



Best Practices:

Selection and Hiring for Charter Schools

A step-by-step guide for improving selection and hiring processes

Best Practices: Selection and Hiring for Charter Schools

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HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The [Indiana Charter School Network](#), in partnership with the [Illinois Network of Charter Schools](#), contracted with [EdFuel](#) for writing and tool development on best practices in selection and hiring. This resource is meant to provide an overview of key principles around best practices for selection and hiring along with ready-to-use, easy-to-implement tools.

I. COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE HIRING PROCESS

Hiring high quality teachers can be an immense challenge given the national teacher shortage and increasing attrition rates. The most effective charter networks across the country are working to overcome this challenge by “hiring right the first time” to ensure high quality, strong fit teachers who are more likely to be retained. To do this well, charter networks are strengthening their hiring processes to ensure strong candidates are vetted and hired quickly.

Hiring processes can and should vary so that they represent the authenticity of each charter school and network. However, based on national best practices, there are a number of key principles that should live in every selection process to ensure the highest quality hires possible:

Key Principle	Description	Details & Aligned Resources
Clearly Defined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly lay out the process for the internal team and candidates ahead of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample Candidate Email, <i>EdFuel</i>
Aligned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process should be clearly aligned to a hiring profile and rubrics (or scorecard) and should reflect the priorities identified in the profile The structure, alignment, and use of rubrics is an initial step to support organizations in accounting for bias in the hiring process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample MS ELA Hiring Profile, <i>EdFuel</i> How Rocky Mountain Prep Uses Scorecards to Hire the Right People, <i>CSGF</i> From Intention to Action: Building Diverse, Inclusive Teams in Education to Deepen Impact, <i>Koya Leadership Partners and Education Pioneers</i>
Quick, but Thorough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once in the pipeline the hiring process should take approximately 4 weeks As technology progresses we also encourage organizations to consider on-demand video interviewing (through platforms such as VidCruiter) that can speed up the process 	<p>Should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Resume Review Phone/Video Screen Sample Teach In-Person Interview Reference Checks <p>Reports demonstrating average time to hire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to Hire by Industry in the U.S., <i>DHI Group, Inc.</i> Average Time to Hire Instructional Staff, <i>Achievement First</i>
Serves as a Recruitment Tactic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process should highlight your organization’s Employee Value Proposition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons from Online Dating: Defining Your School’s Employee Value Proposition, <i>EdFuel</i>

Sample Hiring Processes in Action

Below are two sample hiring processes. These processes vary given what specific charters are looking for in candidates, however, they each include the key components outlined above.

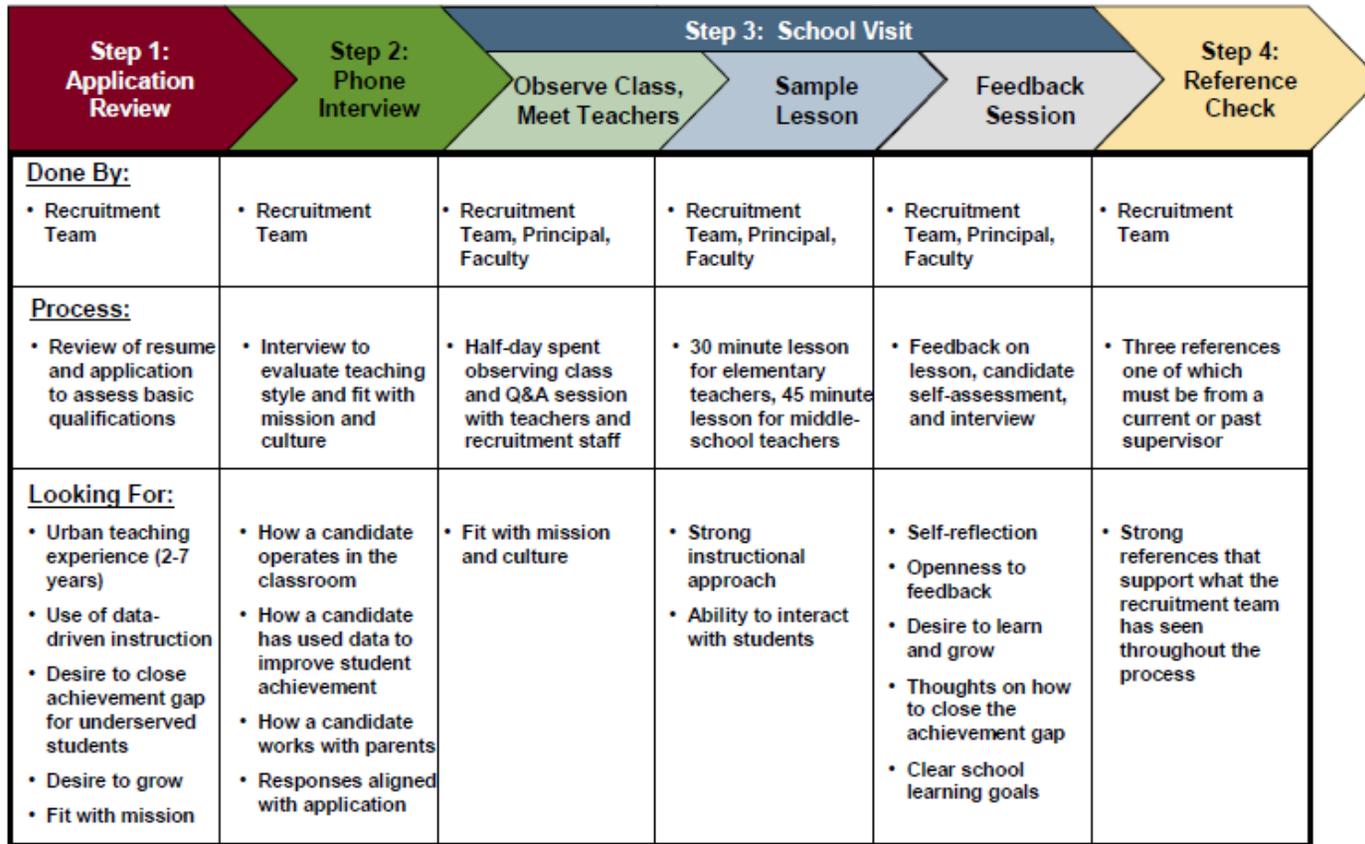
SAMPLE PROCESS I	
Stage	Description
Resume review	Initial review of applicant resumes to determine whether they will move to a phone/video screen.
30 min on-demand video/phone interview	Candidates are either invited to participate in a 30 minute on-demand video/phone interview or are sent a standard rejection email.
Sample Teach/In Person interview	Candidates are invited to conduct a sample teach at the school. The sample teach is accompanied by a 60 minute in-person interview.
Reference check	Candidate references are checked following the sample teach / in-person interview.
Final interview	If necessary, a final interview is conducted to probe any areas that have questions or concerns.

SAMPLE PROCESS II	
Stage	Description
Resume and sample LP review	Initial review of applicant resumes and sample lesson plans to determine whether they will move to a phone/video screen.
30 min on-demand video/phone interview	Candidates are either invited to participate in a 30 minute on-demand video/phone interview or are sent a standard rejection email.
Sample Teach/In Person interview	Candidates are invited to conduct a sample teach at the school. The sample teach is accompanied by a 60 minute in-person interview.
Team interview	Additional team members interview candidates.
Reference check	Candidate references are checked following the sample teach / in-person interview.

 Denotes a difference from Sample Process I (i.e. includes a sample LP review)

Case Study: Achievement First Sample Hiring Process

Application and Selection Process Diagram



If a candidate makes it through the entire process, a job offer will be extended by the hiring Principal

II. HIRING PROFILE

One of the keys to a strong selection process is pre-identifying the non-negotiable knowledge, skills, and mindsets that are critical for success in a specific position. If an organization does not identify these non-negotiables ahead of time they run the risk of making hiring decisions based on subjective feelings. This can lead to quality and equity issues in the hiring pool. A hiring profile is the anchor that guides and aligns the entire hiring process. If you need support in identifying key competencies reference EdFuel’s [Blueprint for Success competency maps](#).

Inputs for Hiring Profile: Includes key inputs and a space for brainstorming.

<p>School Culture / Core Values <i>What are the top three components of the school culture you wish to create? Make sure these are aligned your school core values.</i></p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>	<p>Core Teacher Responsibilities <i>List the core responsibilities of teachers at your school. Do responsibilities differ across teachers? If so, how? What will this teacher be responsible for?</i></p>
<p>Teacher Daily Schedule <i>Map out a sample daily schedule of a teacher.</i></p>	<p>Skills/Competencies on Existing Team <i>What skillsets do you already have on your team? What skills/competencies does that mean this position needs?</i></p>

Hiring Profile Template: Provides space for an organization to outline the key knowledge, skills, mindsets, and additional information based on the inputs for a specific role. Arguably the most important and helpful component of the hiring profile is the prioritization section. Often organizations try to find the “perfect fit” for a role, rather than finding a person who brings the most important attributes for success in a role.

Position	Category	Notes
	Core Knowledge	
	Core Skills/Competencies	
	Core Mindsets	
	Additional Important Qualifications/Experience	
Prioritization		
<p>Based on your reflections, what are the top two most important qualities of this hire? Prioritize only two.</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>Based on the two priorities, what two or three qualities are you most willing to sacrifice? Why does this feel appropriate?</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p>		

 Sample Hiring Profile: Teacher

Position	Category	Notes
Middle School ELA Teacher	Core Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MS ELA pedagogy & content knowledge: previous success in role How to support low level readers
	Core Skills/Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build relationships with students, families, colleagues Classroom management Differentiation Culturally responsive pedagogy Ability to work as part of a team (co-teacher)
	Core Mindsets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth mindset All students can achieve (high expectations) Deep belief in diversity, equity, and inclusiveness Collaboration makes us stronger
	Additional Important Qualifications/Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certified in MS ELA 2+ years of teaching experience

Prioritization

Based on your reflections, what are the top two most important qualities of this hire? Prioritize only two.

1. Previous success as a MS ELA teacher 
2. Growth Mindset 

Based on the two priorities, what two or three qualities are you most willing to sacrifice? Why does this feel appropriate?

3. Culturally responsive pedagogy: We can teach this.
4. Classroom management: We have a very clear structure and strong management coaches.

Note: Wherever you see the anchor image throughout the document you will note alignment to top line hiring profile traits. 

III. EFFECTIVE PHONE/VIDEO SCREENS

Key Components of an Effective Phone/Video Screen:

Component	Description
Standardized	Should have a standard interview guide and accompanying rubric
Aligned to Hiring Profile	Questions should be aligned to the hiring profile
Role Play	Include at least one role play (topic should be consistent across all candidates)
Clearly Framed	Frame the interview for the candidate (what to expect, timing, who will be involved, note-taking, etc.)
Future Looking	Ask the candidate if they have any timing constraints at the culmination of the interview (i.e. other job offers)

SAMPLE PHONE/VIDEO INTERVIEW GUIDE: TEACHER

Time	Core Value / Skill Focus Area	Question	Interview Notes
3 min	Opening	<p>I'm really looking forward to our conversation today. I want to quickly go over the structure and answer any questions you have before diving in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We're going to plan for about 30 minutes, and I'd like to leave a few minutes at the end to answer any questions you have about our organization or the role. Feel free to stop me at any point if you have clarifying questions or if I'm unclear. I'm going to be taking notes as you talk so I can make sure the rest of our team is looped in, and I just wanted to flag that for you in case you hear typing in the background. Do you have any questions for me? 	

10 min	 MS ELA Experience	As you know, we are hiring for a Middle School English teacher. Tell me about your previous role as a MS ELA teacher. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were your goals? • What were the outcomes? • How did you perform in relation to your peers? 	
7 min	 Interactions with families and growth mindset	We're going to shift course a little bit and go into a role play. Here's the situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent stops by your classroom to discuss her child's academic progress. You just gave a mid-year assessment back that her son scored a 65% on. You have met his mom once, at back to school night, but haven't spoken to her since. I'd like to role play the first few minutes of the conversation you have with her. If you need a few seconds to gather your thoughts, that's completely fine. Just jump right in whenever you're ready. <p>Debrief of Exercise: I'd like to talk about the role play you completed. How do you feel like you did? What did you do well? What would you have done differently?</p> <p>Interviewer: Share specific feedback, gauge their reaction, ask what their next steps would be</p> <p><If time>: Describe your previous relationship with families. How did that compare to the expectations? To your peers?</p>	
5 min	Collaboration / Community	If you were given this position, what would be the first 3 actions you would take in July/August to get ready for the school year? Why did you select those three areas? <p>Interview: Assess for the extent to which they bring up getting to know students, parents, staff members, etc. and how detailed they are about what they would do to build relationships and establish community.</p>	
Up to 5 min	Closing / Questions	Is there anything else that you think might be helpful for me to know? Do you have any questions for me? <p>Interviewer: share what the structure of the hiring process looks like. Ask the candidate if they have any timeline constraints (e.g. if they are in the process for other roles and need to know by a certain time)</p>	

 **SAMPLE PHONE/VIDEO INTERVIEW RUBRIC: TEACHER**

Category	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Meets Expectations (3)	Partially Meets Expectations (2)	Does Not Meet Expectations (1)
 Previous Success as a MS ELA teacher	Demonstrates an exceptional understanding of and results in MS ELA	Demonstrates a clear understanding of and results in MS ELA	Somewhat demonstrates a clear understanding of and results in MS ELA	Does not demonstrate a clear understanding of or results in MS ELA
Interactions with Families	Meets expectations and shows a unique ability to invest families	Demonstrates ability to positively build relationships with families	Somewhat demonstrates ability to positively build relationships with families	Does not demonstrate ability to positively build relationships with families
 Growth Mindset	Meets expectations and demonstrates an above-average willingness to improve	Demonstrates willingness to grow and improve	Somewhat demonstrates willingness to grow and improve	Does not demonstrate willingness to grow and improve
Collaboration / Community	Meets expectations and demonstrates inclination to build community / collaborate with multiple stakeholders	Demonstrates inclination to build community / collaborate with at least one group of stakeholders	Somewhat demonstrates inclination to build community / collaborate with at least one group of stakeholders	Does not demonstrate inclination to build community / collaborate with at least one group of stakeholders

Overall Assessment			
Overall Rating			
Move forward in the process?	Yes	No	Unsure?
Areas to Probe			

IV. EFFECTIVE SAMPLE TEACH

Key components of an effective sample teach:

Component	Description
Real Students	Whenever possible the sample teach should be done with real students to assess how the teacher interacts and builds relationships
Aligned to Hiring Profile	Assessment of sample teach should be aligned to hiring profile
Rubric-based	Assessment of the sample teach should be based on the organization's teaching rubric. This provides clarity for both the evaluators and the teacher in regards to what the instructional expectations will be
Assess Self-Awareness	After the sample teach, ask the teacher for their reflections first (strengths/areas for growth) to assess their self-awareness and reflectiveness
Share Feedback	Share feedback with the teacher (strengths/areas for growth) and ask him/her what resonates about the feedback (based on rubric)
"Go Again"	Ask the teacher to redo a portion of the lesson to assess growth mindset and ability to implement feedback

[Sample teach rubric](#) from West Denver Preparatory via TNTP's Teacher Talent Toolbox

V. EFFECTIVE IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS

Key components of effective in-person interviews

Component	Description
Standardized	Should have a standard interview guide and accompanying rubric
Aligned to Hiring Profile	Questions should be aligned to the hiring profile
Team	Should be led by a number of team members, including someone who is doing/has done the role you're hiring for, to get varying perspectives and account for bias
Role Play	Include at least one role play (topic should be consistent across all candidates)
Clearly Framed	Frame the interview for the candidate (what to expect, timing, who will be involved, note-taking, etc.)
Future Looking	Share any updates on hiring timeline at the culmination of the interview

SAMPLE FINAL INTERVIEW GUIDE: TEACHER

Time	Core Value / Skill Focus Area	Question	Owner	Interview Notes
5 min	Opening	<p>We're really looking forward to our conversation today! I want to quickly go over the structure, and answer any questions you have before diving in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We've planned for about 90 minutes, and I'd like to leave plenty of time at the end to answer any questions you have about our school or the role. Feel free to stop us at any point if you have clarifying questions or if we're unclear. We're going to be taking notes as you talk so we can make sure the rest of our team is looped in, and I just wanted to flag that for you in case you're wondering why we have computers with us. 	Principal	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have any questions for us? 		
5 min	Hiring Process	<p>Before we fully dive in, I'd love to hear how the hiring process has been for you so far? How has it felt?</p> <p><i>Assess reflectiveness, positivity, etc.</i></p>	Principal	
25 min	 Previous Success as a MS ELA teacher	<p>Given that you haven't yet had the chance to speak with everyone here, we'd love to have you start by talking us through your previous experiences as a MS ELA teacher.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were your goals? How did you perform in relation to them? In relation to your peers? <Probe all previous teaching roles, if none, probe experience in college or coursework> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you plan? How do you approach long-term planning? How about short-term planning? How did you plan your lessons so that you were meeting the needs of all of the students in your class? How do assessments fit into your overall lesson planning? 	Principal	
10 min	 MS ELA Content Knowledge	<p>Tell me about a specific lesson you felt was very successful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was the objective? What were the activities/how did you teach the lesson? How do you know it was so successful? What you do differently if you had to teach it again? Why was that lesson important? 	Team Member 1	
10 min	 Growth Mindset	<p>Tell me about a time when you received constructive feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was the feedback? What was your initial reaction? What did you do with the feedback? Did it have an impact on your work? <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell me about another time you received constructive feedback. 	Team Member 2	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell me about a challenging project you've worked on. How did you approach it? 		
10 min	Classroom Management	<p>Tell us about a time when you had a student who was continually disrupting class. What did you do?</p> <p>Follow Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you think might have been the cause of the misbehavior? What challenges did you face as you attempted to remedy the situation? 	Team Member 1	
10 min	Parent/Community	<p><i>We are going to role-play this next scenario.</i></p> <p><i>Role-play:</i> One of your seventh-grade students, Jeremy, has been a persistent behavior disruption in class. You have observed him taking things from other students, calling you names when you are turned to the chalkboard, etc. In several instances, you have disciplined Jeremy by giving him lunch detention and separating his desk from other students. He has not improved. Today, his mother is at school because Jeremy has told her that you have been picking on him and separating him from the rest of the class for no reason and she is very upset.</p> <p><i>I'll be Jeremy's mother. Begin whenever you are ready.</i></p> <p>Debrief Role Play (assess self-awareness):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What went well? What would you do differently? Share feedback 	Principal	
5 min	Personal Responsibility/ Problem solving	It is the first day of school, and you go to your classroom and find that you have no books. What do you do? And then what? And if after a month, there were still no books, what would you do then?	Team Member 2	
10 min	Closing / Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there anything else that you think might be helpful for me to know? Do you have any questions for me? You should hear from us within the next XX days. 	Principal	

 **SAMPLE FINAL INTERVIEW RUBRIC (TEACHER)**

Category	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Meets Expectations (3)	Partially Meets Expectations (2)	Does Not Meet Expectations (1)
 Previous Success as a MS ELA teacher	Demonstrates an exceptional understanding of and results in MS ELA	Demonstrates a clear understanding of and results in MS ELA	Somewhat demonstrates a clear understanding of and results in MS ELA	Does not demonstrate a clear understanding of or results in MS ELA
 Growth Mindset	Meets expectations and demonstrates an above-average willingness to improve	Demonstrates willingness to grow and improve	Somewhat demonstrates willingness to grow and improve	Does not demonstrate willingness to grow and improve
Classroom Management	Demonstrates ability to manage a classroom with clear expectations and a firm, yet positive demeanor and shows a unique ability to invest students in systems	Demonstrates ability to manage a classroom with clear expectations and a firm, yet positive demeanor	Somewhat demonstrates ability to manage classroom with clear expectations and a firm, yet positive demeanor	Does not demonstrate ability to manage classroom with clear expectations and a firm, yet positive demeanor
Interactions with families	Meets expectations and shows a unique ability to invest families	Demonstrates ability to positively build relationships with families	Somewhat demonstrates ability to positively build relationships with families	Does not demonstrate ability to positively build relationships with families
Personal Responsibility/ Problem Solving	Demonstrates ability to take action and think outside of the box to address challenges and shows unique ability to influence others	Demonstrates ability to take action and think outside of the box to address challenges	Somewhat demonstrates ability to take action and think outside of the box to address challenges	Does not demonstrate ability to take action and think outside of the box to address challenges

Overall Assessment			
Overall Rating			
Move forward in the process?	Yes	No	Unsure?
Areas to Probe			

VI. REFERENCE CHECKS

Reference checks are a key component of an effective hiring process and yet are often overlooked, undervalued, or even ignored given time and capacity constraints. Below are some key best practices and principles to ensure reference checks lead to strong hires.

Best Practice	Principles	What Could This Look Like?
Gather Key Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a “nice to have”, but a critical resource to use as an opportunity to gather information about your candidate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a scale of 1-10 to gather hard data (i.e. On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate this person’s strategic planning skills and why?) Sample Reference Check Questions, CWU The Reference Check: More than a Formality, Bridgespan
Align to Hiring Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional opportunity to assess the candidate against the top line hiring profile criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategically align questions to the top 2-3 hiring profile criteria
Seek Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather feedback from all who interviewed the candidate to determine concerns and any additional information needed from references 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use this information as the basis of the reference check questions The Right Way to Check Someone’s References, Harvard Business Review
Set the Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set the tone in the reference check by sharing positive feedback about the candidate Share the benefits of having as much information as possible and understanding that no candidate is perfect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft a script ahead of time with key information to set the tone appropriately

 **SAMPLE REFERENCE CHECK GUIDE**

Topic	Script	Notes
<p>Introduction</p> 	<p>Thanks for agreeing to speak with me about your experience working with _____. My name is _____ and I am the hiring manager for our organization. Before we start, I'd like to give you a quick overview of our organization and the position we are considering this candidate for.</p> <p><OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATION>: We're a single site charter school that is focused on serving all students. We have a large population of students with special needs and each classroom has two adults. We are in our third year of operation and so operate much like a start-up where we have a small staff and are all hands-on deck.</p> <p><OVERVIEW OF HIRING PROFILE>: This candidate is a finalist for one of our MS ELA lead teacher positions. This lead teacher must be a team-player who can work effectively with a co-teacher as they will be in the classroom together every day. They must have a deep belief that all students can achieve, especially given the context of our student population, and they must have a track record of success when it comes to teaching MS ELA.</p> <p><SET THE TONE>: We believe that this candidate could be a strong fit for this role because they have demonstrated _____ throughout our process. We also know that no candidate is perfect and so we like to gather as much information as possible to confirm whether they have a high chance of success in the role.</p> <p>Please tell me a little bit about yourself and how you know this candidate. (How long, in what context? How often were you in contact, etc.?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How you would characterize your experience working with this candidate? 	
<p>Overall Strengths and Weaknesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What parts of this job sound most like something this candidate might succeed in? • Can you describe this candidate's greatest strengths? What words come to mind in describing this candidate? 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you had to pick out two pieces of the job where you think this candidate might not be as strong or might need some development, what would those be? 	
Skills/Traits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was this candidate's greatest achievement in the time you worked together? What impact has the candidate had on the organization? In their department? Tell me about a time when you were not entirely thrilled with this candidate's performance. In my experience, I've seen some people who are more uptight and organized, if a little prickly, and some who are more laid-back and friendly, though maybe not always hitting deadlines – which sounds most like this candidate? 	
 Rankings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On a scale of 1-10 how good would this candidate be at building relationships with students and families? How well do they listen? How do they build consensus? On a scale of 1-10 how good would this candidate be at delivering high quality MS ELA lessons for ALL students? On a scale of 1-10 how does this candidate do when faced with a challenge (i.e. a challenging student, a tough schedule, etc.)? On a scale of 1-10 how well does this candidate do when given constructive feedback? On a scale of 1-10 how well does this candidate work as part of a team? With a co-teacher? How would this candidate rank compared to people in similar positions – would you say about average, a little better than average, top quarter, top 10%, top 1%, or the best ever? What makes you say that? What should we know about this candidate if we're going to manage him/her effectively? If we imagine that it's six months from now and I've hired this candidate but it's not working out, why do you think that would be? 	
Wrap up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, how would you rate this candidate's likelihood of success in this role on a scale of 1-10? Is there anything else you would want to know about this candidate if you were in my shoes? 	

VII. CLOSING

Many of these resources have been compiled or created using open source material and guidance from a number of organizations in the education sector. A number of best practices have been pulled from:

- Achievement First
- Charter School Growth Fund
- TNTP, [Teacher Talent Toolbox](#)
- Bridgespan
- New Schools Venture Fund

We thank all of the organizations across the talent ecosystem that are working to provide high quality open source materials to schools, networks, and districts across the country.

If you have any questions, please reach out to info@edfuel.org.

VIII. APPENDIX

Below you can find links to Word versions of all sample tools provided. If you have any questions, please reach out to info@edfuel.org.

- [Sample Hiring Profile Template](#)
- [Sample Phone Interview Guide and Rubric](#)
- [Sample Final Interview Guide and Rubric](#)
- [Sample Reference Check Guide](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The Indiana Charter School Network (formerly Network for Quality Education) serves as a “help desk” to its member schools by keeping them informed of policy updates and operational issues. ICSN works closely with the Institute for Quality Education team, in the development of policy positions to be shared with policymakers, to ensure our charter school members are represented well at the state level.



The Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS) is dedicated to the improvement of education by establishing high-quality charter public schools that transform lives and communities. As the voice of the Illinois charter schools, INCS advocates for legislation on behalf of the charter sector, provides support to strengthen charter schools, and influences education policy for the benefit of all public school students.



EdFuel is a mission-driven, national non-profit that provides talent management support tailored to the education sector. We support single site schools, charter networks, traditional districts, and education nonprofits with talent management needs of all types.