

Marketing Your Professionalism

Tips and Strategies to Prepare and “Psych” Yourself for Interviewing, Personal Branding, and Acquiring That First School Music Teacher Job

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PCMEA/College Workshop Materials

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1. *Everything* you need is here: <https://paulkfoxusc.wordpress.com/becoming-a-music-educator/>
2. Load this URL of the 2013 PMEA conference handouts (Mr. Fox’s “ghost” teacher pages) to download files (ASAP before they become inactive): <http://www.uscsd.k12.pa.us/Page/6361>
3. Do you know what it means to be a professional? – Can you define the term professionalism?
4. Construction of a professional activities archive – the precursor of your résumé and e-portfolio
 - a. A “Me file” of bulleted accomplishments with dates
 - b. Assessments and transcripts
 - c. Scholarships and other awards
 - d. Education experiences (don’t forget student teaching and other field assignments, private teaching, substitute teaching, summer camps, sports, scouts, church, marching band sectionals or field assistance, choral accompaniment or coachings, etc.)
 - e. Sample artifacts like solo recital and chamber/large group concert programs
 - f. Sample lesson plans, achievement targets, rubrics, and student assessments
 - g. Original compositions and arrangements
 - h. Congratulatory notes and letters of reference
 - i. Philosophy of music education and personal mission statement (see #5 below)
5. Jim Frankel’s guiding questions offered as an introduction to his PMEA technology sessions
 - a. What is your personal mission? Why?
 - b. What is the role of music in a child’s education?
 - c. Are we creating performers, theorists, teachers... or lifelong music lovers?
6. Certified to teach what? – Are you a specialist or a generalist?
7. General categories of interview questions
 - a. Music and music education content and methods
 - b. General education terminology and concepts
 - c. Philosophy, goals, past experience, and education (avoid an emphasis on a specialty)
 - d. Personality traits, social skills, and habits of “professionalism”
8. Alphabet soup – Do you know these acronyms? What if they come up at an interview?
 - a. ADD or ADHD
 - b. AYP or now SPP
 - c. The Four Cs and P21 group
 - d. DOK or HOTS
 - e. EQ, EU and UBD
 - f. ESEA and NCLB
 - g. GATE
 - h. IEP
 - i. Madelyn Hunter’s ITIP
 - j. PDE’s SAS portal
 - k. PLC
 - l. PSSA and PVAS
 - m. RTI
 - n. SLO

9. Jargon, Trends, and Issues – Be familiar with as many of these as possible!

- a. The Common Core
- b. Whole Child Initiatives
- c. 21st Century Learning Skills
- d. Flipped Classrooms and Blended Schools
- e. Multiple Intelligences
- f. Customization, Differentiation, and Individualization
- g. Formative, Summative and Authentic Assessments



10. What makes the “ideal candidate” for becoming an educator? – Tools of assessment

- a. Charlotte Danielson’s Four Domains from *The Framework for Teaching* (Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities)
- b. Core Teaching Standards (see back page, Upper St. Clair School District hiring criteria)

11. Pre-Interview – Preparations before the meeting

- a. Self-assessment of personal strengths you wish to convey to the prospective employer
- b. Development of a balanced/unified (non-specialist) comprehensive philosophy of music education, your own mission, vision, goals, and personal values
- c. Preparation of personal examples (detailed anecdotes/stories) showing how/when you have been modeling professionalism and the core teaching standards
- d. Practice and drill on story-telling skills and answering common interview questions
- e. Research of the school district, music program, job opening, and curricular innovations
- f. Well-researched questions to ask at the interview
- g. Trial run (knowing exactly where you are going – time needed and traffic patterns)

12. Positive interview techniques

- a. Calm, positive, open, friendly, sensitive, and cheerful attitude
- b. Warm greeting and firm handshake
- c. Relaxed speech, posture, and body language
- d. Use of interviewer’s name when talking
- e. Sitting at an angle, not directly in front of interviewer (no barriers & defensive posture)
- f. Consistent eye contact, appropriate smiling and responses, and listening to interviewer
- g. Honesty and saying what you really mean (you may be “stuck” with your answers)
- h. Freedom to make admissions such as “I do not know” (inexperience is not a crime)
- i. Sharing of one hard copy and several digital versions of your résumé and portfolio (#4)

13. Bad habits (avoid these at all costs)

- a. Tardiness
- b. Sloppy, trendy, or informal dress
- c. Repeated verbal pauses or repetitive exclamations of “Ahh,” “Umm,” “Like,” etc.
- d. Use of weak words that suggest a lack of conviction (“kind of,” “sort of,” or “I feel like”)
- e. Unsubstantiated or unsupported statements
- f. Verbal clutter (too many run-on statements) or “bird walking” (veering off the subject)
- g. Any form of fidgeting (tapping, spinning a pen, etc.) or touching your face, hair, clothes
- h. Failure to look directly at the interviewer(s)
- i. Responses that go overboard or volunteer too much information
- j. Flip conversation or answers that are too casual, personal, or informal
- k. Forceful, dominating, one-sided, or opinionated views and arrogant attitudes
- l. Non-verbal cues that reflect nerves (slouching, looking down, clenching hands in lap)

14. Post interview – Debriefing of yourself

- a. Interview journal – writing of everything you did right and wrong while it is still fresh
- b. Record of names/e-mails of the participants, and job placement process (dates/forms)
- c. Summary of needed documentation, portfolios and other information for follow-ups
- d. Personalized thank-you letter (set yourself apart from the other applicants)

15. Sample interview questions by core teaching standard (USC criteria or most popular)

- a. Who had the greatest influence on you to become a music teacher and why? *(Most Popular)*
 - b. What are the most important qualities of an outstanding educator? *(Most Popular)*
 - c. What is your personal philosophy of student discipline? *(Most Popular)*
 - d. How would you assess the learning in your classroom/rehearsal? *(Most Popular)*
 - e. What purpose does music education serve in the public schools? *(Most Popular)*
 - f. What is the importance of professional development and how will you apply it to your career? *(Most Popular)*
 - g. What are your personal goals? Where do you see yourself in ten years? *(Most Popular)*
 - h. How do you recruit students to “grow” a music program? *(Most Popular)*
- A1. Concerning music education, what is your philosophy and mission? *(A – Educational Philosophy)*
A2. What is your view of the teacher’s role in the classroom? *(A – Educational Philosophy)*
A3. What is most important to you (and why): music content, outcome, or process? *(A – Educational Philosophy)*
- B1. Describe a successful lesson plan you have developed. *(B – Knowledge/Education)*
B2. What units would you plan for __th grade general music? *(B – Knowledge/Education)*
B3. List a few selections you might program on a choral (or band or string) concert. *(B – Knowledge/Education)*
B4. What steps would you take to teach someone how to improvise? *(B – Knowledge/Education)*
B5. How do you get a child to match pitch? *(B – Knowledge/Education)*
- C1. What rules and expectations would you establish in your classroom? *(C – Classroom Management)*
C2. How will you control behavior in large ensembles? *(C – Classroom Management)*
C3. How would you deal with a difficult student who has gotten off-task? *(C – Classroom Management)*
- D1. How will you incorporate the use of technology in your classroom? *(D – Technology)*
D2. How have you utilized technology to assist in instructional preparation? *(D – Technology)*
D3. Summarize a list of software programs and other technology you have mastered. *(D – Technology)*
- E1. Describe your strengths in oral communications and public relations. *(E – Oral Expression)*
E2. How would you disseminate information to the students in support of your daily lesson targets? *(E – Oral Expression)*
E3. Provide sample announcements you could make at an a) open house or b) public performance? *(E – Oral Expression)*
- F1. Discuss your strengths in writing and/or written communications. *(F – Written Expression)*
F2. What role does the Common Core have in general music (or music ensembles)? *(F – Written Expression)*
F3. Describe your last or favorite college essay or article on music or curriculum. *(F – Written Expression)*
- G1. Describe your leadership style. *(G – Leadership)*
G2. What actions would you take to get a group of peers refocused on the task at hand? *(G – Leadership)*
G3. Illustrate your role in a group project or collaborative assignment. *(G – Leadership or H - Teamwork)*
- H1. How would you involve students in the decision-making or planning of your classes/ensembles? *(H – Teamwork)*
H2. How would you involve parents in your music program? *(H – Teamwork)*
- I1. How would your musical peers describe you? *(I – Judgment)*
I2. How do you typically model professionalism and judgment in dealing with conflict? *(I – Judgment)*
- J1. How do you differentiate and teach to diverse levels of achievement in your music classes? *(J – Problem Solving)*
J2. Describe a difficult decision you had to make and how you arrived at your decision. *(J – Problem Solving)*
J3. How will you accommodate students who want to participate in both music and sports? *(J – Problem Solving)*
- K1. How do you insure that long-term plans and music objectives are met? *(K – Planning and Organization)*
K2. Illustrate a typical musical (or marching band or ensemble) production schedule. *(K – Planning and Organization)*
- L1. How would you structure a general music (or ensemble rehearsal) classroom of the future? *(L – Innovation)*
L2. Share an anecdote about a new or innovative teaching technique you have used in music. *(L – Innovation)*
- M1. Describe a project you initiated (or would initiate) in your teaching or extra-curricular activity. *(M – Initiative)*
M2. What motivates you to try new things? *(M – Initiative)*
M3. How much time outside the school day should a music teacher be expected to work? *(M – Initiative)*
- N1. How would you define professional commitment in terms of music education? *(N – Dependability)*
N2. What after-school activities do you plan to become involved? *(N – Dependability)*
- O1. How do you cope with stress? *(O – Adaptability)*
O2. How do you manage shifting priorities or changing deadlines? *(O – Adaptability)*
- P1. Why did you choose to become a music teacher? *(P – Self-Insight/Development)*
P2. In your own music-making or teaching, of which are you most proud (and why)? *(P – Self-Insight/Development)*
P3. If you could write a book, what would the title be? *(P – Self-Insight/Development)*
- Q1. What hobbies or special skills do you have which may influence your future activities? *(Q – Energy/Enthusiasm)*
Q2. In what extra-curricular activities did you participate at the HS and college level? *(Q – Energy/Enthusiasm)*

16. Sample content-specific inquiries and basis for second or third-round demonstration lessons

- a. How would you teach “steady beat” or pitch matching in the primary grades? [GENERAL MUSIC]
- b. How and when would you teach syncopation to the intermediate grades? [GENERAL MUSIC]
- c. Describe in detail an introductory lesson on improvisation using 12-bars blues progression. [JAZZ]
- d. How would you assess the learning in EL/MS music classes? [GENERAL MUSIC]
- e. What marching band style do you prefer to teach and perform in the halftime show, and how would you organize the marching auxiliary units (majorettes, color guard, dance team, and/or drumline)? [BAND]
- f. How would you improve the intonation/tone quality/bow technique of a string players? [STRINGS]
- g. Describe the selections you would program for a EL/MS/HS choral/band/orchestra concert in December/May. [ALL]
- h. How would you assist fifth graders performing dotted quarter/eighth combinations hesitantly or incorrectly? [ALL]
- i. When and how do you present the concepts of shifting/spiccato/vibrato to string students? [STRINGS]
- j. Describe a lesson in which you would use classroom instruments. [GENERAL MUSIC]
- k. How do you advise/assist in the student’s selection of a beginning band instrument? [BAND]
- l. What criteria and methods should be used assign voice types for your EL/MS/HS chorus? [CHORAL]
- m. What steps would you take to improve an ensemble’s phrasing/blend/balance? [BAND/STR./CHORAL]
- n. Discuss the process you use in developing the singing voice. [GENERAL MUSIC/CHORAL]
- o. Describe your background and knowledge of each of the following methodologies: Orff, Kodaly, Gordon, Suzuki, Dalcroze. [ALL]
- p. What are your keyboard skills like? Vocal skills? Secondary instrument skills? [ALL]
- q. How would you warm-up a band/chorus/orchestra? How do you tune instruments? [ALL]
- r. Show us how you would start a piece in general music/band/chorus/orchestra. [ALL]
- s. Tell us about a composition/improvisation/multimedia project you have done with students. [ALL]
- t. How would you integrate music with the other academic subjects in the EL/MS/HS? [ALL]
- u. What are the most common problems for beginning instrumentalists/vocalists? [ALL]

Upper St. Clair School District
Professional Applicant Rating Form

Overall Rating (Circle One)			
1 Unsatisfactory	2 Satisfactory	3 Good	4 Superior

Name: _____ Interview Date and Time: _____

Certification(s): _____ Position: _____

	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Superior	Remarks:
Instructional:					
A. Educational/Philosophy					
B. Knowledge/Education					
C. Classroom Management					
D. Technology					
E. Oral Expression					
F. Written Communication					
Professional:					
G. Leadership					
H. Teamwork					
I. Judgment					
J. Problem Solving/Decision Making					
K. Planning and Organizing					
L. Innovation					
Personal:					
M. Initiative					
N. Dependability					
O. Adaptability					
P. Self-insight and Development					
Q. Energy and Enthusiasm					
R. Appearance					

Comments: _____ Signature of Rater: _____ Date: _____