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SMCPS Interview & Hiring Procedures

I. The Posting Process

The Administrator/Supervisor can submit a requisition to fill a new position or to fill a replacement position through TalentEd (PowerSchool Unified Talent) at <https://stmarymd.tedk12.com/>.

Once the requisition has been approved by all required parties, the position can then be announced via the SMCPS website. <https://www.smcps.org/hr/employment-opportunities>

II. Revising and/or Developing the Position Description & Vacancy Announcement

When positions are newly developed within SMCPS, a position description is written. Please contact the Department of Human Resources, to request a sample of the format used. Be sure to include essential functions and specific requirements that may be unique for that position (certifications required, licenses required, particular tests required, educational or experience requirements, and other skills or abilities). New positions will need to be placed appropriately on a Salary Schedule to reflect months and hours worked and/or level of responsibility, etc. **If the position is Grant Funded, please indicate that as well.** The position description, once approved, will be posted online under Schedule of Classifications & Position Descriptions. When positions within SMCPS are vacated, and need to be refilled, the position description must be reviewed for accuracy. Current position descriptions can be obtained online at <https://www.smcps.org/hr/schedule-of-classifications-position-descriptions>. Please print the position description and indicate proposed revisions, if any. If revisions are necessary, they must be approved by Cabinet before being sent to Human Resources. Vacancy announcements are developed from the Position Descriptions.

The vacancy announcement will include the following:

- Documents requested from the applicant (online application, resume, cover letter, references, certifications, licenses, transcripts, test scores, etc. If specific certifications are required, they will be noted as well. i.e. – Administrator I or II, Certified Electrician, etc.)
- Appropriate placement on the Salary Schedule, if the position is grant funded, number of months worked and when appropriate, hours worked.
- Minimum education and/or experience needed for the position (required or desired).
- Essential functions of the position.
- Other skills or abilities for the position (required or desired).

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Positions are posted according to the negotiated agreements for the appropriate number of days. All positions will be posted utilizing the online application system through the SMCPS website.

IV. Selecting Applicants

Remember, you will need to document any decisions made about applicants during the screening process!

From the applications that are submitted through TalentEd, each application will be reviewed initially by Human Resources to determine if the applicant meets the **minimum qualifications** that are specified in the Vacancy Announcement. Vacancy Announcements are given to the Administrator/Supervisor with the list of qualified internal applicants. Please pay very close attention to the **minimum requirements**. Current benefitted SMCPS employees who meet the **minimum requirements** MUST be granted an interview and considered prior to requesting external applicants. In order to request External applicants, who meet the **minimum requirements**, the Administrator/Supervisor must submit in writing a summary indicating the knowledge, skills, or abilities that internal candidates lacked. Once the request is considered and approved, external candidates will be released by Human Resources to the Administrator/Supervisor to consider for an interview. An Administrator/Supervisor is not required to extend an interview to all external candidates.

V. Compiling the Interview Committee

When compiling the interview committee, the Administrator/Supervisor should include male and female representation when possible. Every effort should be made to develop a racially diverse committee. At a minimum, interview committees should be at least two (2) individuals. These individuals should be knowledgeable of the position that is being interviewed for, and should have administrative or supervisory roles. If an individual who is not an Administrator/Supervisor is serving on an interview committee for a position that is equal to their current position, that individual should be a recognized veteran in that position, or a leader at that level, and approved to serve on the interview committee. If at any time, there would be a conflict of interest with the interviewer and any of the applicants being interviewed, the interviewer should be excused, and replaced with an alternate. All applicants being interviewed should be interviewed by the exact same committee, whenever possible.

The Administrator/Supervisor will serve as the lead. Prior to the interviews beginning, the committee should determine if one person will ask all questions, or if each committee member will

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take turns asking questions. One committee member should be the greeter, and escort the applicants to the interview room, when appropriate. Each committee member should introduce themselves to the applicants, even if they know them previously. It is a good idea to have a printed sheet with the interview committee team members listed, with their titles, and who the lead interviewer is, as this person may receive a thank-you note or follow-up letter from the applicants.

VI. Interviewing and Rating Applicants

The purpose of an interview is to get the applicant to talk about themselves so that you can determine if they are a quality candidate for the position. Your job is not to sell the applicant on the organization, but to listen to what they have to say. Make sure that your questions are as open-ended as they can be. Questions that can be answered with a "Yes" or "No" will not help you to get to know the applicant. The interview is the applicant's opportunity to expand on his or her qualifications, as introduced by the resume and cover letter. They should also have the chance to talk about previous work experience that is applicable to the position for which they are interviewing. **Once the lists of questions are created, use each of them consistently for each and every applicant interviewing for that position.**

As we ask applicants to make proper eye contact with the interview committee, the interview committee should also make proper eye contact with the applicants. Taking notes on the applicants' responses to questions is appropriate, and expected. Please refrain from showing any non-verbal cues that may be interpreted incorrectly by an applicant. Remember to be respectful, and turn-off your cell phone or set it to silent.

Don't fall in love with one applicant! Conduct each interview respectfully, without any preconceived notions. Be fair and consistent with all applicants. Review what you can and cannot ask of applicants before the interviews begin. The following is taken from the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's website: <http://dllr.maryland.gov/oeope/preemp.shtml>

<i>SUBJECT</i>	<i>LAWFUL INQUIRIES/REQUIREMENTS</i>	<i>UNLAWFUL INQUIRIES/REQUIREMENTS</i>
Age	Whether the applicant meets the minimum age requirement set by law; if required as a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification (BFOQ); or After hire, if inquiry serves a legitimate record-keeping purpose.	That applicant state age or date of birth. That applicant produce proof of age (birth certificate, baptismal record). Specifications such as: "young", "college student", "recent college graduate", and "retired person."
Arrests & Convictions	Inquiries about convictions that bear a direct relationship to the job and have not been expunged or sealed by the courts. Consideration should be given to the nature, recentness and rehabilitation.	Inquiries about an applicant's general arrest and conviction record.

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SUBJECT	LAWFUL INQUIRIES/REQUIREMENTS	UNLAWFUL INQUIRIES/REQUIREMENTS
Citizenship, Birthplace	After employment, verification of legal right to work (all new hires).	Whether applicant, parents or spouse are naturalized or native-born U.S citizens. Birthplace of applicant, parents or spouse. Requirement that applicant produce naturalization papers.
Dependents		Inquiries regarding: the number and ages of children; what child care arrangements have been made; family planning.
Disability	Whether applicant is able to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. That applicant demonstrate how she/he would perform the job and with what accommodation(s). After a job offer, but before hire, require medical examination for all similarly situated entering employees.	Requirement that applicant take medical examination or provide information about workers' compensation claim(s) before a job offer. General inquiries into the applicant's state of health or the nature and severity of a disability.
Driver's License	Inquiry if driving is necessary to the job.	Inquiring if all applicants have a valid driver's license regardless of job.
Marital Status		Whether applicant is: single, married, divorced, widowed, etc.; Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms. Inquiries regarding the names and ages of spouse or children.
Military Service	Job related inquiries into military experience in the U.S. Armed Forces or state militia (e.g. branch, occupational specialty).	Inquiries regarding foreign military experience. Whether honorably discharged.
Name	Whether the applicant has used another name (for the purpose of verifying past work record).	Inquiries or comments about the name that would reveal applicant's lineage, national origin, marital status, etc. (e.g. maiden name?) Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.?
National Origin	What languages applicant reads, speaks or writes fluently if relevant to the job or if required as a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification.	Inquiries regarding: applicant's nationality, ancestry, lineage or parentage; nationality of applicant's parents or spouse; maiden name of applicant, wife or mother.
Photograph	May be requested after hire (for identification).	Request before hire.

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SUBJECT	LAWFUL INQUIRIES/REQUIREMENTS	UNLAWFUL INQUIRIES/REQUIREMENTS
Polygraph, Lie Detector		Require test to be taken as a condition of employment.
Professional Associations	Inquiries regarding memberships in job-related clubs and organizations. Applicants may omit those that reveal the race, religion, age, sex, disability, etc. of applicant.	Requesting the names of all organizations, clubs, and associations to which the applicant belongs. Inquiries regarding how the applicant spends his/her spare time.
Race, Color		Inquiries regarding: applicant's race; color of applicant's skin, eyes, hair or other questions directly or indirectly indicating race or color; applicant's height (unless a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification).
References	Inquiring by whom was applicant referred. Requesting names of persons willing to provide professional or character references. Making job related inquiries of references.	Requiring the submission of religious references. Inquiries of references that would elicit information on applicant's race, color, national origin, age, marital status, disability or sexual orientation.
Religion	Inquiries regarding the normal hours of work. After hire, inquiries regarding religious accommodations.	Inquiries regarding applicant's religious denomination or affiliation or religious holidays observed. Any inquiry that would indicate or identify religious customs or holidays observed.
Sex	Inquiry only if required as a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification.	Inquiries regarding: applicant's sex; Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.; if applicant is expecting, planning a family or uses birth control.
Sexual Orientation		Any inquiry concerning an applicant's heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality.

VII. Rating the interview

Using the ratings from the interview questions, and the Interview Quality Scale scoring sheet, rate the applicant. Interviews are a great way to not only listen to the applicant's answers to questions asked, but also to make observations about:

- Interpersonal Skills
 - How do they show their ability to deal with issues in regards to working with others?

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- Are they willing to accept suggestions for improvement and/or accept responsibility for their actions?
- Are they cooperative in nature?
- How do they relate to others?
- Are they critical or negative of former supervisors or employers where they previously worked?
- Do they express regard for others, even if their experience was not a positive one?
- **Communication Skills**
 - Do they have good verbal communication skills?
 - Are they able to easily express their ideas?
 - Do they have good eye contact?
 - Do they express their ideas and thoughts in a convincing manner?
 - Do they use good grammar?
 - Can they present themselves effectively, in a well-organized manner?
- **Intellectual Abilities**
 - Are they able to think and respond spontaneously?
 - Can they focus their concentration to solve problems?
 - Do they have a good understanding of the position and expectations of their role in that position?

What should the interview committee tell the applicant? At no point in the interview, should you neither promise a position to any applicant, nor infer that they will or may be the successful applicant. The final determination for any position remains with the Superintendent and/or Board of Education. Once all interviews are completed, the committee will make their recommendation to the appropriate supervisor. In some instances, follow-up interviews may be conducted.

Once the recommendation is approved, Human Resources will contact the successful applicant with the official offer of employment. If they accept, the other applicants will be notified by Human Resources. For all positions, the applicants not chosen will be notified by email through the TalentEd system.

One of the questions an applicant is likely to ask is when a decision can be expected. Be honest, but also remember that the hiring process is a lengthy process, that can meet with delays. Do not make promises that you cannot support. If they ask you a question that you do not know the answer to, document the question, and let them know someone will contact them with a response. Be sure to follow-up on the response as soon as possible after the interview, or refer it to Human Resources, or the appropriate department.

Composing feedback

Upon completion of the interviews, each member of the committee should complete the scoring of the applicant's responses to the scripted questions and the Interview Quality Scale scoring sheet. Please remember to have each committee member sign the bottom of these forms. The committee should work collaboratively to complete the Strengths and Suggestions for Improving

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Candidacy sheet for each applicant, and the leader of the interview committee should sign this form. Each applicant should have Strengths and Suggestions for Improving Candidacy. All of the feedback forms, and ratings sheets should be returned to Human Resources with the recommendation to hire form.

VIII. Checking references

Each new hire to SMCPS must have 3 references. TalentEd has the ability to send electronic reference checks, if the applicant enters an email address for those references. If there are not 3 electronic references in School Recruiter, or the 3 that are submitted are not acceptable, additional reference checks must be completed. Human Resources will ultimately complete the reference checks, if they have not been completed by the Administrator/Supervisor prior to the applicant's name being recommended to Human Resources to fill a vacancy. No offer of employment will be made to any applicant before they have had satisfactory reference checks completed. All employment is contingent upon successful completion of a full background check and the Child Abuse Sexual Misconduct prior employment verifications.

IX. Selecting the successful applicant

Once interviews are completed, and scores are tabulated for all the applicants interviewed, the committee must make a recommendation for final determination of one candidate (or when asked to do so, a top 3, 4, 5, etc.). The entire application packet as well as the performance during the interview should be considered together. The interview committee will base their recommendation on what was presented to them through the application and interview process, without including personal biases, and must never reflect any form of illegal discriminations.

Recommend the applicant based on his/her merits in relation to the criteria established for the position. Recommend the best qualified applicant. Give all applicants thorough consideration, and treat all applicants with respect and confidentiality.

All Recommendations to Hire as well as the supporting documents (questions, interview quality scale, strengths and suggestions feedback sheet, and total scores for all candidates interviewed) will be submitted using this link:

<https://www.cognitofrms.com/StMarysCountyPublicSchools1/recommendationforhire>.

X. Human Resources Responsibilities

Recommended candidates for employment are contacted by Human Resources, once approved by the Assistant Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and/or Superintendent, when appropriate. Background checks, previous employer Child Abuse/Sexual Misconduct verification forms, orientation trainings, and required completion of necessary forms and paperwork is completed through Human Resources and in conjunction with the Department of Safety and Security as outlined in Board of Education policy GCD. All employment is contingent upon successful completion of a full background check and Child Abuse/Sexual Misconduct verification forms.

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All other candidates that were not selected are notified through the online application system, that they were not selected. Candidates that wish to receive feedback pertaining to their interview should contact Human Resources to schedule an appointment to review feedback provided by the interview committee.

What to send to Human Resources

Human Resources will need the following items upon completion of the interview.

- ✓ Recommendation for Hire Form -
<https://www.cognitofrms.com/StMarysCountyPublicSchools1/recommendationforhire>
 - The form is sent to Human Resources and includes the Position Title, Requisition ID#, successful applicant's name, gender, and race, and how many reference checks have been completed on the applicant. All of the names, genders, and races of all other applicants that were interviewed, need to be listed in order of ratings (highest to lowest) should the first applicant decline the position. There is a box that can be selected if the committee does not want to offer the position to anyone else that was interviewed. Lastly, there is a place for additional comments to Human Resources.
- ✓ A copy of the questions asked during the interview for all applicants.
- ✓ The individual interview committee members' rating sheet for the questions.
- ✓ The individual interview committee members' Interview Quality Scale scoring sheets.
- ✓ The interview committee's Strengths and Suggestions for Improving Candidacy evaluation for each applicant.
- ✓ The interview committee's overall scoring of all applicants interviewed.