

Conducting Reference Checks

Who

Reference checks are conducted to attempt to determine the candidate's competencies and work behaviors. Therefore, references should be administrators and supervisors who worked with the candidate within the last five to eight years or so - people who have had a direct or indirect reason to observe and evaluate the candidate in a teaching position - for example, the direct supervisor, a school administrator, assistant superintendent, or human resources director.

Ask the candidate to provide references, but also be ready to do some digging and contact others who might be able to provide information. Some examples:

- If the candidate does not include former and/or current supervisors, see if you can identify those folks and call them.
- Try calling a district that the candidate has listed as a former employer, but has not included as a reference, and see if you can speak to an administrator there.
- If you know anyone at SCASD who has worked at the candidate's district, ask them if they worked with the candidate or if they know someone who may have.

Between the references offered by the candidate and the ones you find off-the-grid, aim to have about 3 discussions - 2 at a minimum.

Needless to say, you'll need to get creative for folks who do not have any paid employment experiences. Call HR if you have questions.

Getting Started

Explain why you are calling and ask the individual if they have a few minutes to talk. Start with simple, non-threatening questions, such as giving a brief description of the SCASD position and asking if it is similar to the position the candidate held. Then move on to open-ended questions about the candidate's job performance and personality traits. The key is to gain the reference's trust by conveying the air of a friend asking for advice. Just be friendly - by making it conversational, you can usually find out a heck of a lot more.

Questions

Follow the directions below to access the reference check questions in Talent Ed. If you ask additional questions, remember to keep them open-ended and more in the form of behavior assessment. For example, do not ask: Did Bob get along with his co-workers? Instead, say: Tell me about how Bob got along with his co-workers.

What To Listen For

Tune into the reference's style and listen for subtle cues, such as tone of voice and pauses. For instance, a long pause can indicate a reference's reluctance to say something negative. You might ask the silent types whether their failure to provide information means a problem with the candidate - pay attention to the way they respond - it may give you a tip-off to whether there are problems or not.

Also note how questions are answered - when answering the question 'would you hire this person again', the reference might say 'yes', or 'we would consider him for the right position', or 'absolutely, in a heartbeat!'. Three affirmative answers, but three very different meanings.

Social Media

Do a quick check on social media - I usually just google the person's name and the city/state they are located (all of the cities and states if they have moved around). Others who are more adept at social media are more thorough. Most frequently, nothing of interest pops up. But, sometimes you are very happy you have taken this step.

Directions for Completing the Reference Check Form in Talent Ed

1. Sign into Talent Ed.
2. Click on the 'APPLICATION MANAGER' tab at the top right.
3. In the 'SEARCH' box, type the name of the candidate you want to conduct a reference check on and hit 'ENTER'.
4. Click on the candidate's BLUE FILE FOLDER located on the far right.
5. Click on the 'REFERENCE' tab.
6. To check a reference that is not included in the list provided by the candidate, click the 'NEW REFERENCE' button on the bottom right and complete the reference name and contact information, and then click 'SAVE'. The reference name will be added to the list of references.

***Ignore the 'Note' on the right hand side.** The reference name, contact information, and notes you are adding cannot be seen by the candidate.

7. Choose the reference you want to check and click the 'ADD CHECK' button to the right hand side.
8. Select 'Reference Calls' using the drop down arrow and click 'COMPLETE MANUALLY'.
9. Contact the reference and complete the form. Once done, click 'SUBMIT' found at the bottom of the form.
10. You will get a message stating the reference form was submitted to SCASD. Click 'DONE' and you will be taken back to the list of references.