Conducting Effective Virtual Interviews[27]

- Select user-friendly software and have a backup if connection cannot be made.
- Dedicate a time and an appropriate space (clean, quiet, professional) for search team members to conduct the interviews.
- Use at least two interviewers but not more than four. Four can be unwieldy and confusing for the candidate. Two keeps the questioning focused and provides two individual perspectives of the interview.
- Use a structured question protocol for interviewers to follow with no deviations. Remind interviewers that they are not allowed to ask personal questions.
- Set time limits. Virtual interviews are normally one hour in length.
- Designate a lead interviewer. This individual's responsibilities include welcoming the candidate, introducing other interviewers, explaining the process, asking the first question, keeping the conversation focused and on-track, and serving as timekeeper.
- Orient the interview team(s). Train the team(s) on how to conduct a virtual interview and the importance of following the structured question protocol. This includes how to use the software, choosing appropriate attire, and ensuring each team member has the times, dates, and locations of each interview. If individuals must participate virtually, provide information for connecting to the interview and remind them to find a quiet and confidential setting. Emphasize the importance of reviewing the candidate's application information before the interview.
- Orient the candidates. Explain to candidates well in advance as what to expect during the interview, who will be participating, how to connect including how to use the software, and a number to call if they are experiencing any difficulties. Ask if candidates require any assistive technology or other supports to ensure they can fully hear and respond to interviewer questions. Remind them of the date and time and the need for the interview to occur in a quiet and uninterrupted space. Districts may elect to share possible interview questions with candidates before the interview in order to help them prepare.
- Record the interview. With candidate permission, districts may record the interviews. Obtain permission from the candidate during the orientation and again at the start of the interview. If the district is unable to record, it is good practice to have someone take detailed notes of the interview.
- Follow up. As soon as possible after the meeting, the search manager or chair should follow up with an email to the candidate thanking them for participating in the interview. In addition, a brief explanation of the next steps and timeline in the search process should be included.