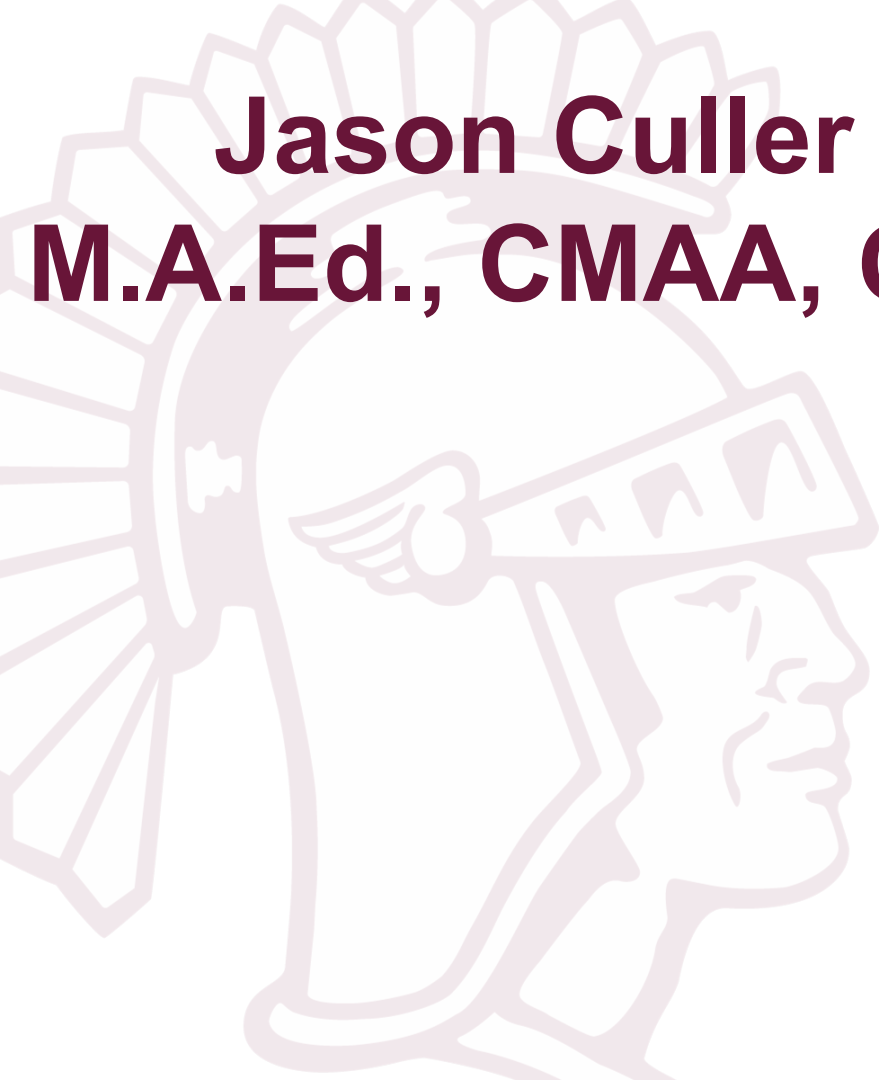


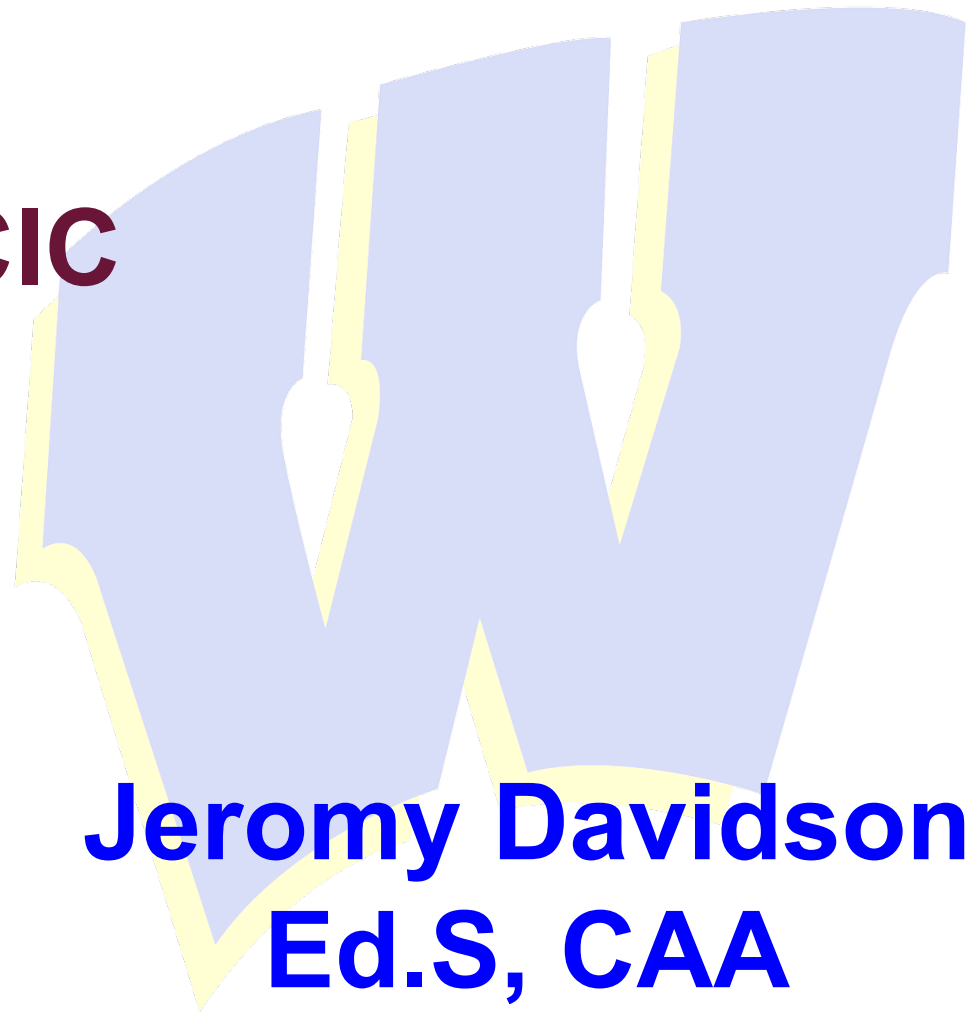


IMPROVING YOUR

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES



Jason Culler
M.A.Ed., CMAA, CIC



Jeromy Davidson
Ed.S, CAA

JOB OPENING

When you have a position open within your district, your desire is to fill it as soon as possible with the most highly qualified individual you can find.....How do you go about doing that???

ACQUIRING THE BEST CANDIDATE

4 Phases of Acquiring the best Candidate to fulfill the vacancy:

- 1. Write a complete/detailed job description-publicize it, publish it, share it, post it.**
- 2. Search through and find the best resumes**
- 3. Vetting the candidate-Social Media Posts, telephone calls, emails, etc....**
- 4. Narrow down the possible candidates**

FORMING A COMMITTEE

- **Community Stakeholders**
- **Administration**
- **Booster Club President/Member**
- **AD, or designee**
- **Confidentiality Agreement between members.**

SAMPLE

SKILLS YOUR CANDIDATE SHOULD POSSES

1. **HARD SKILLS**-are those skills that are easily quantified-i.e. degree, computer programming, typing skills, and fluency in foreign language.
2. **SOFT SKILLS**-are those skills that are more subjective-i.e. communication, flexibility, leadership, motivation, patience, persuasion, problem-solving abilities, teamwork, time management, and work ethic.

HARD SKILLS vs. SOFT SKILLS

- **Hard skills can be taught.**
- **Soft skills are more an inherent part of a person's character and therefore more difficult to learn on the job.**
- **How do you coerce the desired soft-skills out of the candidate in an interview?**
- **By carefully wording your questions and by listening for certain types of attitudes and responses, you will find out who will fit the position and your school climate/culture on all levels.**

COMMUNICATION

- Be cognizant of candidates communication skills through e-mail, phone conversations, & creeping on their social media pages.
- Ask open-ended questions to gain a greater understanding of how this person will communicate with others.
- Try to start with a broad ice-breaker question such as: *Tell me about yourself or tell me why you feel you are a good candidate for this job.*
- Look for important communication qualities such as eye contact, body posture: unfolded arms & legs & a forward leading position.
- To assess communication skills further, you can ask: *Describe a time you had a problem with a supervisor and what you did to resolve it.*
- Does this candidate value good communication? If they did nothing to resolve the problem then that can be an indication of poor communication skills. Don't evaluate the candidate based upon the problem, look at ways the candidate used soft skills to resolve the issue.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

- Many employers miss clues during the interview that a candidate will eventually fail as an employee. Most new employees don't fail because of lack of skill. Rather, they fail because their personalities and their attitudes are not a good match for the organization.
- A positive attitude is a quality closely linked with professionalism.
- No matter the position you are hiring for, you want someone who exudes excitement about working for your school.
- Enthusiastic candidates will carry the enthusiasm over into their classroom, field, or court.
- We believe that it will have a positive impact on their job performance.
- Some questions we might ask to coerce the desired soft-skill are: **How does this position fit into your career plan?**
- The candidate's response will reveal what they know about your school, the school culture, and whether they see a position with your school as a stepping stone or as a place to call home.

COOPERATION/TEAMWORK

- There will be times when the candidate will work independently, but you want to make sure that they can work well with their colleagues as well.
- One way to ascertain this skill is by asking: **"Tell me about a time when you completed a group project at your previous position."**
- Ask follow-up questions if necessary about the size of the group, the responsibilities your candidate had and the scope of the project. Also ask if the project was successful and why or why not?
- Another way to gauge how well a candidate works with others is by asking: **"When do you enjoy working in a group setting and when do you prefer to handle a project independently?"**

GOAL-ORIENTED

- Look for an employee who sees the new position as a challenge.
- You will get the best job performance from an individual who sees the new job as a fulfillment of a goal rather than just a means to a paycheck or as another listing on a resume.
- Try to find out how goal-oriented the candidate is by asking them a few simple questions such as:
 - How do you measure your own success?
 - Describe your short-term or long-term career goals.
 - Tell me how your last job fit or did not fit into this plan.
 - How will this job meet your career goals?
- Try to find ways to have the candidate tell you about their career goals. You might ask: "Where do you see yourself in five years?"
- The response you get to this question will reveal if the candidate expects to stay with your school and will show how much he or she already knows about your school.

FLEXIBILITY

- We define flexibility as the ability to adapt to different circumstances and different people and to handle unforeseen events with a sense of calm and grace.
- Successful schools that have been able to thrive during the last economic downturn in Oklahoma have done so because of the flexibility of their employees.
- As a result, flexibility is more critical than ever. To determine how set they are in their ways we ask them to **“Describe a situation in which they had to adjust to changes over which they had no control.”**

DEPENDABILITY

- Find a candidate who will show up on time and give their all too every aspect of their day.
- Find someone who complies with your policies and procedures and is trustworthy with school resources.
- Trustworthiness is one of the most important soft skills, yet probably the most difficult to measure in an interview.
- What we look for from the candidate is how they have demonstrated dependability with prior performance. Our opening question related to dependability might be: **How would you describe your work ethic?**
- Follow that question up by asking the candidate to **“Discuss a situation in which they had to go beyond the normal call of duty to get a job done. Ask for clarification on the candidate's job responsibilities when this incident occurred if necessary.”**
- Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to dependability questions. Simply try to gauge how they reacted in certain previous situations to help you determine how they will handle your workplace. Don't worry about fabricated scenarios. With clear, direct follow-up questions, you should be able to expose these as made-up examples.

INTEGRITY

- Integrity & dependability are two of the most prominent soft skills to look for.
- Schools want to hire people who conduct business ethically. The best employees are ones who are honest and upfront in all aspects of their employment.
- Apart from diligently checking the candidate's references, how can you assess the applicant's integrity? You can ask:
 1. "Tell me about a time when your integrity was challenged. How did you handle it?"
 2. "What would you do if an employer or a colleague asked you to do something unethical?"
 3. "Have you ever experienced a career setback or loss because you did what you felt was right?"
 4. "Are there any work situations when honesty could be inappropriate?"

CREATIVITY

- The phrases "thinking outside of the box" or "drawing outside the lines" have been used to the point of being meaningless clichés, but being able to think creatively is indeed a highly-valued soft skill in today's job search.
- Administrators are looking for versatile team members who can apply their skills to a variety of different situations and can solve unexpected problems that come up with ease and confidence. Some questions we've asked to try and help us determine a candidate's creativity:
 1. *"We approach the topic by commenting that our school, along with a number of other schools locally, continually strive to do more with less. We lead to the question where we ask the candidate to discuss a time he or she helped a district faster, smarter, more efficient or less expensive."*
- Your leading candidates will be excited with this question and eager to share their creative ideas.
 1. Another idea could be to ask the candidates *to "share a time they had to solve a tough problem at work. Ask for as much detail as possible, including the deadlines and the budget for the project."*

ORGANIZATION

- A desirable candidate for us is one who exhibits strong organizational skills and is excellent at time management. Although our culture has admired the concept of multi-tasking, research has revealed that doing many tasks at once does not mean doing them well. When you try to accomplish two dissimilar tasks, your brain cannot process both and encode them fully into your short-term memory.
- When information doesn't make it into the short-term memory, the brain cannot transfer into long-term memory for later recall.
- Here are some interview questions we employ to help us gauge a candidate's organizational skills:
 - **“Before you begin a new project, what steps do you take to get organized?”**
 - **“How do you prioritize your tasks in an average workday?”**
 - **“What steps have you taken (or would you take) when a project appears it will not make its deadline?”**

INTELLIGENCE

- Emotional intelligence, the person's ability to function within social or group settings, is one of our most desired soft skills we look for in a candidate. This will determine how well they interact with you, your team, your students, and parents.
- When you are faced with multiple resumes from tons of qualified candidates, how can you determine who has the intelligence for the job?
- An intelligent candidate has the confidence to think on their feet. They don't get bored because they are always coming up with new ideas, and they have the ability to handle complicated situations whenever the need arises. An intelligent employee is innovative and adaptable to different surroundings.
- Here are some questions to utilize to help identify a candidate who has the level of thinking you need for your school and is not just proficient at a certain job skill.
 - *“From everything you know about Jenks, share how you will be able to make a contribution.”*
 - *“What motivates you in your work?”*
 - *“What frustrates you in your work?”*
 - *“How will you continue to learn and grow in this position?”*

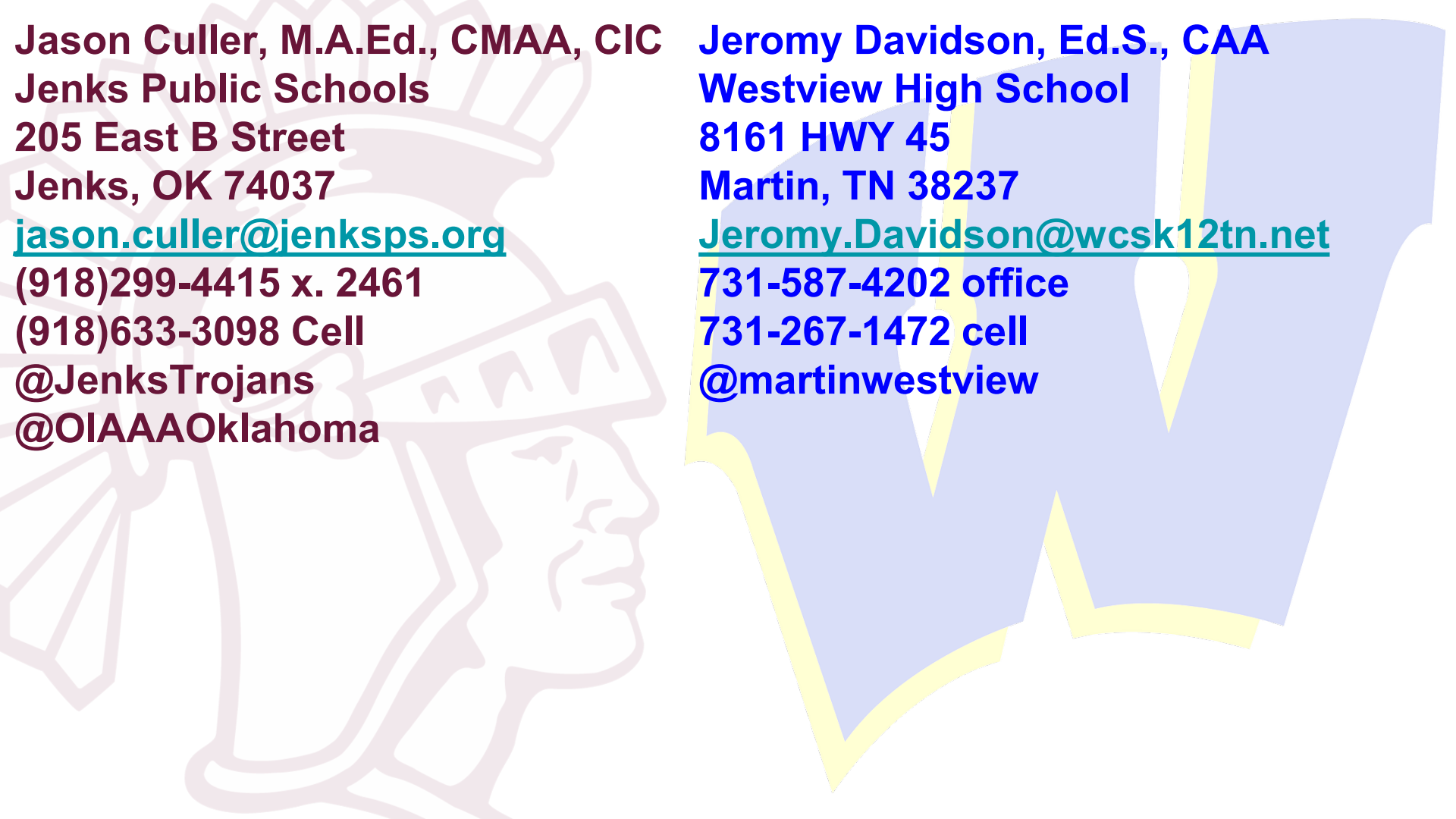
ENDING THE INTERVIEW

- Be sure to leave time at the end of your interview to ask your job candidate if he or she has any questions for you.
- A strong candidate will have questions that reveal that he or she has been listening carefully to what you say or don't say in the interview.
- This is the point in the interview when you can have a real conversation with the candidate.
- Listen for bold questions such as "Now that we have met and had a chance to talk, is there anything you see that would keep me from qualifying for this position?" or "What do you like about working here and what do you dislike about working here?" If your school has recently made some changes or some headlines, a good candidate will ask about those changes.
- A candidate who is bold enough to turn the tables, in a pleasant way, is someone worth noticing.

ENDING THE INTERVIEW

A few final thoughts:

- **Take notes during the interview. First of all, especially if you are interviewing many candidates, your memory can fail you, and notes will help you keep your thoughts straight. When an interviewer takes notes, it also conveys a sense of professionalism and thoroughness about the whole process.**
- **In addition, flexibility is not just for the candidate but for the interviewer as well. If a candidate gives you some unclear or incomplete responses, or interesting ones, ask appropriate follow-up questions to clarify whatever you do not understand.**



Jason Culler, M.A.Ed., CMAA, CIC
Jenks Public Schools
205 East B Street
Jenks, OK 74037

jason.culler@jenksps.org

(918)299-4415 x. 2461

(918)633-3098 Cell

@JenksTrojans

@OIAAAOklahoma

Jeromy Davidson, Ed.S., CAA
Westview High School
8161 HWY 45
Martin, TN 38237

Jeromy.Davidson@wcsk12tn.net

731-587-4202 office

731-267-1472 cell

@martinwestview

Jenks Public Schools
Interview Committee Confidentiality Statement

Open Position

I hereby understand the legal importance and the Jenks School District's expectations to maintain strict confidentiality regarding any and all information related to personnel interviews. By agreeing to participate in the interview process, I hereby agree to keep any and all information related to the applicants and interviews confidential. I hereby agree to only share information with individuals directly involved with this personnel selection process.

Name of Committee Member (Please Print)

Signature

Date

Administrator – Committee Chair (Please Print)

Signature

Date

Return confidentiality statements with interview statements to Human Resources.