

New Teachers



Some of you have probably heard that we are hiring some new teachers for next year. We've had a couple of people retire and one person is moving away. I thought you might like to know a little bit about the process I like to use when hiring new teachers.

First of all, I consider it one of the most important parts of my job. A good teacher is worth his or her weight in gold. This is the person with whom your child spends the majority of his or her day. This is the person who has the biggest impact on your child's education. So, what is my process? How do I like to conduct the hiring process?

First of all, we advertise. We use several online resources and we use the the Omaha World Herald. Since we are a Catholic School and our mission statement is: *To grow in spirit, mind, and body as disciples of Christ*, we also advertise for practicing Catholics. Once we have a sufficient number of applicants we begin the screening process. We look at the candidates for each position through a slightly different lenses. So that screening lens might vary from position to position, or even from year to year. We will select as many applicants for interviews as we deem appropriate. It could be anywhere from three to six.

If at all possible, I like to interview while school is in session. This way I can have the candidates actually teach a class of students. That gives us the opportunity to see them in action, the instructional strategies they use, how they interact with kids, how they maintain classroom discipline, etc. Then we also like to give them some writing exercises. This is a good way to test content knowledge, writing and communication skills, and a lot of other things, depending upon how we frame the questions. We also use the traditional format of asking questions orally, but I've found that people who have a lot of interviews get rather good at that part even if they aren't as good in other areas such as teaching! In addition, I always try to have the interviewees meet with some of our teachers in a less formal atmosphere, for example, going to lunch or having coffee and snacks. Finally, we do a lot of background checks. Along with the required Archdiocesan criminal and sexual offender checks, we make a lot of phone calls to people who know them and have worked with them. We try to contact people who they have listed as references, but also people that they don't have on their reference list. It can be quite revealing to pay attention to which people a person leaves off of their reference list.

By the time we get through with all of these things, we have a lot of documentation to go through and evaluate before we can even consider offering someone the position.

Anyway, as we go through this process, please pray that we and the applicants make good decisions as we try to fill the positions we have available.

Yours in Christ,
Jim Makey, Principal