

You got the call for the interview, now what?
South Dakota Music Educators Association 2022 Conference
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“Knock ‘Em Dead” by Martin Yate- Excerpts

Your resume is the most financially important document you will ever own.

- 15-45 seconds is all your employer will give to the first reading. The one that carefully relates the resume to the job description gets read a second time.
- Get inside the employer’s head.
- People get hired based on their credentials, not their potential.
- Job requirements mean you list all the things you bring to the party to meet that requirement.
- Critical thinking: All jobs are problem identification, problem avoidance, and solution.

Think of the best person you have ever seen doing this job and what made him or her stand out. Now think of the worst person you have ever seen doing this job and what made that individual stand out in such a negative way.

Six Resume Rules

1. Always have a target job title placed at the top of your resume.
2. Always have a performance profile or career summary. Do not tell your needs as they are not interested at this time.
3. Always have a “core competencies” section.
4. Never put salary on a resume.
5. Keep your resume focused, most believe 1 page is best
6. Emphasize your achievement...focus on: achievements, problem solving skills, professional behavior profile. Promotions don’t come in reward for loyalty and tenure; they come as a result of capabilities.

The Cover Letter

Have a cover letter; it introduces you, puts your resume in context, and demonstrates your writing skills. You have to go out and make your life happen. One third of all hires come from personal/professional networks. When networking, never talk about what you want in your next ideal job; focus the talk about what you can do. Do not use current managers and co workers as references or it could cost you your job. Do not use school email for any aspect of a job search or it could cost you your job. When you dress and look like a professional, you are likely to be treated as one.

Seven guidelines to good body language

1. Walk slowly and stand tall upon entering the room.
2. Smile, make eye contact, respond warmly.
3. Sit upright, butt back, head up, maintain eye contact, smile naturally whenever the opportunity arises.
4. Use mirroring techniques. If the interviewer leans forward to make a point, a few moments later you do so.
5. Head up and eyes forward at all times.
6. Remain calm and do not hurry your movements. This will control your persona.
7. Breathe. You cannot be nervous unless you breathe rapidly.

Things to never forget

- First impressions are the strongest.
- Know some knowledge of the school/school system- state report cards
- Shine your shoes- that is attention to detail
- Guys always wear a coat and tie
- Turn off your cell phone. Leave it in the car
- Practice smiling – it releases endorphins.
- Be the best prepared for the interview.

Things to avoid:

1. Failing to listen to the question.
2. Answering a question that was not asked.
3. Providing inappropriate or irrelevant information.
4. Answering a question with a question
5. Being unprepared.

Four secrets of the hire

1. Ability and suitability – Explain your approach in clear, simple terms. Show how this fits into the overall efforts of the department and school.
2. Motivation – Commitment to take the rough with the smooth, rotten assignments with the plum ones. Show enthusiasm for your work/profession and show enthusiasm for this opportunity.
3. Manageability and teamwork – Don't bring up religious, political, social, or racial matters during the Interview. They will not ask the same of you.
4. Being prepared!

After the interview

Email the principal or HR person who conducted the interview thanking them for the invitation to interview. This really sticks out in a principal's mind, especially if he/she is interviewing several candidates.

Sample interview questions

1. Tell us about yourself. Usually, the first one asked. Be general
2. What makes you a strong candidate for this job? A middle school position?
An elementary job?
3. Why do you want to be a music teacher?
4. Describe the place of music in the overall educational program?
5. What do you consider your greatest asset as a teacher?

6. What are your strengths? Weaknesses? Very popular question, be honest about the weaknesses part.
 7. Why do you want to teach here?
 8. Describe your idea of classroom management.
 9. What kind of administrative support is required for you to be successful?
 10. A benchmark for third graders is that they have learned quarter, half, dotted half, whole and pairs of eighth notes with corresponding rests. How would you assess that learning has taken place?
 11. Our district has a team of general music, string, and band teachers in each elementary school. All of these persons share a student population. What personal qualities do you have that would make you an effective team member?
 12. What does it mean to have a learner-centered classroom?
 13. What do you do with a student who resists music?
 14. Describe your lesson planning procedure.
 15. What kinds of things you think are important in a music curriculum?
 16. How would you use music to develop a sense of community in this building—to bring students, parents, families, and teachers together?
 17. Briefly, describe your personal philosophy of music education.
 18. How would you integrate music with the other academic subjects in the middle/high school?
 19. How should special learners be integrated into the band program?
- What teaching techniques and strategies would you use to accommodate students' learning needs?
20. Would you consider yourself a life long learner?

General

1. Describe your background and knowledge of each of the following methodologies: Orff, Kodaly, Gordon, Suzuki, Dalcroze. Are you comfortable with this system?
2. How important is performing in the general music classroom? Instrumental music questions

Band

1. Describe the recruiting process you would use to start beginners?
2. What are the most common problems for beginning instrumentalists?
3. How would you organize and plan a typical band rehearsal?
4. How many concerts should a high school band play in a year?
5. What is the role of the marching band in the overall music program? Jazz ensemble?
6. Our high school has a concert band and an orchestra. Should wind players perform in orchestra if they are not interested in doing so? If so, how should the wind players be selected for orchestra?
7. Should students be allowed to join the band in high school if they have never played an instrument before?
8. There is a guidance counselor in the high school who is not a supporter of the band program. This person discourages students from including band in their schedules and tells students to drop band in favor of courses in other subjects. How would you try to improve this situation?
9. Your first trumpet player is also the starting point guard on the girls' basketball team, and there is a conflict with a game and a concert scheduled for the same evening. How would you try to resolve the problem?

Choral

1. Discuss the process you use in developing the singing voice.
2. Describe the recruiting process you would use to start beginners?
3. What is the role of sacred music in the school choral music program?
4. What is the best age/grade for singers to begin private voice instruction?
5. Discuss the role of the accompanist in the choral setting.
6. What is the role of the "show" choir in the choral music program? Jazz choir?
Madrigal ensemble?
7. Talk about the place of the musical in the overall choral program.
8. What are your feelings about "rote" instruction? How and when should it be used, if at all?
9. Describe a good choral sound. How do you go about developing this type of sound?
10. Your best tenor is also the first chair trombonist in the school band program and is planning on

being a music education major in college. He has just told you that he is considering dropping chorus to concentrate on the trombone and get ready for his college auditions. What would you say to him?

11. What strategies would you use to attract more male voices to the choral program?

What is the ideal balance of voices for a high school chorus? How many of each voice part and in what proportion?

12. How many choruses, and of what types, would you have in the high school choral program? Why?

13. Talk about the role that the chorus plays in developing good public relations for the school.

14. You are meeting a middle school student for the first time. How would you convince him or her to join chorus?

15. You meet a parent of one of your students in the grocery store, and the parent tells you that her child is considering dropping chorus. What would you say to the parent?

Questions you can/should ask in your interview compiled through several sources

1. Why is this position open?

2. Could you describe the teaching schedule for this position?

3. What kind of schedule is in place? Block? Modified block? How is music handled in this type of schedule?

4. How long is the school/professional day? Start and end times? Are faculty expected to stay after the school day?

5. What teaching methodology has been in place in this school?

6. Is there a district-approved music textbook?

7. What is your vision for the music program?

8. What is the school climate like? Do teachers work together? Collegiality?

9. Could I see the room? Get a tour of the school?

10. Is there a room devoted to music, or does music share with other subjects?

11. Is there any traveling required for this position? To how many schools/rooms?

12. What are the music facilities like? What kinds of equipment are available for use?

13. Is Special Education treated as a self-contained class or mainstreamed through all classes?
14. What kinds of expectations are there regarding committee assignments, duties (lunch duty, hall duty, etc.) and before/after school meetings?
15. How much planning time is built into the schedule?
16. What opportunities are available for professional growth/development?
17. Is/are there a staff accompanist?
18. How many performances are required?
19. What kind of budget is available for
 - a. Sheet music
 - b. Equipment/instruments
 - c. Repair, piano tuning
 - d. Accompanists, private teachers, marching band staff
20. Are there stipends for extracurricular assignments (such as jazz band, show choir, studio orchestra, musicals)?
21. What is the length of the contract? 190/205/210/220