

Interviewing Faculty, Staff, and Administration

Pam Stephens

One of the most common closes to a job interview is the familiar, “Do you have questions for us?” Don’t let this opportunity escape—it is the perfect segue into finding out exactly how the faculty, staff, and administration feel about the importance of art on their campus. It is also an opportunity for you to determine the depth of understanding about art teaching at the school.

The response to this question should be well-planned and posed in a thoughtful way. Avoid closed-ended questions that can result in yes/no answers. Likewise, avoid generic questions such as, “Is art important in this school?” Your goal is to obtain a response that explains the depth of importance of art to the faculty, staff, and administration.

The following is a sampling of questions that can help you to decide if the campus where you are applying is indeed a place where you can find your bliss as an art educator.

1. What would teachers, staff, or administrators expect to see when they visit the artroom? This all-important question seeks to determine if art is recognized equally with other content areas. You want to know that all staff members acknowledge that quality, comprehensive art teaching contributes positively to critical thinking skills in students.

2. What short and long-term goals are set for the art program? This should help you to understand what is expected of you and the art program during your first year, and in years to come, guiding you to understand the focus of the school.

3. How is the art program structured? The answer to this question should let you know if there is a sequential curriculum derived from state or national academic standards. This question might also produce a response about the schedule for art; that is, how many minutes per week you can expect to see each student.

4. What opportunities are available for collaborative planning among the arts and other content areas? The strongest art programs are those that make interdisciplinary connections with other content areas such as math, science, language arts, and social studies. If multiple opportunities are cited, this is a good indicator that the arts are an intrinsic and valued part of the curriculum.

5. What resources and materials are available for art teaching? You hope to hear that the artroom is equipped with basic supplies plus technology, a kiln, printmaking equipment, posters, videos, and books. You also hope to hear that funds are available for obtaining up-to-date materials and resources.

6. What sort of professional development can new teachers expect during the first year of teaching? You want to hear that art educators have regular meetings with other art teachers in the district, and that art-specific professional development is provided throughout the year.

7. How does the school or district advocate membership in professional associations? The response to this question should let you know if your membership dues, registration fees, and travel to conferences will be partially or fully covered by the school or district.



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8. What opportunities does the art program have for exposing children to masterworks of art? This question seeks to find out if the school supports field trips to art galleries, museums, or other venues. It might also result in finding out if artists are brought into the school to discuss their artwork, or if funding is readily available to purchase quality art prints, posters, software, books, and videos.

In Closing

The bottom line when interviewing for a teaching position is to determine if the school is indeed the place you wish to be. Don’t be afraid to ask questions. Listen carefully to responses. Only then will you be prepared to accept or decline when the job is offered to you.

Do you have a favorite question that you asked during an interview for an art-teaching job? How did that question help you to decide if you had found the right job? Please share your questions with us by e-mailing Pamela.Stephens@nau.edu. 📧

Pam Stephens is associate professor of art education at Northern Arizona University and is a member of the SchoolArts advisory board. Pamela.Stephens@nau.edu