panel members' evaluation of the candidates' qualifications and their overall competitive rating.
- 2. All candidates should be rated in the same areas.
- 3. Interview forms are not available for candidates to review. The forms do not go into the personnel file.
- 4. Notes taken by panel members should be clear.

III. INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES

It is desirable that the panel follow a similar pattern in all interviews.

- A. The same questions must be asked of all candidates. Follow-up questions may be asked about topics introduced by the candidate.
- B. The chairperson should open the interview by making the proper introductions and providing background information that will help the candidate better understand the interview process and the position.
- C. The panel members should operate from a set list of job-related questions that each of the candidates will be asked. Panel members may ask additional job-related questions of each individual, provided that the same questions are asked of all candidates.

- D. If a candidate has limitations which appear to be serious, panel members should express any reservations they feel as to the candidate's qualifications. The candidate must be given reasonable opportunity to reply to a panel member's reservations and clarify any points about which a misunderstanding may exist.
- E. The chairperson should also end the interview by asking the candidates if they would like to add any additional information or if they have any questions. The process for notifying each candidate of the results of the interview should also be explained.

IV. LIMITATIONS

- A. Panel members may not ask questions or make statements relating to the following topics in such a way that discrimination might be inferred, nor may any of these topics be used as a factor in eliminating a candidate from competition:
 - 1. Race, color, age, national origin, or ancestry.
 - 2. Sex or marital status, including family information.
 - 3. Political or religious affiliations.
 - 4. Success or failure in previous examinations.
 - 5. Time commitments not related to the position.
- B. A panel member should withdraw from any interview in which he or she feels they cannot rate a candidate's qualifications fairly and impartially.
- C. Ratings should be compiled prior to any discussion comparing the candidates. Your rankings of the candidates must reflect your actual order of preference.
- D. Confidentiality—In the interest of fairness to all candidates, panel members should not needlessly reveal that they are going to serve as panel members. Panel members should not reveal to anyone any candidate's name, any information about the candidate's qualifications, nor the score that the members gave the candidates.
- E. After the interview, panel members should not reveal any information regarding the process nor should they reveal the results until it has been approved by the Superintendent and announced by the Department. All inquiries should be directed to the personnel manager.

V. SUGGESTIONS TO PANEL MEMBERS

- A. Watch for "halo effects." Probably the most serious obstacle to reliable interviewing is the so-called "halo effect." Unless we are alert, our questions and judgment may be unduly influenced by a single trait or a small group of the

candidate's traits or characteristics. Being aware of this common tendency is, perhaps, the best assurance that such "halo effects" will not distort our ratings.

- B. A friendly, easy going approach will usually produce more useful information about a candidate's qualifications than will an interview which is characterized by a series of rapid-fire, direct questions.
- C. Maintain consistent standards. Applying standards consistently through a series of interviews requires vigilance on the part of all panel members. Should early ratings prove to be out of line, members should adjust them to reflect a candidate's qualifications.
- D. Keep on schedule. Panels should make every reasonable effort to keep interviews on schedule. However, if the panel drops behind, no interview should be unduly abbreviated in order to return to the schedule.
- E. It is our desire to hire the best person for each position that becomes available. It is hoped that these brief guidelines will prove helpful in achieving that end.