

Virtual Interviewing Guidance, Strategies & Resources

With the spread of Coronavirus, many things are uncertain for our schools and the students and families we serve. For school leaders and hiring managers, this crisis comes as the hiring season starts to pick up, meaning that they must not only support existing employees through school closures, but also continue to pursue next year's staffing goals. Ultimately, we know the best teachers and staff are hired early and must do our best to press forward in these uncertain times. Please review the resources below to support your hiring teams to move forward with candidates virtually. This document will continue to be updated.

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Reach out to your HC Manager with any questions, suggestions, or ideas!

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What to determine with your hiring team ahead of time

1. How will the entire subcommittee be part of a virtual interview?
2. Will you use a video conferencing platform or a conference call? Which platform is best?
3. How will we see the candidate teach a demo lesson?
 - a. Send a recording of a lesson ahead of time for review.
 - b. During a video interview, they can do a quick lesson with interviewers as "students."
4. How will we norm around the use of microphones?
 - a. Ask all hiring team members to enter the call on mute.
 - b. Use the chat feature to send messages around the team.
 - c. Develop an order for asking the questions in advance and have team members unmute as the interview progresses.

Virtual Demo Lesson Resources

- [TFA Virtual Lesson](#)
- [Scholastic Video Lesson Tips](#)

- [VIPKid Sample Lesson Platform](#)
- [Exemplar Lesson](#)

Video Conferencing Platforms

- [Google Hangouts Group Video Conferencing](#) - (supported by OIIT)
- [ZOOM Video Conferencing](#) - (supported by OIIT)
- [Blue Jeans Video Conferencing](#)
- [Go to Meeting Video Conferencing](#)
- [EZTalks Video Conferencing](#)

Selecting the Right Video Conferencing Platform:

1. Try several video conferencing platforms to find the one that you are most comfortable using
2. Log into your call software to make sure your account is fully functional.
3. Check for new updates and download any necessary plugins — this takes time and the software may prevent you from calling before the download is complete.
4. Get familiar with the software. In addition to logging on and testing your sound and visual elements, you may also need to patch other callers in, and screen-share documents. As they say, practice makes perfect.
5. Check out this resource from BPS Tech: [Zoom vs. Hangouts: When Should I Use Each Tool?](#)

5 Tips to Conduct an Effective Virtual Interview:

Review these tips with your hiring team prior to any virtual interview. Setting those expectations up front helps ensure candidates experience the same strong interview process they would if you were interviewing them in person.

1. Test Your Tech: The last thing you want is to join that virtual interview and discover that your audio isn't working or that you don't know how to share your screen. This is why it's so important to do a test run ahead of the actual interview. Make sure you know how to work all of the necessary features. Do a sound and video quality test to ensure things are functioning properly.

2. Find a Quiet, Non-Distracting Space: Even though that interview is happening virtually, it still deserves the same level of respect and professionalism that you would commit to any other job interview. You need to find a quiet place where you can give that candidate your undivided attention. Don't choose a room where people will be popping in and out or milling about in the background. Additionally, make sure to ditch your phone and silence any notifications on your computer. Make it a priority to create a distraction-free space where you and that candidate can talk.

3. Be Direct and Honest: Despite your preparation, technical glitches can still occur. If that does happen, don't hesitate to disclose that to the candidate. If the video freezes or the audio skips out and you're unable to hear that person's response, ask them to repeat it. It's far better to be upfront and get the information that you need—rather than politely nodding because you're too embarrassed to admit that you missed something.

4. Remember Your Body Language: As mentioned previously, it might be happening virtually, but this is still a job interview—which means you and your team need to behave professionally. Sit up straight. Make eye contact by looking directly at your camera. Don't get distracted by emails or social media notifications. Remember, this person can still see you, which means your body language does matter. Plus, candidates will likely follow whatever example you set. So, the more professional you are, the more professional they'll be.

5. Empower Your Candidates With Information: Remember all of that important groundwork you did for this virtual interview—such as testing your technology and finding a quiet space? Things run even smoother if your candidates do those very same things.

A day or two ahead of your scheduled interview, send a simple guide to the candidate you'll be interviewing.

This guide can walk them through things they should do to prepare for their interview, any do's or don'ts you want to fill them in on, and any other information you think is relevant.

- For example, do you prefer that they wear headphones?
- Is there a certain video chat app that they need to download?
- Do they need to be told to silence their computer notifications?

Outline everything that they need to do ahead of time. Not only will you calm their nerves a little bit, you'll also set yourself up for a far more productive (not to mention less distracting) interview.

Q&A

Q: What if I was in the process of hiring a new staff member?

A: School-based hires in progress will be delayed until April 27th, unless schools open earlier. Staffing will not be scheduling any new Welcome Sessions. In emergency situations only, Welcome Sessions may be scheduled if warranted, please contact Hannah Hall (hhall@bostonpublicschools.org) and Steven Chen (schen2@bostonpublicschools.org) for more information.

Q: Can I move the interview and hiring process forward virtually?

A: Yes! We encourage hiring teams to continue moving their hiring processes forward. We know the best hires are hired early.

Q: What about demo lessons?

A: We are encouraging teams to conduct these virtually via Zoom or Google Hangouts. Alternatively, hiring teams could request previously taped lessons that candidates have on hand. Hiring teams could also craft school specific assignments to be completed virtually and then debrief on Zoom or Google Hangout interviews. An example assignment would be asking a candidate to craft a lesson plan for a particular standard and submit their plan to the hiring team prior to interviewing. The team could review and then debrief with the candidate across a variety of metrics (i.e. was the lesson cognitively demanding, did the lesson show evidence of well thought out differentiation and scaffolds, are the questions open ended, etc.?)

If you and your teams are exploring other ideas, please let us know, and we can add to this guide!

Q: When will hires be approved?

A: Even though the Staffing Team will no longer be scheduling Welcome Sessions, we will continue approving hires and posting positions as hiring teams move forward on the process. For SY2021 BT3 (ex. teachers, social workers, nurses etc.), we will begin approving hires by March 20. Please ensure you continue following the [Hiring Policies and Guidance](#), [Best Practices](#), and the [Personnel Subcommittee](#) circular.