



New York State Board of Regents State Education Department

Virtual Capacity Interview Expectations and Tips



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New York State Education Department Virtual Capacity Interview Expectations and Tips¹

Capacity interviews are a critical component of the New York State Education Department's (NYSED) charter school new school application review processes. These interviews often provide

Tutorials on how to use the Zoom platform can be found at

amount of time, and then mute NYSED staff and turn off NYSED staff cameras in order to observe and take notes on the group discussions as unobtrusively as possible to minimize distractions.

SETTING NORMS

While norms are always helpful to streamline capacity interviews and keep attention on the substance of the discussion, pivoting to the virtual environment requires some additional norms.

Display names: All participants must display their full names as well as the role they served in application development and/or will play in the proposed school through the Zoom platform. This helps everyone be clear about who is speaking, and the skill sets they represent.

Speak up: The mic mute function is a necessity when background noise is an issue but should be used sparingly otherwise. To accomplish capacity interview objectives, establish a tone of contribution, not passive, muted listening.

Share cameras: All participants are strongly encouraged to share their camera. The ability to see one another throughout the entire interview is crucial to establish and maintain a sense of continuity and community between (and among) the review panel and the applicant team. While social distancing requirements remain in place, video conferencing and camera sharing are the best ways to accomplish this. Barring special circumstances (such as the lack of technology), all participants should be visible.

Focus: Ask all participants to turn off notifications and minimize other distractions that may exist in their locations, as much as possible.

Signal: There is usually more ground to cover than time available during capacity interviews. Applicant groups should establish and share a visual cue to ensure participants share the floor, such as a raising a hand. Similarly, NYSED will notify applicant groups when shifting to new questions or topics.

Record: NYSED will record all capacity interview meetings via the Zoom platform.

Opening Remarks: At the beginning of the capacity interview, the applicant team will be asked to introduce themselves and make an opening statement if they so choose.

QUESTIONS

If the applicant groups has any questions regarding the capacity group process they are strongly encouraged to email NYSED with sufficient time prior to the capacity interview at CharterSchools@nysed.gov. NYSED will be monitoring that email inbox on a regular basis. Any technical issues with the Zoom platform should be directed to Zoom at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>, not to NYSED.