

Finding the best fit for your new teaching job

When job seekers pour over opportunities, they often focus on money or location. But one thing is sometimes overlooked: Which job is the best fit?

Being a good fit for a job or occupation is a sign of likely success, while a lack of a fit can lead to a bad situation and/or a short time on the job.

But how do current teachers or those just entering the profession determine the best fit for them?

Checking into a school



Before even accepting a job interview for a particular school, a candidate should seek information about the school and the area.

[Niche.com](#) has all sorts of data about a school district and the area. The website rates Hillsborough County as one of the 15 best places to live and teach in the state of Florida. It also breaks down each school in a variety of areas and has stats about each school.

Stories on [thecornerstoneforteachers.com](#) had plenty of advice about how to determine if a particular school is right for you. Here are some highlights:

- What's the average class size? In this case that means how many kids were actually in the room last year and how many are projected for the next academic year?
- What's the ESOL or ELL (English Language Learner) population at the school? How will I be equipped to meet their needs? According to an April 2018 story in the Tampa Bay Times, county ELL program supervisor Sandra Rosario said students in Hillsborough County schools in the 2017-18 academic year hailed from about 125 countries and spoke nearly 200 languages.
- How many years of experience does my grade-level team have? At each level, it's beneficial to have at least one veteran teacher. That person can help support you or mentor you if you're a newer teacher. If you're a veteran teacher yourself, perhaps this is the time to ask if you can be that guiding hand for younger teachers, a role you might not have been asked to do before.

If possible, try to tour the school you're interested in while it's in session. If you're interviewing in May or June, you likely can get a glimpse of what life is like there.

If you get to arrange for a tour, picture yourself in that school 40-plus hours a week. Now treat it like you're touring a nursing home or assisted living facility for your elderly relatives. Is the place clean? Are the bathrooms well kept? Is there trash strewn about? And how about the staff members, are they pleasant? Do they greet you with smiles or sighs?

You should also get a sense for how orderly a school is. Do the kids generally behave? Are the teachers usually calm or are they almost always yelling to try to get the kids to calm down? How do students conduct themselves in the hallways?

Finally, a tour will give you a chance to see your possible future bosses – the administrators – in action. How do they interact with teachers? Do they know their students' names, or at least a decent percentage of the names? How do they deal with non-teaching personnel under them, including administrative assistants?

Teach and Reach or asking the big questions



Prospective teachers should have already taken the step of self-examining their own desire to become a person who guides today's youth. [Thoughtco.com](#) has some general questions which prospective teachers could ask themselves (and which, incidentally, might well come up in a job interview).

- Are you compassionate? Patience, kindness and understanding will go a long way in the classroom.
- Are you passionate? If a teacher loves his or her subject, that infectious enthusiasm is more likely to rub off on the students.
- Are you persistent? Kids have bad days just like adults, and the kids might not yet be equipped to face those challenges.
- Are you up for challenges? Short-term and long-term goals must stay in focus even when your students get off track.
- Are you results oriented? Great test scores are the ideal outcome, but how do your students get there?
- Are you creative and curious? Thinking of different ways to impart your wisdom and deliver on your lesson plans is important because every classroom is different.
- Are you optimistic? Projecting positivity helps students to achieve their objectives and yours.
- Are you flexible? Every day is different. The ability to think on one's feet and even keep a sense of humor are crucial elements in an ever-changing atmosphere.

Pros – Cons = Decision



For each school you will surely have things you may like and dislike. Make a pro and con list to help you objectively evaluate your options. When you figure out what a school wants from you as a teacher and what you want from your school, you can select a school and school culture that is a good fit for you.

