



# A Guide to Understanding National Board Certification:

2009-10 CANDIDACY CYCLE

*A Joint Project of the American  
Federation of Teachers and the  
National Education Association*





*A Union of Professionals*

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Members and affiliates of the AFT and the NEA are welcome to duplicate this guide. It is available on both organizations' Web sites: [www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org) and [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org).

Bound copies are available for \$5 each; \$3 each for five or more copies. To order, send a check with your name and address to either the AFT or the NEA at the address listed above.

Ask for item number 39-09004 (AFT).

# **A Guide to Understanding National Board Certification:**

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National Education Association*



## Dear Colleagues:

**O**ne important role of a union is to support members' pursuit of increased knowledge and skill. That is why the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association strongly support National Board Certification as a proven way to strengthen the skills, knowledge, professionalism, and recognition of teachers.

National Board Certification is a challenging but deeply rewarding experience that provides rich professional development benefits and expanded opportunities for teacher leadership. The support for National Board Certification can be found throughout the education community: parents, administrators, school boards, universities, and the AFT and NEA—at the national level as well as many of our state and local affiliates. National Board Certification continues to grow in importance because dedicated teachers like you embrace the challenge of examining their practice against the profession's highest standards.

In recent years, several research studies have found that the practice of National Board Certified Teachers has a positive impact on student learning. This growing body of research confirms the feedback from thousands of classroom teachers and reinforces the significance of National Board Certification as an important part of affiliate strategies to strengthen teaching and learning in America's public schools.

The AFT and NEA have produced this candidate guide to help our members successfully navigate the National Board Certification process. The guide provides practical advice, suggestions, and tools from National Board Certified Teachers, candidates, and candidate support providers. The guide complements the candidate materials provided by the National Board and contains many references and links to NBPTS resources. We

hope you find the guide helpful, and we welcome your feedback. We also encourage you to contact your local union or state affiliate to discuss what support may be available to you during this process.

On behalf of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, we thank you for your commitment to quality teaching and to America's children by investing your time and energy in National Board Certification.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randi Weingarten".

**Randi Weingarten**  
President  
American Federation  
of Teachers



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis Van Roekel".

**Dennis Van Roekel**  
President  
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Association

## Foreword

**F**or the past two decades, Americans have recognized the growing challenges facing public education and have considered a host of ideas, programs, and strategies to enhance teaching and learning in schools. Educators have worked to strengthen their knowledge and skills as part of this national effort to make higher levels of achievement possible for all students.

Within this context of reform, the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession released its 1986 report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the Twenty-First Century*, which called for teachers and other stakeholders to join together to create the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Its mission is:

- To advance the quality of teaching and learning by maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.
- To provide a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards.
- To advocate related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification into American education and capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers.

Educators have been integrally involved in the board's work from the beginning. Teachers compose the majority of the board's membership, thereby having a real voice in establishing NBPTS policy. Teachers serve in leadership roles, help their colleagues better understand the certification process, provide candidate support, score assessments, and work on all aspects of NBPTS products and services. Today, nearly 74,000 teachers have achieved National Board

Certification—the teaching profession's highest credential.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA) were among the founding organizations that established the National Board in 1987. Across the country, leaders, staff and members of AFT and NEA affiliates are working to support teachers who choose to pursue National Board Certification. They also are collaborating with other stakeholders to secure legislation, regulations, and contract language that facilitate teacher access to, and maximize benefits from, the certification process. Both organizations remain NBPTS' strongest supporters for several reasons:

- AFT and NEA members attest to the positive effects the National Board Certification process has on their teaching practice;
- The importance of advanced professional standards to guide teachers at all points in their careers;
- The expanded professional roles becoming available to teachers who complete National Board Certification; and
- The research that links National Board Certification with improved student achievement.

National Board Certification is a professional undertaking that requires the mastery and integration of both content and pedagogical knowledge. It also requires that teachers possess a repertoire of instructional strategies to help all students meet high standards. This guide is intended to help candidates and others understand the process of National Board Certification.

The observations, ideas, and suggestions contained in this guide were provided by AFT

and NEA members who have achieved National Board Certification or who are experienced in supporting candidates through the certification process. Certainly there is no guarantee that these suggestions will lead to National Board Certification; rather, they are offered to help clarify the assessment process, suggest alternative ways of looking at or thinking about the requirements, and provide time-saving ideas.

## How To Use this Guide



Good ideas and tips from NBPTS and past candidates and trainers.



Where to get help from NBPTS.



Exercises to help you hone the skills you will need to complete National Board Certification.



Reproducible handouts to be copied and shared with others who are helping you.

**T**his guide is intended to lead you through the National Board Certification process and help you address some of the challenges that past candidates have identified. Although the guide supplements the wealth of information and instruction provided by the National Board—the *Portfolio Instructions*, the *Assessment Center Guidelines*, the *Scoring Guide for Candidates*, and other information on the Web site—it is not intended to replace any of these. You still must read all of the NBPTS *Portfolio Instructions* and all other materials provided by NBPTS very carefully and thoroughly.

Most of your questions should be answered somewhere in the information provided by NBPTS. Use the Candidate Inquiry Service for more information, or contact NBPTS for information and clarification. **Remember to save the response!**

This guide is divided into seven sections:

**Section 1: Am I Ready?** contains information on those things you need to know and do before you begin putting together your portfolio or completing the exercises at the Assessment Center. It contains an introductory chapter, a chapter on certificate areas, a chapter on how to study the NBPTS Standards, and a chapter on collecting materials, planning and fees and frequently asked questions.

**Section 2: The NBPTS Portfolio** contains information to help you create your portfolio entries. It includes chapters on following directions, collecting examples of your teaching practice,

preparing written commentaries, and documenting your accomplishments.

**Section 3: NBPTS Assessment Center** provides information and tips to help you complete your Assessment Center exercises successfully.

**Section 4: Scoring** provides answers to some of the questions related to receiving and understanding scoring.

**Section 5: The Advanced Candidacy** helps candidates who are still on the journey to obtaining National Board Certification think about the issues involved with continuing their pursuit of National Board Certification. This section contains information on evaluating which, if any, exercises to retake.

**Section 6: The Renewal Candidacy** provides information about the Profile for Professional Growth for candidates who are ready to renew their National Board Certificates.

**Section 7: Conclusion** contains a glossary and survey.

Throughout this guide, you will see helpful icons in the margins (shown at left) that will provide you with sources of information, good advice, and exercises that will help as you work your way through the certification process.



# Table of Contents

	<b>Foreword</b> .....	4
	<b>How to Use this Guide</b> .....	6
	<b>Did You Know?</b> .....	10
<b>Section 1:</b>	<b>Am I Ready?</b> .....	11
	<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	
	If You Are Considering National Board Certification.....	12
	Understanding the Commitment You Are Making.....	12
	<b>Chapter 2: Certificate Areas</b>	
	Low-Demand Certificates .....	14
	Commonly Asked Questions .....	16
	<b>Chapter 3: Working with the NBPTS Standards</b>	
	Embodying the NBPTS Standards .....	18
	Creating a Notebook to Study and Understand the NBPTS Standards .....	18
	Providing Evidence .....	20
	<b>Chapter 4: Materials, Planning and Fees</b>	
	Download and Print Materials .....	21
	Developing a Schedule .....	22
	Helpful Strategies .....	22
	Fees and Charges .....	25
	Refunds .....	27
	Additional Support .....	28
<b>Section 2:</b>	<b>The NBPTS Portfolio</b> .....	29
	<b>Chapter 5: Following Directions</b>	
	Format of Part 2 of the <i>Portfolio Instructions</i> .....	30
	Rules for Submission.....	30
	Suggestions for Submission.....	30
	Spanish Language Option (SLO): Clarification of Rules for Classroom-Based Entries .....	31
	<b>Chapter 6: Collecting Examples of Your Teaching Practice</b>	
	Student Work Samples .....	32
	Video/DVD Entries .....	35
	<b>Chapter 7: Preparing Written Commentaries</b>	
	Description vs. Analysis vs. Reflection.....	39
	<b>Chapter 8: Documenting Accomplishments</b> .....	42

<b>Section 3:</b>	<b>NBPTS Assessment Center</b> .....	<b>44</b>
	<b>Chapter 9: Assessment Center Experience</b>	
	Assessment Center Appointment .....	45
	Regulations and Procedures .....	45
	What the Exercises Are About and How to Prepare .....	46
	Review Content .....	46
	Online Tutorial .....	46
	Answering the Prompt .....	46
	What’s the Best Way to Read the Exercise .....	47
	Assessment Center Anxiety Tips .....	47
	Preparing for the Assessment Center Exercises: Retired Prompts .....	48
	How Long Will I Be at the Assessment Center? .....	48
<b>Section 4:</b>	<b>Scoring</b> .....	<b>50</b>
	<b>Chapter 10: Receiving Scores</b> .....	<b>51</b>
	<b>Chapter 11: Understanding Scoring</b> .....	<b>52</b>
<b>Section 5:</b>	<b>The Advanced Candidacy</b> .....	<b>54</b>
	<b>Chapter 12: Deciding What’s Next</b>	
	Determining Which Exercises to Retake .....	55
	<b>Chapter 13: Preparing to Retake</b>	
	Portfolio Exercises .....	58
	Assessment Center .....	59
	The Retake Process .....	59
	The Retake Fee .....	59
<b>Section 6:</b>	<b>The Renewal Candidacy</b> .....	<b>60</b>
	<b>Chapter 14: The <i>Profile of Professional Growth</i></b> .....	<b>61</b>
	<b>Chapter 15: When and How to Renew</b> .....	<b>62</b>
	Questions about the Renewal Decision .....	63
<b>Section 7:</b>	<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>64</b>
	<b>Glossary of Terms</b> .....	<b>65</b>
	<b>A Guide to Understanding National Board Certification: 2009-10 Candidacy Cycle Survey</b> .....	<b>67</b>
	<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	<b>inside back cover</b>



# TAKE ONE!

## A POWERFUL TOOL TO IMPROVE TEACHING QUALITY

**Take One!**<sup>®</sup> is a unique offering from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards<sup>®</sup> (NBPTS) that provides a standards-based approach for improving teaching practice and links student learning to effective instruction.

Teachers prepare and submit one pre-selected video portfolio entry from any of the current certificate areas of National Board Certification. A teacher can later transfer the score if he or she pursues National Board candidacy within two years.

### Why Take One!?

#### Better Teaching

*Take One!* improves teaching quality by providing teachers with the opportunity to reflect on their own classroom instructional practices within the context of national teaching standards.

#### Better Learning

*Take One!* helps teachers plan and achieve specific learning outcomes and adapt their teaching practices to the needs of individual students. This focus on student learning reinforces a strong link between instructional goals, teaching practice and student learning.

#### Better Schools

*Take One!* provides teachers and other educators the opportunity to form professional learning communities with a common language for—and commitment to—improved student achievement. These communities offer the opportunity for a sustained, integrated focus on student learning within individual schools and across districts and states.

#### Systemic Change

*Take One!* supports the growing movement toward a fundamental shift in how schools and districts approach instructional leadership using learning communities—especially in high-need schools.

- *Take One!* allows all teachers to “sample” National Board Certification—not only to improve their teaching practices within their classrooms and schools but also to begin the path toward National Board candidacy, if they so choose.
- Built on the strong research base of National Board Certification, *Take One!* helps meet goals for developing highly qualified teachers as defined by No Child Left Behind.

## Did You Know?

**The 2009-10 Candidacy Cycle** begins on January 31, 2009, and closes June 15, 2010.

**Assessment Center Testing Window**—The Assessment Center testing window opens January 4, 2010, and closes on June 15, 2010.

**Pay with E-Check**—Pay your assessment fees with NBPTS' electronic check process. Payments are due no later than January 31, 2010, if you pay by e-check, but do not select the Extended Payment Option.

**Extended Payment Option for Candidates with E-Check**—With this flexible plan, first-time candidates can pay their assessment fees by electronic check, and NBPTS will extend the payment deadline to March 15, 2010. How does it work? Simply agree to make all payments for which you are personally responsible for by electronic check. You decide the amount of your payment installments.

**Phaseout of VHS Submissions**—The acceptance of VHS submissions may be phased out in an upcoming candidacy cycle, so candidates may prefer to record video evidence on DVD to avoid having to re-record or transfer videotapes. DVD instructions to help candidates properly prepare, mark, pack, and ship DVD submissions are in the *Portfolio Instructions* and the *Profile of Professional Growth*, available on the NBPTS Web site and in portfolio and renewal kits. Candidates should read these instructions carefully and adhere to the tips and procedures outlined.

**Use My Profile to Manage Your Candidacy Online**—You can correct and/or update personal information, and verify whether the NBPTS has received your fees or forms—anytime, anywhere—by accessing your candidate record from the *My Profile* screen in National Board Registration & Information Center (NBRIC). *My Profile* is a secure, password-protected data manage-

ment program that is tailored for your personal use. You can access *My Profile* at any time after you apply by logging in with your username and password, or create them by keying in your candidate ID, last name and birth date.

**Take One!**—*Take One!* is an offering from NBPTS for educators interested in experiencing the highly praised professional development attributes of National Board Certification. It is a standards-based professional development opportunity that has been built from NBPTS' nationally respected assessment program—a program that has been rigorously studied by independent researchers and found to improve teacher quality and enhance student achievement. *Take One!* participants are expected to study the NBPTS Standards for their teaching discipline, complete a video portfolio entry using a classroom of students to demonstrate preK-12 teaching, and submit the entry to NBPTS to be scored, in accordance with the deadlines and policies of the current NBPTS assessment program.

As an added bonus, those who choose to subsequently become candidates for National Board Certification can choose to transfer their *Take One!* score within two years, if eligible to pursue certification, and complete the remaining nine components of the assessment to continue their pursuit of National Board Certification.

**Application for National Board Certification Renewal**—National Board Certified Teachers who are currently in their eighth and ninth years of certification must complete the renewal process prior to their certification expiration date and can renew only in their original certificate area. Information about certification renewal and the *Profile of Professional Growth*, the evaluation tool for renewal of National Board Certification, can be found at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).

## Section 1:

# Am I Ready?

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## Overview

This section provides information on what you need to know and do before putting together your portfolio or participating in the Assessment Center exercises.



## Chapter 1: Introduction



Read everything NBPTS sends you.

**N**ational Board Certification recognizes teaching excellence based on NBPTS Standards for accomplished teaching. A National Board Certificate attests that a teacher has met the highest standards established for the profession.

Attaining National Board Certification is a professional achievement. The assessments were developed in collaboration with practicing teachers who verified that they measure best practice and represent indicators of accomplished teaching. As teachers complete the certification process, they must continually connect their classroom practice to NBPTS Standards and provide evidence of that connection. Most teacher candidates find that the yearlong reflection and analysis process that National Board Certification candidacy entails is one of the most rewarding and meaningful experiences of their professional lives.



Review *Standards, Portfolio Instructions, the 2009 Guide to National Board Certification, your area's Scoring Guide for Candidates, and Assessment Center Guidelines* at: [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).

### If You Are Considering National Board Certification

If you are considering applying for National Board Certification, there are several ways to learn more about the process:

- First, finish reading this guide to get a sense of what to expect from National Board Certification candidacy.
- Next, go to the NBPTS Web site: [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org). There you can review the *NBPTS Standards, Certificate Areas, Portfolio Instructions, the 2009 Guide to National Board Certification, Assessment Center Guidelines*, and even apply online.
- Finally, talk to National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in your state or district because

they can help you think about how certification will support your professional goals. Check the NBPTS Web site for a listing of NBCTs in your area.

### Understanding the Commitment You Are Making

The National Board Certification assessment process examines how you plan, teach, analyze student work, and engage in reflection to meet the needs of your students. The purpose of the National Board Certification assessment process is to determine if candidates meet NBPTS Standards for their field. It is essential that you understand and accept this purpose and study the NBPTS Standards carefully.

The National Board Certification assessment process requires you to present samples of your teaching practice and write commentaries that demonstrate a level of professional practice that meets the NBPTS Standards. It is not enough merely to present what you do—successful candidates also must provide written analyses that clearly explain how their teaching practice meets the NBPTS Standards. In addition to being excellent teachers, NBCTs are able to clearly demon-

#### Successful Candidates Are:

- Action-minded
- Reflective
- Committed
- Disciplined
- Energetic
- Thorough

strate and articulate how their teaching practice meets NBPTS Standards.

**Portfolio**—You will create a portfolio according to NBPTS specifications. The portfolio consists of four entries, each of which requires you to provide direct evidence that your teaching meets the NBPTS Standards. Each entry must be accompanied by written analytical, descriptive, and reflective commentary.

- *Three entries* focus on classroom practice (and generally include two video recordings of teaching and evidence in the form of student work samples); and

- *One entry* documents accomplishments that focus on both your work within the profession and your outreach to families and the community.

**Assessment Center**—At the Assessment Center, you will be expected to demonstrate your knowledge of developmentally appropriate content across the full range of the certificate area you have chosen. There are six computer-delivered exercises, each of which allows up to 30 minutes for candidate response.



## Chapter 2: Certificate Areas

**Y**ou can find an overview of each certificate at the NBPTS Web site ([www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/certificate\\_areas1](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/certificate_areas1)) to help you decide which certificate is right for you.

The table at the right lists the 25 National Board Certificates that are offered.

### Low-Demand Certificates

Due to a low candidate demand, first-time candidate registration for the certificates and specialty areas listed below will remain closed until further notice. Future administration of these certificates and specialty areas will be dictated by future candidate demand. Advanced candidates in these certificate areas are not affected, however, and renewal will be available for NBCTs who previously certified in these certificate areas.

- Early Adolescence/Generalist
- Early and Middle Childhood/World Languages Other Than English
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/World Languages Other Than English—German, Japanese, and Latin specialty areas only

The decision was not a judgment on any subject area and was based strictly on candidate demand. The decision is in accordance with the following published announcement: NBPTS reserves the right not to offer an assessment, not to score an assessment after it has been offered, and/or not to render certification decisions if, in its discretion, NBPTS determines that low candidate volume may result in psychometric or financial problems. In the event that a problem

### NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATE AREAS

Subject	Available Certificates by Developmental Level*
Generalist	EC/Generalist
	MC/Generalist
Art	EMC/Art
	EAYA/Art
Career and Technical Education	EAYA/Career and Technical Education
English as a New Language	EMC/English as a New Language
	EAYA/English as a New Language
English Language Arts	EA/English Language Arts
	AYA/English Language Arts
Exceptional Needs	ECYA/Exceptional Needs
Health Education	EAYA/Health Education
Library Media	ECYA/Library Media
Literacy	EMC/Literacy: Reading-Language Arts
Mathematics	EA/Mathematics
	AYA/Mathematics
Music	EMC/Music
	EAYA/Music
Physical Education	EMC/Physical Education
	EAYA/Physical Education
School Counseling	ECYA/School Counseling
Science	EA/Science
	AYA/Science
Social Studies-History	EA/Social Studies-History
	AYA/Social Studies-History
World Languages Other Than English	EAYA/World Languages Other Than English

\*The developmental levels are Early Childhood (EC), ages 3-8; Early Childhood through Young Adulthood (ECYA), ages 3-18+; Middle Childhood (MC), ages 7-12; Early and Middle Childhood (EMC), ages 3-12; Early Adolescence (EA), ages 11-15; Adolescence and Young Adulthood (AYA), ages 11-18+. The Exceptional Needs certificate area applies to ages 0-21+.



arises due to insufficient candidate volume or with respect to any aspect of an assessment or scoring system that is not adequately resolved, in the judgment of NBPTS, such that a valid certification decision can be made within an appropriate time period, NBPTS will offer full fee refunds to affected candidates. —*NBPTS Board Policy on Low-Demand Certificates*

Candidate registration for all other certificate areas remains open. A complete list of certificate offerings will be updated regularly on the NBPTS Web site ([www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org)).

## Commonly Asked Questions

### **Am I eligible to participate in the National Board Certification process?**

To be eligible for National Board Certification, you must submit proof that you meet the following education, employment, and licensure requirements.

- Possess a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution.
- Have completed three years of successful teaching (or as a school counselor if applying for the ECYA/School Counseling certificate) in one or more early childhood, elementary, middle, or secondary school(s).
- Hold a valid state teaching license (or valid state license as a school counselor if applying for the ECYA/School Counseling certificate) for each of the three years of employment you verify (if required in your state). It is important to remember a provisional or resident teacher certificate does not count as a valid state teaching license.

You will be required to submit written verification that you satisfy these requirements. If after review of the verification forms, NBPTS determines that you do not meet the eligibility requirements for certification at this time, you may be eligible to receive a refund of a portion of your fee payment in accordance with the NBPTS refund policy. The \$500 initial fee is nonrefundable.

### **What are the fees associated with National Board Certification?**

The assessment fee for National Board Certification is \$2,500. This includes the nonrefundable \$500 initial fee. Additionally, the application charge for first-time applicants is \$65.

### **Why isn't NBPTS Certification state-based?**

While state licensing systems set minimum requirements to teach in each state, NBPTS offers experienced teachers the professional development opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and practices against high and rigorous standards at a national level. Since National Board Certification is voluntary, it is meant to complement, not replace, state licensing. Remember, if you move to a new state, you still have to meet all of its licensing requirements.

### **Why should I seek National Board Certification if my state does not offer any incentives?**

Even if your state does not offer incentives, the certification process is worth the effort because it provides opportunities for serious reflection about your practice, fosters self-examination, and encourages professional dialogue with colleagues. The National Board Certification process enables you to evaluate skills and knowledge against objective, peer-developed standards of accomplished practice, and thereby adjust and improve your teaching practice. NBCTs overwhelmingly report that seeking National Board Certification is one of the most rewarding professional development experiences of their careers and, therefore, well worth the effort.

### **How do I know which certificate to pursue?**

NBPTS recommends that you carefully study the NBPTS Standards in the certificate area that best reflects the age range of students and the subject you teach, as well as the demands of the portfolio entries and Assessment Center exercises, to determine if the entries and exercises will allow you to demonstrate your level of accomplished teaching practice. One way to become familiar with the different certificate areas is to visit the NBPTS Web site. What you will need to be able to do for each certificate is described at [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/certificate\\_areas1](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/certificate_areas1).

### **If I apply for candidacy, how much time will the process require?**

The National Board Certification process requires a serious one- to three-year commitment of time and effort. Following the steps outlined in this guide and careful planning will help make the process manageable.

### **How technology savvy do I have to be?**

Depending on the certificate, most candidates will be asked to include in their portfolio entries information about how they use technology for instruction. They should refer to their specific certificate Standards for references to technology that are appropriate. In addition to consulting NBPTS Standards for their certificate, candidates may also use their state standards as a reference for approved forms of classroom technology.

Teachers are becoming more aware of other technological tools such as video, audio, and digital materials to support

student learning and extend the curriculum. Although their level of expertise may vary, most students have access to basic technology such as computer software applications, the Internet, electronic media, and other emerging technologies for research and access to a variety of information.

To prepare for the Assessment Center, some use of technology is expected. For example, it is strongly recommended that candidates access the new NBPTS-Pearson VUE assessment center tutorial at: [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/assessment/prepare\\_for\\_your\\_appoint](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/assessment/prepare_for_your_appoint). This informational presentation will help prepare the candidate for the Assessment Center testing experience and demonstrates the look and feel of the software that will be used to administer the Assessment Center exercises. Candidates will find information on the tools that will be available on the computer, as well as how to navigate through the questions and each exercise. At the Assessment Center, candidates also will have an additional opportunity to use technology to go through an interactive tutorial that provides a testing simulation of the exercises.

Candidates also will be required to use the computer for some or all of their responses at the Assessment Center.

**Do I need a computer, printer, and Internet access to complete certification?**

NBPTS support providers stress the importance of access to a computer, printer, and the Internet. It is very difficult to manage the portfolio work without word processing and its components such as spelling and grammar check. Also, the online resources (both content and support groups) are too valuable to miss. A printer helps with multiple drafts and revisions and, in a pinch, can serve as a copying machine.

**How will my entries be scored?**

All scoring is based on the evidence candidates submit—videos, student work samples, candidates’ analyses, and the responses to Assessment Center prompts. Your National Board Certification assessment is evaluated by at least 12 classroom teachers, who must: possess a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution; have a minimum of three years of successful teaching experience; be actively teaching students in the certificate area domains for which they score responses (or be an NBCT in the certificate area); and successfully complete assessor training provided by NBPTS and qualify as an assessor prior to scoring. Submissions by ECYA/School Counseling candidates will be evaluated by

actively practicing school counselors with at least three years of school counseling experience who successfully complete assessor training and qualify to evaluate responses.

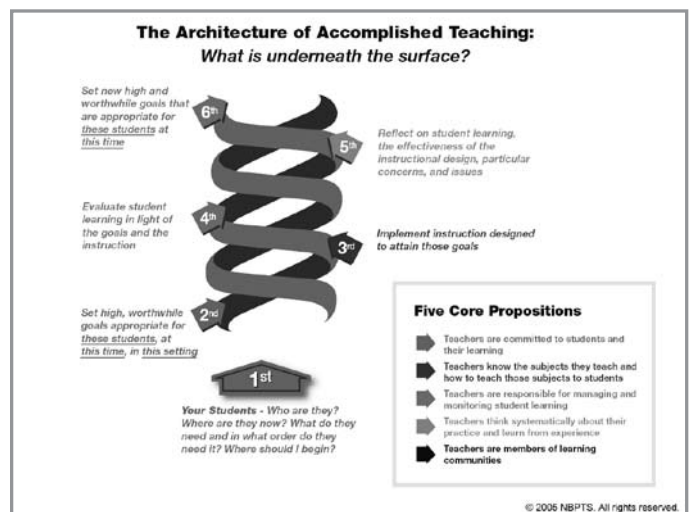
**Does the fact that I did not certify mean that I am not a good teacher?**

No—absolutely not. It simply means that you did not show evidence of meeting the NBPTS Standards.

**What is The Architecture of Accomplished Teaching?**

The Architecture of Accomplished Teaching is a metaphor for what accomplished teachers do in the classroom. Just as two buildings can be very different on the surface, they still share common features. Likewise, no two teachers may approach their craft in the same manner. However, while surface features may differ, there are fundamental aspects of teaching that are shared by all accomplished teachers.

As the double helix (below) shows, teachers first know their students and their needs and then set worthwhile goals for those students. Teachers implement instruction related to those goals, evaluate the learning in connection with the goals, and finally, reflect on student learning. Once those steps are completed, accomplished teachers begin the process of goal-setting all over again. The motion within the double helix reflects the accomplished teacher’s ongoing process of establishing student needs, instructional goals and strategies, evaluating assessments, and reflecting on teaching and learning.



For answers to many more commonly asked questions, visit the NBPTS Web site at [www.nbpts.org/help\\_and\\_faqs](http://www.nbpts.org/help_and_faqs).

## Chapter 3: Working with the NBPTS Standards



- *NBPTS Standards*
- *Phase 1: Prepare in Part 1 of the Portfolio Instructions*
- [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org)

All teachers are familiar with standards. In the last several years we have seen an explosion of standards from states, districts, and national organizations of various kinds. Typically, these standards focus on what students should know and be able to do. The NBPTS Standards on the Web site (and included on the CD-ROM in your box) focus on what accomplished teachers know and are able to do. To become a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT), you must clearly demonstrate that your teaching practice meets NBPTS Standards. To do this, first you must thoroughly understand the standards.

Although the standards for each certificate area are specific to that area, they rest on a fundamental philosophical foundation expressed in the NBPTS policy statement “*What Teachers Should Know and Be Able To Do*.” That statement identifies the Five Core Propositions:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.

The first step in approaching the NBPTS Standards is to internalize their core propositions and to see yourself embodying these standards in your practice.

### Embodying the NBPTS Standards

Why is it important for you to spend time reading and understanding the NBPTS Standards?

- They are the only criteria used to determine certification.

- Studying the standards can inform your practice and help you become a more thoughtful practitioner.
- The process of applying the standards will help you to internalize them.

The NBPTS Standards represent a professional consensus on the aspects of practice that distinguish accomplished teachers. The standards incorporate the essential knowledge, skills, dispositions, and commitment that allow teachers to practice at a high level. Following a nationwide search for outstanding educators, a standards committee—the majority of whom are classroom teachers in the certificate area being considered—developed standards that describe what accomplished teachers know and are able to do. The standards were widely disseminated for public critique and comment and revised accordingly before being adopted.

National Board Certification is standards-based. You are asked to reflect on your teaching practices through the lens of the NBPTS Standards. These standards are the criteria for evaluating your work.

### Creating a Notebook to Study and Understand the NBPTS Standards

This chapter is designed to stress the importance of understanding the NBPTS Standards. It provides suggestions on how to study the standards and how to provide evidence that you are meeting them.

NBCTs recommend different strategies for studying the standards specific to your certificate area. Some NBCTs recommend that candidates prepare a “standards notebook” using these exercises. Identify the ones that work for you and use them to develop your own standards notebook.



NBCTs recommend that prior to starting the portfolio entries, you study and apply the standards to your own teaching practice.

**CAN YOU ILLUSTRATE EACH OF THE NBPTS CORE PROPOSITIONS?**

PROPOSITION	ACTIVITIES
1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.	
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.	
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.	
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.	
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.	



**Exercise 1:**

To understand the standards, start by reviewing the core propositions on which the standards are based. Write down two specific acts or activities that **you** do regularly that illustrate each of the Five Core Propositions.



**Exercise 2:**

1. **Read** the standards carefully.
2. **Reread** the standards and write notes in the margins about how you meet each one.
3. **Reread** the standards and highlight key statements that strike you as being important.
4. **Reread** the standards and, if possible, discuss the key elements with another candidate.



**Exercise 3:**

Summarize each standard in your content area/developmental level. For each standard, answer the following questions. Be specific and provide personal examples when possible.

*Standard I: Knowledge of Students—Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of child development and their relationships with students to understand their students' abilities, interests, aspirations, and values.*

1. What do I know with respect to this standard?
2. What do I do with respect to this standard?
3. How might I demonstrate proficiency in this standard?
4. What do I do that provides evidence that I have met this standard?
5. How might I convince colleagues that I have met this standard?
6. How does the evidence meet the standard?



Some NBCTs recommend reading and tape-recording the standards in your own voice to listen to while you do other things, drive to work, for example.



If you are having difficulty, this is a good time to talk to others about the standards—discuss them in your support group or talk to your mentor or colleague.



#### Exercise 4:

Make a T-chart to help you relate the standards to your practice. Write a concise summary of the NBPTS Standard at the top of a page. Divide the page vertically. On the left side, list the values associated with the standard. On the right side, note the things you do—or might do—to exemplify the standard.

<b>CONCISE SUMMARY OF STANDARD I</b>	
<b>ASSOCIATED VALUES</b>	<b>WHAT I DO OR MIGHT DO TO EXEMPLIFY THE STANDARD</b>

#### Providing Evidence

Not only must you know what each standard says and means, but you must also think through:

- What **evidence** in your teaching practice demonstrates the standard?
- How does that evidence meet the particular standard?

Use the following formula when supporting student learning:

$$C = E + ISL$$

When you make a claim (C), you must give evidence (E) to support that claim and then state how this had an impact on student learning (ISL).

NBPTS assessors report that the majority of candidates who do not achieve National Board Certification have one thing in common: The portfolio entries did not provide convincing evidence that the candidates had met NBPTS Standards.

The certification process requires that candidates show how they meet the particular NBPTS Standards required for each portfolio entry. You are required to collect and prepare evidence—student work samples, written commentaries, and video recordings—that demonstrate your teaching practice. You might think of your task as having three parts:

- Understanding the NBPTS Standards.
- Embodying the standards in your practice.
- Demonstrating to the assessors that you embody the standards in your practice.

Unsuccessful candidates typically quote the NBPTS text for the standards in their portfolio entries but do not provide student work and reflections that actually demonstrate how their teaching practice meets the standards and affects student learning. **A successful candidate is able to explain how the student work or the video recordings submitted show that the candidate has met a standard and how his or her teaching has affected student learning.**



## Chapter 4: Materials, Planning and Fees

**T**his chapter includes tips on how to create a reasonable schedule for developing and submitting your portfolio and preparing for the Assessment Center, as well as strategies that help you manage the certification process. This chapter also includes sources of technical support and highlights elements of the NBPTS certification process.

### Download and Print Materials

About four weeks after your application and initial payment are received at NBPTS, you will receive a box of materials necessary to submit your portfolio. Before your box arrives, we strongly encourage you to **download and print the *Assessment Calendar*, the *NBPTS Standards*, the *Scoring Guide for Candidates*, *Portfolio Instructions* for your specific certificate area, and the *Assessment Center Guidelines* from the NBPTS Web site.**

Once the box arrives, be sure to check the packing list to make sure everything is enclosed. If something is missing, call NBPTS at 1-800-22TEACH. The box will include some necessary materials that are not available on the Web site and a CD-ROM.

**The CD-ROM** contains Standards, *Portfolio Instructions* (including shipping information), and other resources in a Web-based format that you can read on-screen or print. If you choose to print the *Portfolio Instructions*, be aware that the materials total approximately 200 pages. It is well worth the effort to locate a printer capable of printing double-sided pages. If you don't have one, ask the technology coordinator at your

school, your district office, or your union representative for help. A local copy store is another option.

Other supplies to have on hand as you start getting organized are:

**A calendar** with both a week-by-week view and a month-by-month view—this calendar will help you keep focused and on schedule during the certification process. Set up a realistic calendar and stick with it.

**School and personal calendar** so you are able to incorporate those dates into your planning.

**Printer paper** to print the *Portfolio Instructions* from the CD-ROM and other useful information from the NBPTS Web site.

**Blank notebooks**—National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) recommend that you keep notebooks and pens in places where you will have time to think—for example, at your bedside and in the kitchen. One of these notebooks will serve as your “standards notebook,” which is described in Chapter 3.

**Highlighters**—Some NBCTs recommend that you use highlighters to help you study the standards and the *Portfolio Instructions* and color-code your calendar.

**Two three-ring binders with pockets**—Put your NBPTS *Portfolio Instructions* and related materials in one and your NBPTS Standards in the other.



■ *Managing Your Time* in Part 1 of the *Portfolio Instructions*



It is a good idea to make a master copy of the forms required for portfolio submission.



Save the box to mail your portfolio back to NBPTS when you are finished.



Please check with your state subsidy provider for state deadlines and requirements.

**Boxes or file organizers**—Use these to help organize each entry and related materials. The materials in the NBPTS portfolio box are your primary source of answers and information. Take the time to carefully read *Phase 1: Prepare* in Part 1 of the *Portfolio Instructions*. As you read and review the contents, you will begin to develop the “big picture” of what completing your portfolio involves.

### Developing a Schedule

Once you have reviewed the contents of the box and are certain that all the materials are enclosed, it is time to begin making a plan and developing a reasonable schedule for the entire certification process. For application/eligibility periods, Assessment Center testing windows, and portfolio due dates, see the chart below.



It is a good idea to schedule your Assessment Center appointment as early as possible.

Think about how much time you have available to develop your portfolio before it is due and how much time you have to prepare for the Assessment Center. Many National Board Certified Teachers report spending 200 to 400 hours preparing for and completing the assessment process.

The figure shown on page 23 is an example of what one month in your calendar might look like. Answer the questions around the margins of the calendar to guide you in developing your own

candidacy calendar. Fill in your candidacy calendar with deadlines, important dates, ongoing tasks, etc. For example, plan when you are going to conduct the different activities required for portfolio submission. These activities include:

**Video recording**—Start recording early and often—so that you and your students become accustomed to being recorded, and to ensure that you have several lessons to analyze.

**Collecting student work**—Start collecting student work right away—the more samples you have, the more options you will have in deciding what to submit.

**Documented accomplishments**—Begin immediately to describe your accomplishments and collect documentation.

**Putting the portfolio together**—Plan to spend a day putting together your portfolio and celebrating its completion.

### Helpful Strategies

Each candidate has a unique experience when pursuing National Board Certification, and all have a particular struggle that must be overcome to finish the course and achieve National Board Certification. This struggle is not only contained in providing evidence that a candidate’s practice meets the highest level established by the profession. It is also heavily wrapped in managing LIFE during the process. National Board Certified Teachers offer words of wisdom below:

**Build a support system**—Many candidates find it helpful to work through the certification process with one or more colleagues. Previous candidates have suggested many different ways to find or create a good support system:

2009-2010 National Board Certification Assessment Calendar																							
STEP	WHAT TO DO	2009											2010										
		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J			
1	<b>Submit</b> • Application • \$500 nonrefundable initial fee To NBPTS ⇄	1											31										
	<b>Submit</b> • All eligibility forms • Full fee payment of \$2,500 To NBPTS ⇄	1											31										
2	<b>Make an Appointment*</b> • After submitting above materials • 30 days before test date Assessment Center Window ⇄																						
	<b>Submit</b> • Your portfolio To NBPTS ⇄	1											31										

\*Full-fee payment and all eligibility forms must be submitted prior to making a testing appointment. Testing appointments are based on limited availability at assessment centers. Candidates are strongly encouraged to make their testing appointment at least 30 days in advance of their desired testing date. Extensions of the testing window will not be granted for any reason.



- Determine whether an organized support system is available through your union, your school district, a local teacher center, or a nearby university.
- Check for candidate support providers through your school system, the unions, or the universities.
- Identify a colleague who is also completing the certification process—even if the buddy isn't in the same certificate area. Having someone you trust to offer honest feedback and make suggestions can be invaluable. (Always remember, though, it is the NBPTS Standards you must meet, not your colleague's.)
- Identify at least two colleagues to review your portfolio; different perspectives are helpful

in ensuring that you have written clear and compelling commentary. Make sure these readers know what the requirements are for each entry. Go over the directions and relevant NBPTS Standards with them and show them the *Scoring Guide for Candidates* in your certificate area as a reference.

- Talk to your students about this endeavor. Tell them that you are stretching yourself as a professional because you want to be a better teacher. Share with them that this is the "Olympics" of teaching (or any other appropriate metaphor) and that you will need their help to win the gold!
- Seek advice and help from NBPTS—[www.nbpts.org/help\\_and\\_faqs](http://www.nbpts.org/help_and_faqs).



Color-code the events on your calendar so that you can quickly see which events are personal, school-related, or NBPTS-related.



Set deadlines and meet them!

When can I work on my portfolio entries each week?      What recurring activities require my time?      What are the non-negotiable NBPTS due dates?      What important personal commitments do I have during the certification process?

January 2010						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 Mail in Eligibility Forms	2 Family Reunion Weekend
3 Family Reunion Weekend	4 Send NBPTS student release forms home with other beginning-of-the-year forms to be signed by the parent	5 NBPTS Support Group 3:00-5:00	6 Work on NBPTS Portfolio 3:30-5:30	7 Maria's soccer practice 5:00-7:00	8	9 Movie with Marc—Mom watching kids
10	11	12 NBPTS Support Group 3:00-5:00	13 Work on NBPTS Portfolio 3:30-5:30	14 Maria's soccer practice 5:00-7:00	15	16
17	18	19 NBPTS Support Group 3:00-5:00	20 Work on NBPTS Portfolio 3:30-5:30	21 Maria's soccer practice 5:00-7:00	22 Video record second period	23
24	25	26 NBPTS Support Group 3:00-5:00	27 Work on NBPTS Portfolio 3:30-5:30	28 Maria's soccer practice 5:00-7:00	29	30
31						

What details can I take care of early?      Have I scheduled time to work with other teachers who are going through, or have gone through, the NBPTS certification process?      When will I do my different NBPTS activities, and what is required in preparation?      Have I included time to relax?



### Exercise 5:

Use this chart to map your application/eligibility path.

MY NBPTS DUE DATES (Partial list)	Date
When are my application and the nonrefundable \$65 application processing charge and \$500 nonrefundable initial fee due to NBPTS?	
When are my full fee payment and all eligibility forms due?	
When must I make my Assessment Center appointment?	
When is my portfolio due at NBPTS?	

**Ask for help**—Candidates who have completed the process recommend that you ask for help when you need it. There are no penalties for seeking help, so it makes sense to take advantage of every available resource.

Your first two stops should be your union representative and your school administration. Find out if they can provide assistance. Examples of candidate support that might be available include:

- Paper
- Photocopying and printing
- Release time to visit other teachers
- Release time to prepare your portfolio
- Video recording equipment and assistance
- Computer loan
- Sponsoring support groups or study groups
- Securing professional materials and resources

If you feel uncomfortable with the writing requirement, find colleagues who can read your writing for clarity. Although the writing requirement is intensive, the portfolio does not require anything beyond clear, concise prose.

If you are responsible for children or adults who need a caretaker, organize this early on in the process and explain the portfolio and Assessment Center timelines to your support provider. As each deadline nears, you may need more time, more frequently to work on your entries and prepare for the Assessment Center.

**Know thyself**—Set reasonable deadlines based on your way of accomplishing a task.

Talk to your friends and family. Solicit their assistance and encouragement. You will need large doses of encouragement throughout this journey. Talk to someone who will build you up when you are down.

Set two specific goals:

- I will turn in all portfolio entries and complete all Assessment Center exercises.
- I will achieve National Board Certification.

**Ethics**—NBPTS encourages collaboration with colleagues. However, **all of the work that you submit as part of your response to any entry must be yours and yours alone**. This means that if you work as a member of a team, your written analyses, the student work samples you submit, and your video recordings must all feature teaching you did and work you oversaw. **If more than one member of a team is going through the assessment, you have an excellent opportunity to collaborate**. But, it is mandatory that each candidate submit different video recording segments, separate and different analyses, and separate and different student work samples. If you submit materials identical to those of another candidate, both of you will be disqualified from the certification process.

For important information regarding adherence to ethical behavior that is expected of all National Board Certification candidates, *Take One!* participants, and National Board Certified Teachers, see the *Guide for Ethical Candidate Support* on the Candidate Support page of the NBPTS Web site ([www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/candidate\\_support](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/candidate_support)).

If a candidate is denied certification or has National Board Certification revoked, NBPTS will provide complete information to the agency responsible for state licensure, employers, as well as any third-party payer who financially supported the teacher involved. NBPTS will also remove the name of the teacher from any NBPTS official listing of NBCTs, and make the teacher's name, city, state, and date of action taken available online and through print publications and press releases.



Use the NBPTS tracking form (found in *Phase 2: Develop* in Part 1 of the *Portfolio Instructions*) to record the classes you have video recorded, the unit you were teaching, and the student work you chose for each entry.

**Nondisclosure Agreement**

At the Assessment Center, you will be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement. If you do not sign it, you will not be permitted to take the test. By signing the agreement, you agree to maintain the full confidentiality of all test questions—specifically, not to reproduce or disclose any test question, in

whole or in part, to any person or entity. If you fail to adhere to this agreement, you will be subject to serious consequences, up to and including legal prosecution.

**FEES AND CHARGES** The following chart lists the various fees and charges applicable to the NBPTS certification process. Candidates are responsible for confirming receipt by NBPTS of any fees, charges, forms, and notices. After applications have been processed, candidates can check the status of fees and charges posted to their individual accounts by accessing *My Profile* via the NBPTS Web site ([www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/my\\_profile](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/my_profile)). Credit card payments will appear in a candidate’s record on the next business day after payment.

TYPE OF FEE/CHARGE	WHAT TO SUBMIT	AMOUNT OF FEE/CHARGE	DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT BY NBPTS
<p><b>Application processing charge for first-time candidates</b> This processing charge is required for all first-time applications and has been established to offset the rising cost of processing applications from candidates who subsequently do not pursue full certification.</p>	Payable online, via credit/debit card (Visa or MasterCard only) or by e-check. NBPTS cannot accept paper checks, money orders, or payments from third parties for this charge.	\$65	<p><b>2009-10 candidates:</b> Must be paid at the time of application submission, and no later than December 31, 2009. NBPTS will not accept your application without payment of this processing charge, and all information provided on your application will be lost.</p>
<p><b>Nonrefundable initial fee</b></p>	Payable online via credit/debit card (Visa or MasterCard only) or e-check. If a third-party payer is paying all or part of the initial fee, the candidate is responsible for taking appropriate steps to ensure the payment is made by the deadline.	\$500	December 31, 2009
<p><b>Certification Assessment fee</b> This fee is required for all new candidates for National Board Certification.</p>	Complete the online candidate application. After your candidate application has been submitted, NBPTS can apply personal or third-party payments (for example, money from your state) to your account. If payment will be made by a third party, the candidate is responsible for taking appropriate steps to ensure payment is made on his or her behalf.	<p>\$2,500 Personal payments can be made using credit/debit card (Visa or MasterCard only), e-check, or money order. Visa, MasterCard, and e-check payments must be made online by accessing <i>My Profile</i>.</p>	<p><b>2009-10 candidates:</b> January 31, 2010 (March 15, 2010, for candidates choosing the extended payment option).</p>
<p><b>Take One! order fee</b></p>	Complete and submit the online order form.	\$395	
<p><b>Returned check fee</b> This fee is assessed if your personal check is returned. This fee applies to both paper and electronic checks.</p>	Information regarding the returned check and the fee.	\$35	30 days after notification.

(Continued)

TYPE OF FEE/CHARGE	WHAT TO SUBMIT	AMOUNT OF FEE/CHARGE	DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT BY NBPTS
<p><b>Change of certificate area</b> To change your certificate area after you have submitted your application, a fee is required to cover the cost of changing information in the candidate database and sending another portfolio kit. (Available for first-time candidates only.)</p>	Request for change (include candidate ID number and mailing address) and the fee. If your new certificate area requires selection of a specialty area, you must provide this information at the time of your request. Change of certificate area requests must be submitted in writing.	\$75	January 31, 2010, and prior to scheduling an Assessment Center appointment and submitting any portfolio entries for scoring.
<p><b>Change of specialty area</b> To change your specialty area after you have submitted your application, but prior to scheduling or attending your Assessment Center appointment, a fee is required to cover the cost of changing information in your candidate record and sending Assessment Center materials. (Available for first-time candidates only.)</p>	Request for change (include candidate ID number and mailing address) and the fee. Change of specialty area requests must be made in writing.	\$75	Prior to scheduling or attending an Assessment Center appointment.
<p><b>Reinstatement of eligibility</b> If you were absent from your appointment and did not notify the test center prior to one business day before your appointment, you must reinstate your eligibility before you can schedule a new appointment.</p>	You must call to reinstate your eligibility and make payment arrangements.	\$175	You must reinstate your eligibility before you schedule any new testing appointments.
<p><b>Printed score report</b> Score results for the three most recent reporting years are available online at any time. This fee is charged for a printed copy of a score report that is available through <i>My Profile</i>.</p>	Request for the copy (include candidate ID number and mailing address) and the fee.	\$25	Three years from the date the scores were originally released.
<p><b>Retake application processing charge</b> This processing charge is required for all retake applications and has been established to offset the rising cost of processing applications from candidates who subsequently do not continue pursuit of certification. Your retake application will not be accepted by NBPTS without payment of this processing charge, and all information provided on your retake application will be lost.</p>	Payable online, via credit/debit card (Visa or MasterCard only) or by e-check. NBPTS cannot accept paper checks or money orders for this charge.	\$15	Upon submission of retake application, and no later than January 31, 2010.
<p><b>Retake fee (per entry/exercise)</b> This fee is required for each portfolio entry or Assessment Center exercise that you choose to retake. You must apply to retake entries/exercises in the same certificate area (and same specialty code, if applicable) that you were assessed in as a first-time candidate.</p> <p>Retake fees are nonrefundable, regardless of the circumstances.</p>	Retake application and the fee. The retake application will be available online following score release. After your application has been submitted, NBPTS can apply personal or third-party payments (for example, money from your state) to your account. If a third-party payer will make payment, the candidate is responsible for taking appropriate steps to ensure payment is made on his or her behalf.	\$350 per entry/exercise  Personal payments can be made using credit/debit card (Visa or MasterCard only), e-check, personal check, or money order. Visa, Mastercard, and e-check payments must be made online by accessing <i>My Profile</i> .	January 31, 2010.

(Continued)

TYPE OF FEE/CHARGE	WHAT TO SUBMIT	AMOUNT OF FEE/CHARGE	DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT BY NBPTS
<b>Change of retake selection fee</b> Fee required to change a retake entry/exercise after application has been submitted. This change fee does not apply to entries that you add or deselect prior to paying the \$350 retake fee. Retake fees are nonrefundable, regardless of the circumstances. You may not deselect an entry after you have paid the retake fee, but you may defer that entry if you are still eligible to retake.	Request for the change (include candidate ID number and mailing address) and the fee. Change of retake selection fee requests must be made in writing.	\$75 per change	January 31, 2010.
<b>Retake reactivation fee (per entry/exercise)</b> This fee is required for each portfolio entry or Assessment Center exercise that you choose to defer after you have paid the retake fee. <i>(This service is not available to candidates in their last year of eligibility.)</i>	Written request for deferment prior to your portfolio deadline or Assessment Center appointment. Deferments can also be submitted via <i>My Profile</i> at <a href="http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/my_profile">www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/my_profile</a> .	\$125 per entry/exercise deferred	Prior to the deadline for assessment fees in the year you reactivate.
<b>Score Verification Service</b> The fee is required to request that your score be verified by NBPTS. Service is available for a limited period of time after scores are released.	Online application indicating what service you are requesting and payment of the fee online by credit/debit card (Visa or MasterCard only).	\$75 per score verified	30 days after the date printed on the score report.
<b>Appeal filing fee</b> Fee to appeal your assessment results.	Written request for the appeal and the fee.	\$500	60 days after the date printed on the score report.

## Refunds

If a candidate's account becomes overpaid for a particular cycle, refund requests for all overpaid fees must be submitted no later than March 1 of the year after the release of scores for the specific cycle in which fees were overpaid. It is the responsibility of the candidate to review charges assessed and payments made against those charges by accessing *My Profile*, and to the extent that payments from any payer cause the candidate's account to be in an overpaid situation, the candidate must inform NBPTS as to which payee should be refunded the amount of the overpayment.

## Where to send payments

### By mail:

NBPTS  
c/o Bank of America - Illinois  
P.O. Box 99406  
Chicago, IL 60693

### By courier:

NBPTS  
c/o Bank of America - Illinois  
99406 Collections Center Drive  
Lockbox 99406  
Chicago, IL 60693

## Additional Support

**General Information**—Use the NBPTS toll-free help line (1-800-22TEACH). Calling the help line does not count for or against you in any way.

The content of calls is tracked only to identify frequently asked questions, provide information, and help clarify future instructions.

**Help with Fees**—To find out about fee support, interest-free loans, or incentives where you live, ask your local or state union leaders or your district administrators, and access online information about the National Board Scholarship Program at [www.nbpts.org/become\\_a\\_candidate/fees\\_financial\\_support](http://www.nbpts.org/become_a_candidate/fees_financial_support) or call (888) 908-FEES (3337).

**NEA National Board Certification Loan**—NEA members seeking National Board Certification have access to a revolving line of credit. Upon approval, MBNA Bank of America, N.A. will assign you a \$3,000 credit limit with repayment terms from 12 to 36 months, no application fees, no transaction fees, and no collateral required. As a special enhancement, the loan also features a 90-day deferred payment option. For more information, or to apply, call (800) 545-4094 from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday; from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Friday; or from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturday (all hours are Eastern Time).

**My Profile**—Candidates can monitor the status of their application online via *My Profile* (see [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/my\\_profile](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/my_profile)). *My Profile* is a secure, password-protected program that candidates can access any time after they create a username and password by keying in their candidate ID, last name and birth date.

From there, candidates can:

- Review their application information, such as certificate area, name, mailing address, phone number(s), etc.
- Review the status, and track the receipt at NBPTS of fee payments, eligibility forms, and portfolio materials.
- Change their profile (e.g., mailing address and contact information); special considerations (e.g., nonstandard testing accommodations, third-party agencies and donors that provide fee support and scholarships, submitting student work in Spanish, or submitting student work in a manual language); or password.
- Review and print a copy of their official score report (after scores have been released).

**Online Help and FAQs**—This part of the Web site includes important information on eligibility requirements, available certificates, retake information, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to other valuable resources. ([www.nbpts.org/help\\_and\\_faqs](http://www.nbpts.org/help_and_faqs)). You can also get answers to your questions from the Candidate Inquiry Service ([http://cis.nbpts.org/nbpts/form\\_candidate.v2.php](http://cis.nbpts.org/nbpts/form_candidate.v2.php)).

**Digital Edge Learning Interchange** (<http://ali.apple.com/digitaledge>) showcases NBCT lessons including video recordings on a wide range of grades and subject matter. Components include professional standards, specific lessons for all grade levels, student work samples, parental involvement, assessments, reflections, resources, and technology.

For more information, use the NBPTS Web site at [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates).





## Section 2:

# The NBPTS Portfolio

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### Overview

Now that you have developed a timeline and studied the NBPTS Standards, it is time to start putting your portfolio together. This section provides information and activities to help you prepare a portfolio that presents your teaching in the way NBPTS requires.

If you are seeking National Board Certification, you are required to submit a total of four entries in your portfolio.

Three of the entries will be classroom-based. Generally, two of these will require video recordings that document your teaching practice. One entry will require that you document your professional accomplishments beyond the classroom in working with families and the community. All entries require written commentaries that describe, analyze, and reflect on your teaching practice.

If you indicated intent to use the Spanish Language Option on your application, you will complete the same portfolio entries and Assessment Center exercises as your certificate-area colleagues; the difference is that you may submit student work and video recordings that are in Spanish. The written commentary accompanying each portfolio entry and your responses to the Assessment Center exercises, however, must be in English.

As you proceed through this guide, you might find it helpful to have the *Portfolio Instructions* next to you so you can follow along.



*Spanish Language Option in Part 1 of the Portfolio Instructions (under Language Accommodation Policies)*

## Chapter 5:

# Following Directions

This chapter describes how you can improve your likelihood of achieving National Board Certification by carefully reading and following the *Portfolio Instructions*.

Part 2 of the *Portfolio Instructions* provides entry directions and forms—names and descriptions of entries, targeted standards and requirements, specifications, and submission information. It is available on the CD-ROM or can be downloaded from the NBPTS Web site after you have selected a certificate area at [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/the\\_portfolio](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/the_portfolio).

For a “big picture” overview of the entries you will submit as part of your portfolio, consult *Submission at a Glance*—a one-page chart (in Part 2 of the *Portfolio Instructions*, immediately preceding the forms) that lists, by entry, all forms and deliverables for a specific certificate area portfolio.

### Format of the Portfolio Instructions

- Standards Measured
- What Do I Need to Do?
- Instructions for each entry’s deliverables
- Cover sheets and forms (including video layout forms, release forms, teacher attestation forms, and the candidate final inventory form)

### Rules for Submission

For the purpose of establishing a fair and equitable playing field for everyone, the *Portfolio Instructions* include format specifications you must follow as you prepare and compile

your evidence. If you do not follow these rules, you risk having your entry disqualified or receiving a score that is not reflective of your practice.

Look for, highlight, and abide by the specifications, including those for:

**Page limits**—for written commentaries, student work samples, and other instructional materials. Remember, assessors will stop reading at the page limits. Print on one side only. If you submit pages with text or pictures on both sides, each side will count as one page.

**Length of video entries**—remember, assessors will not watch more than the specified time limits. If you decide to use a DVD, be sure to use a DVD-R for submission.

**Format descriptions**—size of print/type, line spacing, margin size, preferred fonts, and page layouts.

**Use of names**—do not use last names and do not use identifiers such as school names, colleagues’ names, or city names. Remove your own name from written commentaries and student work.

### Suggestions for Submission

- Allow extra time to prepare and collate all the forms and entries that you will be sending to NBPTS.
- Make sure you allow enough time to complete the task and double-check that everything is included.
- Make photocopies of all materials you submit as part of your portfolio.



## AVOID MISTAKES

To avoid mistakes made by not following directions, past candidates suggest that you:

- Concentrate on the standards addressed by each entry.
- Prepare your responses and materials according to the specifications set forth in the directions.
- **Answer all questions in each entry.**
- Provide evidence and/or link evidence to what you write in your commentaries and link it to the impact on student learning.
- Be clear, convincing, and consistent.
- Analyze and reflect—don't just describe—in your written commentaries.
- Use sentence stems when answering questions.
- Write the question in your draft to make sure you answer the prompt. You can delete it in your last draft.

- Copy all written commentaries, student work samples, and instructional materials.
- Make copies of your videos.
- Always use the directions provided in Part 2 of the *Portfolio Instructions*.
- Keep all materials in a safe and easily accessible place.

### Spanish Language Option (SLO): Clarification of Rules for Classroom-Based Entries

The Spanish Language Option allows candidates to submit student work and video recordings in Spanish.

This option provides an opportunity for generalists and content-area teachers who have a large number of Spanish-speaking students in their classes, and who, therefore, deliver instruction in both English and Spanish, to become National Board Certified Teachers. The SLO is available to candidates in all certificate areas except the English Language Arts, and World Languages Other Than

English certificate areas. (Note that candidates in Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading-Language Arts may elect to use the SLO.) Candidates who exercise this option complete the same portfolio entries and Assessment Center exercises as their certificate-area colleagues. The written commentaries accompanying each portfolio and the responses to the Assessment Center exercises must be in English. In addition, candidates who exercise the SLO are required to submit a written English translation of any written student work submitted in Spanish and/or an English transcript of any video-recorded evidence submitted in Spanish. Candidates must provide the required English translation or transcript, or the response will not be scored. English language translations provided with evidence in Spanish must meet all format specifications for written portfolio materials and must include the candidate's ID number and the entry title in English.



Spend time on reading, reflecting, and analyzing directions. It is one key to success!



Due to the complexity and volume of materials received, NBPTS will not be able to return your original materials.



Trust that you will find these suggestions invaluable if your submission is lost or damaged en route to NBPTS.



The copies you retain also will be useful when reviewing your score results.



NBCTS also suggest making the final copy, the copy you keep for your records, on a different color paper. This way, you know that it is not a draft and is an exact copy of what you sent to NBPTS.

## Chapter 6: Collecting Examples of Your Teaching Practice



Some NBCTs recommend that you include teacher comments on the student work you submit. Comments should be constructive and should reflect that you understand the particular difficulty the student is having.



Practice Activities in  
Part 1 of the *Portfolio  
Instructions* (in *Phase 2:  
Develop*)

**F**or the portfolio, you are required to prepare specific instructional materials—video recordings of your teaching, student work samples, assignments/prompts, etc.—as evidence of your teaching practice. **Read the directions for each entry** (in Part 2 of the *Portfolio Instructions*) **carefully!** Here you will find specific guidelines for the most appropriate assignments and lessons from which to collect student work and video/DVD footage. Following are some general guidelines that apply to all types of instructional materials:

- Choose assignments that allow you to elicit and demonstrate a range of students' understanding of the lesson content.
- Choose complex assignments that will challenge your students to think deeply and/or across disciplines.
- Follow the directions for the type of work that must be submitted. Make sure your instructional materials, if required, meet the unique specifications for each entry.

### Student Work Samples

You will be required to submit entries focused on student work samples along with written commentaries. All written materials submitted as part of the assessment **must** be in English (unless otherwise indicated).

When collecting student work, save copies of class sets to ensure you have the widest selection. It is also a good idea not to make early decisions about which students to feature, because students can move or be transferred to different classes and because your choices may change as you become more familiar with the NBPTS Standards and portfolio entry requirements. There are many kinds of student work. The examples you choose should reflect the types of student work that are most important to your certificate area. Be sure to include only the precise number of students specified in the directions for each entry.



**Exercise 6:**

To analyze student work, select a recent lesson that you taught and collect copies of student work. Complete this exercise based on the lesson.

**ANALYZING STUDENT WORK**

Portfolio entry: \_\_\_\_\_

Standards addressed in this entry: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What was the learning goal(s) of this assignment?
2. How does this work assignment demonstrate the learning goal(s)?
3. What did the student understand about the concept?
4. What did the student misunderstand about the concept?
5. What patterns of errors are evident in the work?
6. What criteria did I use to assess this work sample? (Not “What grade did I give the paper?”)
7. How did the student assess his/her own work?
8. How did I give the student constructive feedback?
9. How is this feedback evident to the assessors?
10. What do I need to explain or reteach about this concept?
11. Based on the analysis of this work sample, what does the student need to learn next?
12. How can I connect future instruction to this learning?



### Exercise 7:

To help provide evidence for written commentary and video recordings, ask a critical friend to observe your teaching and complete this worksheet.

## CRITICAL OBSERVATION WORKSHEET

The observer should cite evidence in your teaching that addresses each of the following questions:

1. What is the evidence of the teacher's ability to plan a thoughtful sequence of learning experiences that:

- Fosters development of clearly delineated \_\_\_\_\_ concepts?
- Employs the \_\_\_\_\_ process as an integral part of the activities?

2. What evidence suggests that the individual employs activities that:

- Are directly relevant to the \_\_\_\_\_ concepts?
- Tap the students' natural curiosity and interests?
- Allow for the students to have some control of the activity?

3. What evidence indicates that the learning experiences are designed to help students discover \_\_\_\_\_ principles for themselves?

4. What evidence exists to show that the teacher helps students understand the relevance of the featured activities to the concepts being addressed?

5. What evidence indicates that the students are deeply engaged intellectually as they actively participate in \_\_\_\_\_?

6. What evidence indicates that the teacher encourages posing questions and formulating and discussing ideas?

7. What evidence reveals that the teacher challenges students' thinking while interacting with them?

8. What evidence verifies that the students engage in \_\_\_\_\_ as they work with other students and/or they engage in independent activities?

9. What evidence shows the teacher's ability to:

- Reflect on students' learning?
- Examine her or his own role in fostering engagement and learning?
- Identify areas that need improvement?

## Video/DVD Entries

When selecting lessons to video record, pay attention to how you will show the “total picture” of your classroom. You want your video to convey—to the extent possible—the classroom climate, student engagement, interactions (both verbal and nonverbal), and your role in promoting classroom discourse. Always refer to Part 2 of the *Portfolio Instructions* as you make decisions about the content for each entry.

In most cases, you will be required to submit two videos of yourself teaching, accompanied by written commentaries. The videos provide an opportunity to show an authentic and complete view of your teaching. Because National Board assessors do not visit your classroom, the videos are the only way they can see you in action. Until you and your students are accustomed to the video-recording process, however, it is unlikely that you will be able to make one that accurately portrays your class.

Inhibition, self-consciousness, and silliness can keep people from acting naturally on a video. The only solution to this problem is practice, practice, and more practice.

Review the *Recording Video Entries* section in *Phase 2: Develop* (in Part 1 of the *Portfolio Instructions*). It contains important information on equipment, technique, and the required release forms. It also provides pictures to help you see the best camera angles in two different classroom settings. Ask for help from your media specialist,

a friend, a teacher assistant, or a student who will be able to help you on several occasions during the certification process. You must be familiar with the detailed requirements for producing your videos. The handout at the end of this chapter can be used to provide your cameraperson with the basic information needed.

Next, complete the following exercises, including selecting practice lessons to record, answering the analysis questions, and completing the analysis practice worksheet. Keep in mind that assessors are looking for (1) climate, (2) pedagogy, (3) instruction, and (4) interactive communication. They must see your face and the faces of your students. Working with these practice videos will provide a unique opportunity to learn from studying your practice and also to hone your skills of observation, analysis, and reflection. These are the skills that will help you complete the assessment process and will enhance your skill as a teaching professional.

Please note, the acceptance of VHS submissions may be phased out in a future candidacy cycle, so candidates may prefer to record video evidence on DVD to avoid having to re-record or transfer videotapes. DVD instructions to help candidates properly prepare, mark, pack, and ship DVD submissions are included in the *Portfolio Instructions* and the *Profile of Professional Growth*, available on the NBPTS Web site and on the CD-ROM. Candidates should read these instructions carefully and adhere to the tips and procedures outlined.



It is a good idea to begin recording early and often until you are adept at getting a video that provides a complete picture of your teaching.



For each class that you record, make a few notes that will help you recall that class session. Also, be sure to label the videos and your notes in such a way that you can quickly and correctly match them when you begin to analyze the recording.



Remember, assessors must be able to see the faces and hear the voices of both you and your students. When making your video, make sure you follow the directions for your specific certificate area.



Don't worry, software menus are acceptable. The assessors do not consider these an edit and will push “play” if necessary.



### Exercise 8:

Use this worksheet to take notes that will help you recall the recording of the class session once you are ready to analyze it.

## VIDEO WORKSHEET

Entry #: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Minutes of video required: \_\_\_\_\_

Standards addressed: \_\_\_\_\_

Content area: \_\_\_\_\_

Grouping specifications (e.g., individual students, small group, whole class):

What does NBPTS want to see in this video?

What lessons might fulfill these requirements, and approximately when will they be presented?



Use actual quotes or actions from the video as evidence to support your statements.

LESSON/UNIT	APPROX. DATE



**Exercise 9:**

Use this worksheet to help you think about what lesson(s) will best fulfill the requirements for the recorded entries.

**VIDEO NOTES**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson Objectives:**

1. What particular instructional challenges did the students in the class offer?
  
2. How successful was the lesson (i.e., were the lesson objectives achieved)? What worked? Cite and analyze the evidence you have to support your opinion.
  
3. What might you do differently next time?
  
4. Describe the instructional materials used in the lesson.
  
5. Describe evidence of student learning for each lesson objective.

Lesson Objectives	Evidence of Student Learning



Use this guide as a handy checklist for producing your video.



## VIDEO RECORDING GUIDE

### Purpose

The purpose of the video is to provide the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards with as authentic and complete a view of the candidate's teaching as possible. This guide presents requirements that NBPTS has established that **must** be followed and suggestions for producing a high-quality recording.

### Minimum equipment needed

- Video camera
- VHS videotapes and CDs (Because NBPTS may not accept VHS tapes in a future cycle, candidates may prefer to record on DVD to avoid having to re-record or transfer videotapes.)
- Recordable DVDs (DVD-R format)
- Tripod
- Extension cord (*remember to tape down cords*)

### Optional equipment

- External microphone
- Headphones (*for monitoring sound as it is being recorded*)

### NBPTS requirements

- **Do not stop and restart the camera at any time** because this may result in the video being unacceptable.
- Make sure to follow the directions and time lengths for your specific certificate area.
- **The video must show the faces of the teacher and the students.**
- The video must **not** show a child or adult whom the teacher has identified as not having a release form because this will result in the video being unacceptable.

### Tips to improve video quality

- Before recording, make sure all cables are securely connected and the medium is in the camera.

- Use a tripod.
  - Position the camera at the side of the room, not facing windows. In general, the camera should be aimed at the speaker, but in a position to capture the participating students. Do not move the camera back and forth between speakers.
  - If chalkboard writing is important to the lesson, take care to ensure that it is captured on the video and that it is legible. Suggestions include:
    - Refocus lens on the board during the lesson.
    - Check the angle before you start recording; you may need to move the camera to avoid distractions such as glare.
    - Consider using dark markers on chart paper taped to the chalkboard.
  - If it is necessary to move the camera while recording, set the zoom lens to its widest setting to reduce the amount of shakiness.
  - Increase the amount of light in the room by turning on all of the lights and opening window blinds. However, **do not aim the camera at a source of bright light.**
- ### Tips to improve sound quality
- Turn off fans, air conditioners, fish tank pumps, etc.
  - Avoid recording when there is extraneous noise (e.g., band practice, recess, lawn mowing, fire drills).
  - Use an external microphone that can be kept close to the person who is speaking. Place a piece of felt under the microphone to diminish noise.
  - Put a “Do Not Disturb” sign on the classroom door to avoid interruptions.
  - Check with the office for unscheduled activities (i.e., fire drills, assemblies, etc.).



## Chapter 7: Preparing Written Commentaries

**T**hroughout the portfolio, you will be asked to prepare written commentaries that will include descriptive, analytic, and reflective writing. In these commentaries, you will demonstrate your understanding and provide your interpretation of the significance of what you have submitted. Most practicing teachers do not spend a lot of time thinking and writing about teaching in this way because they are too busy preparing lessons and teaching classes.

For this reason, it is important that you review the special characteristics of each type of writing and then practice both describing and interpreting your work in the classroom.

### Description vs. Analysis vs. Reflection

**Description** is an objective retelling. When you are asked for description, you must relate what happened accurately and in logical order, so that your reader can have the best sense possible of how your lesson unfolded. Be sure to include all key features that would help a reader feel that he or she was in the classroom with you.

**Analysis** and **reflection** overlap. Both of these types of writing ask you to answer the questions “**why?**” and “**how?**” Analysis is interpretation of the facts, so if you are asked to provide analysis, do not tell what happened (that is description); instead, explain **why** you think it happened and how you feel it influenced the course of the lesson, or your students’ understanding. Reflection is self-analysis. When you are asked what you would do differently in a lesson, you are being asked to reflect on your own practice. **Analysis and reflection require supporting evidence.** Although the focus of this kind of writing is on your interpretation of the events and outcomes,

be sure to include the relevant facts to support your statements.

In *Writing About Teaching* in Part 1 of the *Portfolio Instructions*, there is a clear review of the characteristics of the different kinds of writing you will need to do. Read this section carefully and then complete the activities that follow. Do not think of these exercises as extra work, because completing them will help you later as you prepare each portfolio entry.

It is important that you take the time to think about them before you write your responses. Realize that it takes time, effort and multiple drafts to understand, recognize, and develop the different kinds of writing required for each entry. The process of writing and the analytical and reflective thinking behind it are inseparable. This work will broaden and deepen your practice as well as enable you to present your work to the assessors more effectively.

The directions for each portfolio entry will specify when each type of writing—descriptive, analytic, and/or reflective—is required. Your written commentaries must present an argument, complete with concrete evidence, that you meet the specified NBPTS Standards. In essence, your commentary itself is considered as evidence because it demonstrates that you are able to think about, analyze, and reflect on your teaching practice in relation to the NBPTS Standards. Your commentary is your response to the question, “**What** did you do and **why** did you do it?”

You will be asked to describe and analyze your practice as it relates to NBPTS Standards, so make special note of **which** standards are being



When preparing written commentaries, ask a colleague who is familiar with the NBPTS Standards to review your work and let you know if you are communicating clearly.



Remember, if you are using the Spanish Language Option, you may submit student work and video recordings in Spanish, but all written commentaries must be in English.



The *Level 4 Rubric* specifically requires clear, consistent, and convincing evidence in your responses. The *Level 4 Rubric* is given near the top of each entry and in the *Scoring Guide for Candidates*.

assessed in **each** entry. You must spend considerable time thinking about the standards and reflecting on your teaching in relation to those standards, so don't expect to read the standards once and then complete the entry. Rather, identify the specific standards being addressed in each entry and then review the standards notebook you created using the exercises in Chapter 4 of this guide.

Think about how you are teaching and what you do that embodies the standards. Then go into your classroom and teach. Set aside time later for reflection on how effective your teaching was in relation to those standards. Ask yourself these questions:

- How would I describe and analyze what I did in relation to these particular standards?
- How would I convince someone that my teaching embodies these standards?

**Keep in mind that no single teaching style or approach is expected or desired.** The classroom-based entries assume well-thought-out teaching practices that show students engaged

in learning. Candidates are expected to demonstrate that they:

- Know their students;
- Are able to set appropriate learning goals for them;
- Implement learning experiences to engage students in learning; and
- Analyze these experiences and reflect on their practice.

Read through all of the entry directions before beginning to make choices about which lessons to use for your entries. Now is the time to start thinking about the units you usually teach that might fit the requirements. As you read through the entries, use Exercise 10 (below) to help you study the parameters for each one.



#### Exercise 10:

Complete one of these forms for each portfolio entry.

### PORTFOLIO ENTRY EXERCISE

Certificate Area: \_\_\_\_\_ Entry Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Period: \_\_\_\_\_

What is valued in this entry?

Key words and phrases (look for these in the *Standards Measured* section at the beginning of the entry):

Topic and restrictions:

What must be submitted?

Standards assessed:

- a. Identify which standards are being assessed
- b. Briefly summarize each standard

## HANDOUT FOR REVIEWING WRITTEN COMMENTARIES



Use this handout as you prepare your written commentaries, and share it with the colleagues you have asked to review your work.

### Description

Description is called for when the prompt uses verbs like **state**, **list**, **describe**, or asks “**what**” or “**which**.” If the commentary asks for description, then review your response against the following criteria:

- Do you provide accurate and precise enumeration and/or explanation of critical features?
- Do you provide clear and logical ordering of the elements or features of the event, person, concept, or strategy being described?
- Do you include all of the features or elements that would allow an outsider to see as you see whatever is described?

### Analysis and Reflection

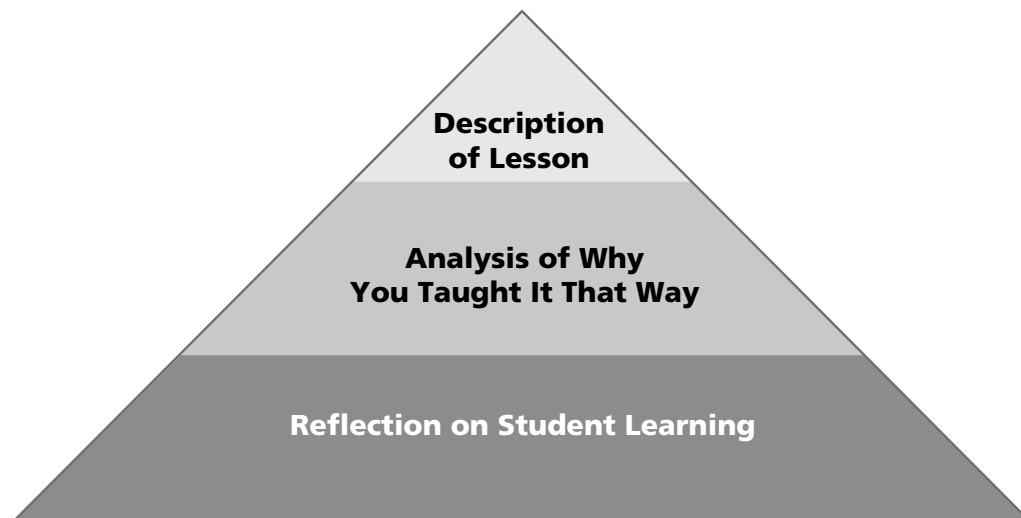
Analysis and reflection overlap. **Analysis** involves interpretation and examination of **why**

the elements or events described are the way they are. **Reflection** is a particular type of analysis—it suggests **self-analysis** or **retrospective consideration** of one’s teaching practice and its outcomes in terms of this assessment. (Note: If the subject of the analysis [the student work or video recording] is not available to the colleague who is reading your analysis, be sure to provide a clear description.)

If the commentary asks for analysis or reflection, review the response against these criteria:

- Is the focus of your writing on the “**why**” (which is analytical and reflective) and not the “**what**” (which is descriptive)?
- Does your response provide an explanation and interpretation of **what** happened, **why** it happened that way, and your understanding of what should come next or **how** you would change the lesson if you could do it again?

**When you write entries, think of a pyramid.** Although *Portfolio Instructions* recommend a greater number of pages for your descriptive and analytical writing, and fewer for your reflective writing, remember that it is your reflective writing and the associated thinking that require the most time and effort. Reflection on your practice and its impact on student learning is the meat of each entry. The lesson description and analysis help prepare you for the real base of the evaluation process. Do not let page lengths mislead you as to which part of your entry is the most crucial.



## Chapter 8:

# Documenting Accomplishments

**T**he third source of evidence about your teaching practice that must be included in your portfolio is documentation of your work activities and accomplishments in each of three categories: (1) as a partner with students' families and the community, (2) as a learner, and (3) as a leader/collaborator.

Make sure you carefully read the rubrics in the *Scoring Guide for Candidates* and the directions in Part 2 of the *Portfolio Instructions* so that you know what is expected and required before you begin collecting evidence and writing about your accomplishments.

This step will save you time in the long run and help ensure that you demonstrate how you meet the NBPTS Standards.

You should begin collecting evidence early in the process. Evaluate the evidence as you collect and select it. Only include evidence that is **directly connected** to the standards identified in Entry 4 (*Documented Accomplishments: Contributions to Student Learning* in Part 2 of the *Portfolio Instructions*) and that can be **directly connected** to student learning.

To document your accomplishments related to collaboration in the professional community, you can submit copies of awards, certificates, or diplomas that show the impact and significance either on your class, school or community, or on a wider scale with relation to the NBPTS Standards. Make sure that you can prove that your accomplishment shows an impact on student learning. **If an accomplishment does not show an impact on student learning, do not include it.**

To help document your accomplishments for outreach to families, keep a Communication Log throughout the year. Record whom you contacted, the type of contact, why the contact was significant, and the outcome of the contact. Keep copies of your correspondence with families and community members, including their responses. Reflect on and analyze the significance and impact of each contact. When considering including a particular activity, you should analyze the activity or the contact in relation to the standards. If something appears routine, analyze it and show why it was not simply routine. Focus on the interactive component of your contacts. Show how you built ongoing two-way relationships rather than simply focusing on your own input.

Entry 4 (in Part 2 of the *Portfolio Instructions*) requires (1) a written description and analysis, and (2) a reflective summary. You must explain what the accomplishment is, why it is significant, and what impact it has on student learning.

Use the questions in Entry 4 (in *Preparing a Reflective Summary*) to guide your discussion of the patterns and significance of your accomplishments.

As always, you must be sure that you provide evidence that connects your work to the NBPTS Standards. As you make your selections of what to include, pay close attention to how the evidence documents the importance and significance of your efforts in direct relation to the NBPTS Standards. For example:

- **Saying you attended a workshop is not enough**—You need to show how you used the information from the workshop to improve your practice, the practice of colleagues, and

your students' learning. In your written commentary, you need to explain why the evidence you have presented is important.

- **Showing the notes you sent home to parents is not enough**—You need to explain why you did it, how it was interactive communication, and what it accomplished.

Make sure you follow the directions and specifications in Entry 4 (e.g., page limits, time frame, use of the same person for different evidence).

Remember, your response will be assessed on the extent to which it provides clear, convincing, and consistent evidence of your ability to advance student learning through your work with families and the community, with colleagues and other professionals, and as a lifelong learner.

Assessors look for clear connections between what you say in the description analysis, what you attach as documentation to support it, and its connection to student learning.



Use the Communication Log in Entry 4 to guide your recording of contacts with parents and the community.



Do you have proof that your accomplishment impacted student learning? Have you included this evidence in your documentation, description, and analysis?

## Section 3:

# NBPTS Assessment Center

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### Overview

The Assessment Center component of the National Board Certification process consists of six computer-delivered exercises, each of which must be completed within 30 minutes, at an Assessment Center near you. The exercises are designed to test your content knowledge specified in the NBPTS Standards for your certificate area.

Your first step should be to review the *Assessment Center Policy and Guidelines* found on the NBPTS Web site. These guidelines are the most important study aid available to candidates preparing for the Assessment Center. Your district or teachers association/union may also offer Assessment Center preparation sessions.



## Chapter 9: Assessment Center Experience

The Assessment Center component of the National Board Certification process is administered at assessment centers nationwide. Candidates applying for National Board Certification in 2009 will be able to complete their Assessment Center exercises between January 4, 2010, and June 15, 2010. For complete information about the Assessment Center experience, refer to the *Assessment Center Policy and Guidelines* on the NBPTS Web site. Please also visit [www.pearsonvue.com/nbpts](http://www.pearsonvue.com/nbpts) to find your nearest location.

### Assessment Center Appointment

You will be mailed an *Authorization to Test (ATT)* confirmation after you submit your (1) eligibility verification form(s), (2) nonstandard testing accommodation form (if applicable), and (3) full candidate fee(s).

After you have received your *ATT* and carefully read all the Assessment Center instructions, the next step is to make an appointment to take the assessment. You will need to refer to your *ATT* when calling to schedule your appointment. Most candidates will have a six- to 12-month window in which to test. **NBPTS strongly encourages you to schedule early** to ensure your desired test location and time.

To make your appointment, follow the directions in *Scheduling an Appointment* at the online Assessment Center Web page at [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/assessment\\_center](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/assessment_center).

### Regulations and Procedures

After you have scheduled your appointment and arrived at the Assessment Center, the staff will use a set of standardized procedures for admitting and testing candidates. It is important that prior to arriving at the Assessment Center, you

review the online information that describes regulations and test-day procedures, and that you follow the directions you receive from the staff and the computer instructions while you are at the Assessment Center.

The Assessment Center staff are employees of the testing center and not NBPTS. It is your responsibility to understand what to expect so the NBPTS assessment you are taking is conducted according to the guidelines.

You must have one valid form of identification (the name on your photo ID must match the name on your *Authorization to Test*) when you arrive at the center.

In addition, if you are applying for any of the following certificates (EA/Math, AYA/Math, EA/Science, AYA/Science, EMC/Art, EAYA/Art, EMC/Music, EAYA/Music, and EAYA/World Languages Other Than English), you must have your sheet of Assessment Center ID labels with you. If you are pursuing certification in EMC/Art or EAYA/Art, you should have your art product in a plastic bag. The only other materials you will be allowed to take into the Assessment Center are pens (black ink) and pencils. Online scientific calculators will be provided for candidates in the appropriate certificate areas. You will not be allowed to take handwritten notes, photocopies, or bound NBPTS materials into the Assessment Center.

Each candidate will be provided with an erasable note board and pen. Scratch paper is not allowed in the testing rooms.

All candidates are required to take the Assessment Center exercises on a computer at an authorized Testing Center. Some handwriting responses are necessary in certain certificate areas such as mathematics and science, due to specific prompt requirements. This applies to all first-time and retake candidates.



Remember, you will not receive your *Authorization to Test* document or be able to make your Assessment Center appointment until you have met all eligibility requirements, submitted all required forms, and paid all of your fees.



NBPTS recommend making your Assessment Center appointment as soon as possible to help improve your chances of getting the time and location you prefer.



Make sure you visit the NBPTS Assessment Center Web page to review the step-by-step guidelines and explore links to helpful information.



Contact NBPTS about name changes.





The online Assessment Center *Web Tutorial and Sample Exercise* is very helpful. Don't skip it! [www.pearsonvue.com/nbpts](http://www.pearsonvue.com/nbpts).



Call your local Assessment Center to confirm your appointment.



Check for possible unique Assessment Center requirements in your certificate area.

## What the Exercises Are About and How to Prepare

Assessment Center exercises focus on your content area or discipline and, therefore, are specific to each of the certificate areas for National Board Certification.

An Assessment Center exercise can consist of one or more prompts (or steps) that direct you to respond to a series of questions designed to gauge your content knowledge. For every certificate except art, the stimulus materials needed for the exercises are presented on the computer screen. For example, in some instances, a classroom scenario or student profile might be presented on the computer screen for you to consider before responding to a question within an exercise. Only the art certificate has on-site stimulus materials provided during the exercises. In either case, it is very important that you read each question carefully and follow the instructions.

## Review Content

The Assessment Center exercises address teaching and learning issues for the full age range included in your certificate; therefore, you are required to demonstrate your knowledge of developmentally appropriate content across the entire certificate age range. If you have not taught the subjects or age group covered, reviewing the objectives for each area and grade level is recommended. Team with other candidates to review prompts, standards, and age range considerations. Textbooks, a curriculum guide, or refresher courses offered by your school system or a local university might be helpful. **Meeting with colleagues who teach subject areas or age ranges you do not currently teach—but that are covered by the certificate area—also is recommended.**

When scoring responses, the assessors value specific detail and clarity, not length. Your responses must specifically refer to the stimulus materials (if provided).

**The Assessment Center exercises do not assess your writing ability. You should present your answers in the manner that best conveys what you want to say.** In some cases, you may choose to use connected paragraphs, while in other cases you may decide to use bulleted lists.

## Online Tutorial

You can access the online tutorial on the NBPTS Web site ([www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/assessment\\_center/prepare\\_for\\_your\\_appoint](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/assessment_center/prepare_for_your_appoint)) to prepare for your appointment. Read through the system requirements before launching the tutorial. Be sure you are using a computer with enough memory to run the tutorial; and a relatively fast Internet connection also is recommended. This will help you to better approximate the conditions you will experience in the Assessment Center.

The tutorial will take you through the entire Assessment Center experience, including assessment directions, and tips on planning your time. Although practicing with the tutorial will help ease your test-day jitters, it is no substitute for being prepared for the content to be tested within the actual assessments.

## Answering the Prompt

Just as there are several successful ways to create accomplished portfolio entries, there are ways to approach answering the Assessment Center exercises. Your method for answering the prompts will depend on your preference. You may want to try several different ways of responding to prompts to help determine your comfort level.

The one non-negotiable: **read the prompt carefully.** Level 4 Rubric responses are not only clear, consistent, and convincing, they are also appropriate and focused to the prompt.

Additionally, and perhaps even more importantly, if a prompt requests that you provide two examples of appropriate actions to take in a given

educational situation, only the first two examples you provided will be scored.

### What's the Best Way to Read the Exercise?

Many candidates say that they found it helpful to read the entire prompt first before beginning their response. This means you would scroll through the screens that show all of the prompts for a single Assessment Center exercise. (The software prevents you from reading the prompts for all six Assessment Center exercises before responding.) One advantage to this method is that you will be aware of the entire question before beginning.

A few candidates report running out of time before getting to the last screen—they either mismanaged time or didn't realize the Assessment Center exercise included three or even four prompts. Other candidates reported that they did not look ahead because it increased their stress. They simply read one screen, answered the question and moved to the next.

### Assessment Center Anxiety Tips

National Board Certified Teachers who have completed the Assessment Center process offer some helpful suggestions in the box below.



Prior to your testing day, check the exact location of the Assessment Center.

### HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE BIG DAY

- Eat a good breakfast.
- Arrive early so you have time to relax before your assessment.
- Draw on your **content knowledge** and what you know about the process of teaching in answering the questions.
- Do not let one question rattle you so much that you are not at your best for the other questions.
- If you think you didn't answer a prompt well, don't let it throw you. Remember, it's a stressful day; you may not be the best judge of your own work.
- Dress comfortably. Bring a sweater, or dress in layers so that you can adapt to the room's temperature.
- Prepare for distractions. As a result of staggered assessment schedules, people will be moving around and taking breaks at different times.
- Bring a mini first-aid kit for a headache, scratchy throat, runny nose, or contact lens trouble.
- Plan a special activity (dinner, vacation, or a party) to celebrate completing the assessment.



For actual retired prompts, visit the candidate resource center on the NBPTS Web site ([www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/assessment\\_center](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/assessment_center)) for *Assessment at a Glance* in your certificate area (which is also provided on the CD-ROM). *Assessment at a Glance* will give you a better idea of the kinds of questions you may be asked on your assessment.



Some NBCTs use the retired prompts for “mock simulation,” giving themselves no more than the 30 minute time allotment.

### Preparing for the Assessment Center Exercises: Retired Prompts

There are some released/retired prompts found in *Assessment at a Glance* available on the NBPTS Web site for each certificate area. Naturally, these are the best and most reliable examples of what you can expect to see at the Assessment Center. However, most certificate areas have only two released prompts that candidates can practice answering. This means you may want to generate some of your own practice prompts.

Many candidates find that writing their own practice prompts based on their intensive study of the descriptors and rubrics is very helpful. However, remember at no time, in no instance, can you ask NBCTs or candidates who have taken their Assessment Center exercises to create practice prompts for you, nor should they review the prompts or responses. This violates the confidentiality statements that candidates sign at the Assessment Center.

If you should decide to create practice prompts, remember that you are creating them based on what you “believe” will be assessed. There is no guarantee that you will write the perfect prompt aligned to the Assessment Center exercise. However, the more practice you have answering prompts, the more comfortable you’ll likely be on test day.

### How Long Will I Be at the Assessment Center?

First-time candidates in most certificate areas follow the same testing schedule as shown below. At this time, Music and World Languages Other Than English have modified testing schedules.

First-time candidates can expect to be at the Assessment Center for a little over four hours. This allows for 30 minutes early arrival, check-in, computer tutorial, Assessment Center exercises and a 15-minute break.

According to the NBPTS Web site, the testing schedule will look like this:

Check-in	15 minutes
Computer Tutorial	30 minutes
Exercises 1–3 (each 30 minutes)	90 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Exercises 4–6 (each 30 minutes)	90 minutes
Total time at Assessment Center	4 hours



**Exercise 11:**

**USING THE RUBRICS: PREPARING FOR THE ASSESSMENT CENTER**

NBPTS has provided retired prompts from a selection of exercises administered in a previous assessment cycle (see *Selected Assessment Center Exercises* in the *Assessment at a Glance* publication provided on the CD-ROM and available online at [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/assessment\\_center](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/assessment_center)). In addition, you will find criteria for scoring indicating what your responses must provide to satisfy the highest level of the scoring rubric. Although the actual prompts will differ in specific substance, current candidates can learn helpful information by examining these exercises along with the retired prompts.

This worksheet suggests a way to glean helpful hints from the rubrics supplied in your own category.

For each of the six prompts, the rubrics tell you what the scorers are expecting from you. For example, from Early Childhood Generalists, Exer. 1 Literacy: Scoring Rubric Requirements – Provide evidence of the following :

1. Identify and explain two strengths of student reading development.
2. Give a developmentally appropriate goal and instructional strategy for two strengths.
3. Discuss appropriate resources/materials to further reading development.
4. Present rationale to connect student strengths, strategy and materials.

Now distinguish among the four scores possible on this prompt: THE EVIDENCE

	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
	Clear, Convincing, Consistent	Clear	Limited	No
1. Accurate	Detailed ID of two strengths	Accurate ID	Inaccurate or vague ID	
2.				

From this exercise, what direction do you expect the prompt to take?

What do you need to know and do in order to complete these tasks?

What should you learn/do/think about to prepare for this exercise?

Using this worksheet model, examine the rubrics provided in your category as a preparation for your Assessment Center prompts.

## Section 4: **Scoring**

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### **Overview**

The scoring process can seem complicated, but NBPTS is committed to making sure that its assessments are valid and meaningful and that the scoring of candidates' responses is reliable, accurate, and fair. This section addresses some of the questions raised by candidates after receiving their scores.



## Chapter 10: Receiving Scores

**Y**ou can view your scores online and print a copy of your score profile by visiting the secure *My Profile* page of the NBPTS Web site ([www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/my\\_profile](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/my_profile)) as soon as scores are released **if you have given NBPTS your Social Security number**. The official policy states that scores will be released on or before December 31.

Past candidates suggest being careful about when and where you first view your scores. If you are nervous, you might want to be alone or have a close friend with you for support. If you think you might become emotional, no matter what your score, you may not want to be in front of your class when you find out.

When you view your score profile, you will find an explanation of your raw exercise scores, the weights for each exercise, the uniform constant that is added to each candidate's weighted exercise total, and your Total Weighted Scaled Score (TWSS). You must earn a TWSS of at least 275 points to achieve National Board Certification. See the figure on the right for an example of what your score profile will look like.

If you achieve National Board Certification on your first attempt, congratulations! Complete the online form to submit the name you want to have on your certificate, tell your administration, your teachers union, and celebrate! Start thinking about how you are going to share the good news with your colleagues, your community, and the people and organizations that have helped you along the way. One way to

share the news is to use the press release template that comes with your certificate.

If you are still on the journey to achieving National Board Certification, congratulations are still in order—you are closer than you were before. It is natural to be disappointed but recognize that making this effort has already positively affected your teaching. Your scores have been banked automatically. Remember, you have 24 months from the date of your initial score report to complete the National Board Certification process.



If you do not feel comfortable notifying the press, ask your mentor or someone else in your school to do it for you.

The first four titles on the score report correspond to the four portfolio entries.

The bottom six titles correspond to the six assessment center exercises.

Entry or Exercise Name	Raw Exercise Score (RES)	Weight (W)	Weighted Scaled Score (RES × W)
Dev and Assess Math Think and Reason	3.000	16.000	48.00
Instr Analysis Whole Class Math Discourse	* 2.375	16.000	38.00
Instr Analysis Small Group Math Collab	* 2.625	16.000	42.00
Doc Accom: Contrib to Student Learning	* 2.500	12.000	30.00
Algebra and Functions I	2.750	6.670	18.34
Connections I	3.000	6.670	20.01
Data Analysis I	* 2.375	6.670	15.84
Geometry I	* 1.375	6.670	9.17
Number and Operation Sense I	* 1.750	6.670	11.67
Technology and Manipulatives I	3.375	6.670	22.51
<b>Sum of Scaled Scores</b>			<b>256</b>
<b>Uniform Constant</b>			<b>12</b>
<b>TOTAL WEIGHTED SCALED SCORE</b>			<b>268</b>

**Key**  
 • RES numbers for portfolio entries link to specific scoring detail.  
 • \* indicates retake is possible.

PRINT THIS REPORT  
 PRINT FULL SCORE REPORT

A uniform constant of 12 points is added to the sum of the weighted scaled scores to produce the Total Weighted Scaled Score. You must earn a Total Weighted Scaled Score of at least 275 points to achieve National Board Certification.

## Chapter 11: Understanding Scoring

Candidates often have many questions after receiving their scores. NBPTS provides information at [www.nbpts.org/help\\_and\\_faqs/scoring](http://www.nbpts.org/help_and_faqs/scoring) and candidates can submit questions through the Candidate Inquiry Service. Some of the more frequently asked questions are addressed below.

**What do these scores mean?** National Board Certification is a standards-based assessment. A candidate's score reflects the degree to which assessors were able to locate clear, consistent, and convincing evidence that the candidate met the standards specific to his or her certificate area. It is vital that candidates who did not achieve National Board Certification on the first attempt understand that their scores reflect the quality of the evidence they provided in the assessment—not necessarily the quality of their teaching!

**Who are the assessors?** Assessors are practicing classroom teachers, just like you, who have received intensive training on how to score the exercises. One or more assessors score each of the 10 candidate responses for certificate areas that have been offered for more than one year. Therefore, each candidate's completed assessment is scored by at least 12 different classroom teachers. Each entry for new certificates is double-scored. Each year NBPTS conducts analyses to determine the level of assessor reliability (i.e., the level of agreement between independent assessors). The results of these reliability analyses indicate that NBPTS assessors are consistently making reliable, accurate, and fair evaluations of candidates' responses.

### **Why does it take so long to receive my scores?**

Extensive quality controls and psychometric analyses are conducted to ensure the statistical reliability and legal defensibility of all score results. This important work is done after all scoring has been completed and before your results can be sent out.

### **What does it mean to get a non-scorable entry?**

If a score has been designated as Not Scorable (NS) or zero, one of the following reasons may apply:

- A candidate's envelope contained none of the critical components the entry required.
- A candidate did not submit a major piece of evidence, such as the written commentary, the student work samples, or the video recording, in the envelope provided.
- A retake candidate may have submitted a portfolio entry that was too similar to the prior submission. When a candidate retakes a portfolio entry, he or she must submit completely new analyses, student work samples, and video recordings. On the whole, at least 90 percent of the submission must be different. For the documented accomplishment entry, candidates must submit completely new descriptions and an interpretive summary.
- A candidate may have submitted materials for the wrong developmental level for his or her certificate area.
- A candidate submitted a response that did not meet the requirements to receive the minimum score of 0.75.



**Can I appeal my score?** Yes. NBPTS has an appeals process. If you think you have “good cause” to believe that the process was fundamentally unfair for you, you can appeal a scoring and/or certification decision. It is difficult to establish good cause to support a request for reconsideration of a certification or scoring decision. You must identify some particular circumstance or condition that explains why you believe it is fundamentally unfair for NBPTS to maintain the certification and/or scoring decisions previously released to you. To appeal a decision, you must submit a letter of request that includes all pertinent details and materials relevant to the appeal, along with the appropriate filing fee; NBPTS must receive the letter within 60 calendar days of the date printed on the score report. The fee to file a certification appeal is \$500; the appeal may take several months. For information about the appeal policy and all related procedures, refer to your *2009 Guide to National Board Certification* or visit the NBPTS Web site at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).

**What if I think one of my scores was reported incorrectly?** NBPTS conducts rigorous quality control procedures before releasing scores. If, however, you still want to have a score

verified, you may choose to use the Score Verification Service for a fee. The portfolio entry(ies) or Assessment Center exercise(s) you want to have verified are not rescored for this fee. For information about the Score Verification Service, fees, and procedures for requesting this service, see the NBPTS Web site at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).

**Why isn't feedback provided with the score report?** Scoring is an evidence collection model, not a deficit model. A candidate's score reflects the degree to which assessors were able to locate clear, consistent, and convincing evidence that the candidate has met the standards specific to his or her certificate area. Assessors are instructed to identify, record, and evaluate only the evidence that candidates provide—“missing evidence” is not identified. Assessors make no suggestions for improvement. They instead focus on the evaluation of evidence, not on feedback to candidates. Providing suggestions for improvement implies that there is a template for success in National Board Certification. In fact, there is an infinite number of ways to certify, and all are based on meeting the standards. Providing suggestions for improvement is not a part of the scoring process.



Sometimes a score will make more sense if you let a little time go by after receiving your score. It allows for more objectivity.

## SECTION 5:

# The Advanced Candidacy

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### Overview

It is not unusual for teachers to achieve National Board Certification over the course of two or three years. This section provides information to help candidates think about retaking portions of their assessment if they do not achieve National Board Certification on their first attempt. Seeking National Board Certification is challenging, but the rewards for both you and your students are worth the effort.



## Chapter 12: Deciding What's Next

If your score fell below the performance standard used by the National Board in awarding National Board Certification, you are not alone; not everyone succeeds on the first try. Candidates often feel as if they have failed. They feel angry or cheated. These are all common, reasonable emotions that must be overcome before planning your next steps.

Take some time to think about whether you want to continue toward achieving National Board Certification. Think about the reasons you initially decided to seek certification and about whether continuing your effort fits with both your personal and professional goals.

Candidates who elect to retake portfolio entries and/or Assessment Center exercises are expected to submit responses by the deadlines established for the National Board Certification year in which they choose to apply. However, if you are unable to meet this deadline, you may choose to defer submitting a new response until the next assessment cycle, provided you are still eligible to retake.

If you elect not to pursue National Board Certification, you should feel satisfied at having completed the profession's most intensive professional development program.

If you decide to continue with the process, you need to start thinking about which exercise(s) you will retake and how you can improve your score(s).

### Determining Which Exercises to Retake

There are several things to consider before deciding which exercises to retake. You need to determine how likely it is that you can increase your score on a given exercise and how much improvement will affect your Total Weighted Scaled Score (TWSS). NBPTS provides an online interactive retake score calculator with your score report that will help you make your decisions. You may also choose to use Exercise 12, which suggests a six-step process to help you determine which exercises to retake. As you work through this process, you will need to have your score report and the worksheet on page 57. Many National Board Certified Teachers also recommend that you work through this process with a friend.



Review online guidance at [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/retake\\_candidates](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/retake_candidates) and in *Interpreting Your Score* in Part 1 of the *Scoring Guide for Candidates* to help you determine which exercises to retake.



#### Exercise 12:

*Determining Which Exercises to Retake.* Use the worksheet on page 57 as you think about which exercises to retake.

*Step 1:* Use your score report to determine how many points your Total Weighted Scaled Score differs from the performance standard of 275.

For example, if you received a TWSS of 268, you need to increase your TWSS by at least 7 points ( $275 - 268 = 7$ ) to receive National Board Certification.

*Step 2:* Determine which individual exercises you are eligible to retake. You are only eligible to retake exercises on which you scored below a 2.75. These exercises are marked with an asterisk (\*) on your score report.

*Step 3:* Using the worksheet, write down the individual raw exercise scores you received on each of the entries and/or exercises that you are eligible to retake. These numbers are located in the raw exercise score (RES) column of your score report.

*Step 4:* Estimate a reasonable score increase that you might attain on each of the individual entries and/or exercises you are eligible to retake. Write these down.

What was the score you received on an exercise? The lower the score, the more room for improvement, but if you scored very low on an exercise, you must decide how likely it is that you can improve it significantly. Also, remember the greater the weight associated with a specific exercise, the more impact an increased score will have on your TWSS. Be realistic and consider the factors discussed in Steps 5 and 6.

*Step 5:* Assess your personal strengths and weaknesses relative to each of the exercises you are eligible to retake. Consider the following questions:

- Do you become anxious during timed assessments?
  - When comparing your portfolio responses to the rubric for the entry, are you **absolutely clear** about why your score is not higher?
  - Do you have good ideas about how to improve your performance on portfolio entries and Assessment Center exercises?
- Step 6:* Consider other factors when deciding which individual exercise(s) to retake.
- Factors to consider include:
- Are you still teaching in the same certificate area?
  - What are your personal obligations during the retake timeframe?
  - Are your school-related or professional obligations likely to increase, decrease, or remain the same across the retake eligibility period?
  - Are your other outside activities likely to increase, decrease, or remain the same?
  - Is funding an issue? Remember that each portfolio entry or Assessment Center exercise you retake will cost \$350, so you will want to identify sources of financial assistance if needed.
  - How difficult will it be for you to complete the exercise(s) process if you delay your retake(s) by a year?
- Are you more comfortable responding to portfolio entries (where prompts are known in advance) or responding to Assessment Center exercises (where the prompts are not known in advance)?

Following these six steps should help you identify the exercise(s) that make most sense for you to retake. Make sure you have selected exercise(s) that, if you improve your score, will earn you enough points to attain National Board Certification. Finally, it is important to remember that when you complete a retake of an exercise, your new score replaces your original score, **even if it is lower than your original score.**

<b>EXERCISE 12: DETERMINING WHICH EXERCISES TO RETAKE</b>					
<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Expected New Raw Score</b>	<b>Current Earned Raw Score</b>	<b>Reasonable Raw Score Increase</b>	<b>Weight x Reasonable Raw Score Increase =</b>
Portfolio Entry 1	16.00				
Portfolio Entry 2	16.00				
Portfolio Entry 3	16.00				
Portfolio Entry 4	12.00				
Assessment Center					
Exercise 1	6.67				
Assessment Center					
Exercise 2	6.67				
Assessment Center					
Exercise 3	6.67				
Assessment Center					
Exercise 4	6.67				
Assessment Center					
Exercise 5	6.67				
Assessment Center					
Exercise 6	6.67				
Uniform Constant					12
				<b>TOTAL</b>	

## Chapter 13: Preparing to Retake



Remember, you can find the standards for your certificate area at [www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/certificate\\_areas1](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/certificate_areas1).

Once you have identified which exercise(s) you are going to retake, you can begin your preparation. If you are a first-time retake candidate, you may continue to pursue National Board Certification for a period of 24 months from the date printed on your initial score report.

One of your first activities should be to reconnect with those who can help you during the retake process. In addition some National Board Certified Teachers who achieved National Board Certification on their second try suggest including a new colleague who might bring a different perspective to your work.

### Portfolio Exercises

If you have decided to retake one or more portfolio entries, you will be responding to the same entry from your original portfolio. However, some of the instructions may contain clarifications or additions, so you should follow the retake instructions carefully.

**Begin by planning a new lesson.** Although you are not prohibited from using the same lesson for your retake entry as you did for your original entry, many mentors suggest selecting a new lesson to help you get a fresh start. However, if you opt to use the same lesson, be very careful that all of your written commentaries, including your analyses, video recording, student work samples, responses, artifacts, and reflection are completely new.

The work you submit for your retake portfolio entry **must be new**. You may not submit identical or amended versions of any part of your original portfolio entry, except as noted in this section. Each retake portfolio entry is compared with your corresponding original portfolio entry. If a retake entry contains identical or amended versions of materials from an original portfolio entry, it will

not be scored. As a result, the retake fee will be forfeited and the retake portfolio entry will be designated “NS” (Not Scoreable) on the candidate’s score profile.

Much of the contextual information in your written commentary is apt to be the same if you are teaching the same grade-level students at the same school. You will not be disadvantaged by this at scoring. Auditors recognize that this information is likely to remain the same.

Regarding Entry 4, which documents your accomplishments, the evidence that you submit for the area of accomplishment relating to your work with students’ families and the community must be new, and it must come from the current year, the 12 months preceding your portfolio due date. The Reflective Summary that you submit also must be new. However, the evidence that you submit for the two areas of accomplishment that require you to present documentation from the last five years may be resubmissions from your original entry. If you choose to resubmit documentation, keep in mind that during scoring, assessors do not have access to the documentation in your original portfolio entry. Therefore, you must submit new copies of the documentation that you previously submitted for this portfolio entry.

Retake candidates are strongly urged to re-evaluate their accomplishments in all three areas required for the entry on documented accomplishments and focus their descriptions and analyses on the substance and significance of these accomplishments as they affect student learning, rather than simply increasing the number of accomplishments submitted.

Next, review the standards that are the focus of the entry or entries you are retaking. Even though you are familiar with the standards, take the time to thoroughly study the relevant standards by



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reviewing the exercises in Chapter 3 of this guide. Also review the *Scoring Guide for Candidates* that is specific to your certificate area so that you are familiar with what is expected in your response. Taking the time to review the standards and how your responses are scored will allow you to build on what you have learned from submitting your original portfolio material. You also should focus on providing *clear, consistent, and convincing evidence* that your teaching meets these standards.

Finally, it will be helpful to review the different types of writing—descriptive, analytic, and reflective—that are required in the written commentaries. See Chapter 7 of this guide or *Writing about Teaching* in Part 1 of the *Portfolio Instructions* for useful advice on developing your written commentaries.

### Assessment Center

If you have chosen to retake one or more Assessment Center exercises, you can begin to prepare by collecting the resources you will need to review the content-area knowledge specified in the NBPTS Standards.

It is important that you review the *Scoring Guide for Candidates* for your certificate area. The guide provides information that will help you understand the features of all four levels of response. You should also review *Assessment at a Glance* for your certificate area. This publication contains a description of each Assessment Center exercise and the scoring criteria for satisfying the highest level of the scoring rubrics, as well as selected Assessment Center prompts used in a previous assessment cycle (retired prompts are not available for newly released certificate areas).

If you are uncomfortable with the computerized format of the Assessment Center, it will be helpful to practice the online tutorial on the NBPTS Web site ([www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/assessment\\_center/prepare\\_for\\_your\\_appoint](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/assessment_center/prepare_for_your_appoint)).

### The Retake Process

You can apply and pay for your retake exercises online. All of the information you need is provided online when you view your scores.

If you decide to begin the retake process immediately, you must apply and pay your fee on or before January 31 of the year following your score receipt. After completing the process, you will be notified of your new scores and your recalculated Total Weighted Scaled Score. New scores will be available on or before December 31 of the year you submit your retake materials.

### The Retake Fee

A candidate is charged a fee of \$350 for each portfolio entry and \$350 for each Assessment Center exercise that he or she chooses to retake. There is a retake application fee of \$15. Retake fees are nonrefundable, regardless of the circumstances.

If after paying the retake fee for one or more portfolio entries or Assessment Center exercises, you find that you cannot complete your portfolio retake entries or take your Assessment Center retake exercises, you may choose to defer submitting a new response for up to one year, provided you are still eligible to retake. Your retake fee will not be refunded, and NBPTS will require \$125 per portfolio entry or Assessment Center exercise to reinstate your deferred retakes. To defer, you must submit your request in writing to the NBPTS Processing Center. The written request to defer portfolio entries must be received prior to the portfolio deadline. The written request to defer Assessment Center exercises must be received prior to your scheduled Assessment Center appointment. To reactivate your application, you must complete a new retake application and pay the deferment fee in the next assessment year. If you do not complete a new retake application and pay the deferment fee, you will forfeit all fees paid. **Note that you cannot defer any portfolio entries or Assessment Center exercises if you are in your last year of eligibility. Retake submissions can only be deferred once.**



You can find *Assessment at a Glance* for your certificate area on the NBPTS Web site ([www.nbpts.org/for\\_candidates/assessment\\_center/prepare\\_for\\_your\\_appoint](http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/assessment_center/prepare_for_your_appoint)).



Check with your state union and district to see if they offer financial support for retake fees.





## Section 6: The Renewal Candidacy

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### Overview

National Board Certificates are issued for a period of 10 years. NBCTs are, and continue to be, accomplished teachers. Their accomplishment reflects an inherent desire to pursue professional growth in order to increase their impact on student learning.

In the eighth year of certification, it is time to start preparations to renew your certificate. NBPTS has developed the *Profile of Professional Growth (PPG)*, the instrument for the renewal of National Board Certification. This instrument provides a comprehensive portrait of an NBCT's professional growth since achieving National Board Certification. It focuses on increasing student learning and maintaining high and rigorous standards, which are the mainstays of the National Board Certification process. A demonstration of preK-12 classroom teaching is required.

## Chapter 14:

# The *Profile of Professional Growth*

**T**he *Profile of Professional Growth (PPG)* has its basis in and is drawn from the Five Core Propositions and the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching. It is designed to promote continued professional development consistent with the high and rigorous standards that National Board Certification represents. It provides an avenue for NBCTs to articulate what certification means to them years later and how their teaching continues to embody NBPTS Standards.

Although the *Profile of Professional Growth* is separated into three components, the parts are integrated and complementary, designed so that NBCTs can demonstrate the connections they make between their continued professional development and student learning.

**Component #1** requires submission of responses to prompts related to four activities that have become a major focus of professional growth. These Professional Growth Experiences (PGEs), including effective and appropriate use of technology and current knowledge of the field, are ongoing and multifaceted. They must reflect the NBCT's continuous commitment and contributions to the professional activities that ultimately impact student learning.

**Component #2** focuses on the application of one of the Professional Growth Experiences featured in the first component. Component #2 requires a video in which the NBCT demonstrates preK-12 classroom teaching. The video and accompanying written commentary must

demonstrate student learning in an environment that promotes equity and appreciation of diversity as well as the application of certificate-specific content knowledge for the candidate's original certificate. **There must be a date stamp on the video.**

**Component #3** focuses on the application of a second Professional Growth Experience featured in Component #1. This third component offers several options, including the choice of featuring work with preK-12 learners or with professional colleagues. The basis for this component must be a different PGE from that used in Component #2.

Throughout each of the three components, the NBCT's activities must demonstrate meaningful and rigorous learning experiences tied to certificate-specific content knowledge. In responding to the prompts, the commentary must reflect the fact that the NBPTS Standards continue to be embedded in the NBCT's practice.

The final section is **Reflection**, in which the NBCT analyzes the connections and patterns among all three components of the *Profile of Professional Growth* from the perspective of his or her role as an educator. The NBCT must focus on challenges encountered, and must describe plans for continued professional growth and efforts to impact student learning.



Remember, the assessors must be able to clearly see the faces and hear the voices of you and your students.

## Chapter 15: When and How to Renew



Visit the NBPTS Web site [www.nbpts.org/for\\_nbpts/certification\\_renewal](http://www.nbpts.org/for_nbpts/certification_renewal) for more information about the *Profile of Professional Growth*.




Once you begin the renewal process, be sure to review the current standards because many of the standards have been revised to better reflect current teaching practices.

**Y**ou must complete the National Board's *Profile of Professional Growth (PPG)* prior to the expiration date of your certificate and can only renew certification in your original certificate area. You may begin formal work on the *Profile of Professional Growth* as early as year eight of your certification period. The table below shows the dates for current renewal cycles.

You may begin your application process online at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org). The total fee for certificate renewal is \$1,150 which includes a \$300 non-refundable application fee. Your renewal must be in your original area of certification. If you are teaching in a different field or are no longer actively teaching, you may still apply for certifi-

cate renewal. However, because the PPG requires classroom teaching in the area of your original certificate, you will need to establish a relationship and work with students of a colleague as part of the renewal process.

You are encouraged to begin your renewal process in the eighth year of certification, in part, to allow two attempts to successfully renew your certificate. The fee to attempt to renew certification the second time is the same as the initial application. You will be required to resubmit your entire PPG for evaluation because the PPG is evaluated holistically so there can be no score banking in the application renewal process. If you do not successfully complete the renewal process before your certificate expires, you will need to

 <b>THE COLOR OF YOUR NBCT FUTURE</b>						
Find the date you achieved certification... →			Then find the dates that apply to your renewal process.			
Date Certified	Certificate Expiration Date	→	Renewal Application Window	Fee Deadline	Submission Deadline	Decision Date
Nov. 30, 2000	Nov. 30, 2010	→	First Opportunity: Nov. 13-Dec. 31, 2008	Jan. 31, 2009	April 30, 2009	Oct. 2009
			Second Opportunity: Sept. 1-Dec. 31, 2009	Jan. 31, 2010	April 30, 2010	Oct. 2010
Nov. 30, 2001	Nov. 30, 2011	→	First Opportunity: Sept. 1-Dec. 31, 2009	Jan. 31, 2010	April 30, 2010	Oct. 2010
			Second Opportunity: Sept. 1-Dec. 31, 2010	Jan. 31, 2011	April 30, 2011	Oct. 2011
Nov. 30, 2002	Nov. 30, 2012	→	First Opportunity: Sept. 1-Dec. 31, 2010	Jan. 31, 2011	April 30, 2011	Oct. 2011
			Second Opportunity: Sept. 1-Dec. 31, 2011	Jan. 31, 2012	April 30, 2012	Oct. 2012
Nov. 30, 2003	Nov. 30, 2013	→	First Opportunity: Sept. 1-Dec. 31, 2011	Jan. 31, 2012	April 30, 2012	Oct. 2012
			Second Opportunity: Sept. 1-Dec. 31, 2012	Jan. 31, 2013	April 30, 2013	Oct. 2013
Nov. 30, 2004	Nov. 30, 2014	→	First Opportunity: Sept. 1-Dec. 31, 2012	Jan. 31, 2013	April 30, 2013	Oct. 2013
			Second Opportunity: Sept. 1-Dec. 31, 2013	Jan. 31, 2014	April 30, 2014	Oct. 2014

\*\*\* NBCTs who are certified after November 2004 can find their schedule for renewal by adding one year to each date shown in the chart. For example: If you are an NBCT who certified in November 2005, your window to apply for your "First Opportunity" to renew your certification is September 1–December 31, 2013. *Reprinted with permission from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org). All rights reserved.*

apply and go through the National Board Certification process as a first-time candidate.

### **Questions about the Renewal Decision** **How does renewal differ from initial certification?**

The process for renewal of National Board Certification is different from the initial certification process in several ways.

- In terms of structure, the renewal instrument has several interrelated components rather than entries and exercises that are independent of each other.
- The evaluation process is different in that a renewal candidate's response is evaluated as a whole rather than each component being scored separately.
- The renewal process is shorter than the original certification process; however, it is still a rigorous and demanding examination of professional growth since original certification.
- Renewal candidates will receive either a "renewed" or "not renewed" decision. The reports of renewal decisions will be different as will the resubmission process for renewal candidates who receive a "not renewed" decision.

### **Is the renewal process based on revised NBPTS Standards?**

Renewal is based on the NBCT's application of

the current standards within the original area of certification. Many of the standards have been revised to better reflect current teaching practices, and NBCTs will need to read and review these standards as part of the renewal process.

### **Can I attempt certificate renewal if I am teaching in a field different from the field in which I was originally certified? What if I am no longer actively teaching or am retired?**

Yes. However, because renewal requires classroom teaching in the area of your original certificate, you will need to establish a relationship and work with students of a colleague as part of the renewal process.

### **Can I attempt renewal after my certificate expires?**

No. If you do not successfully complete the renewal process prior to expiration of your certificate, you will need to apply and go through the National Board Certification process as a first-time candidate.

### **When will renewal submissions be evaluated?**

The evaluation of the *Profile of Professional Growth* is expected to take place in August each year. National Board Certified Teachers seeking renewal will need to plan accordingly to ensure they have adequate time to complete the process based on the timeframe for evaluation.

## Section 7:

# Conclusion

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We hope you find this guide useful as you begin the National Board Certification process. We know from surveys and anecdotes of candidates who have preceded you that the NBPTS process, although time-consuming, is intellectually challenging and an excellent professional development experience. Candidates report that the process has a positive impact on their teaching and on the way in which they interact with colleagues and work with students.

The AFT and the NEA hope that this guide assists you with understanding the National Board Certification process. We commend you for your commitment to strengthening the profession and wish you much success on your journey to National Board Certification.



## Glossary of Terms

You already may be familiar with terms used in the *Portfolio Instructions*, but not necessarily in the context they are used by NBPTS. This section provides general definitions for some of these terms. For a more complete list, see *Learning Portfolio-Related Terms* in Part 1 of the *Portfolio Instructions*.

**Assessment**—The formal or informal process of collecting evidence about progress, analyzing and evaluating progress, communicating about progress, and adjusting teaching practice based on reflection of a teacher’s practice. There are multiple forms of assessment, including formal measurement tools such as achievement or other standardized tests. Informal assessment can take place throughout the school year, and includes evaluating data from multiple sources, such as exercises or assignments that enable you to measure student progress, as well as student work itself, and feedback from parents or other family members.

**Assessment/Prompt** (as in “show how you use an assessment/prompt with your students”)— Any formal or informal means of creating an occasion that will allow a teacher to assess student work or progress. A prompt used to assess student work or progress need not be a formal testing device—it can be a quiz, oral question, problem, or exercise you select, create, or adapt for the purposes of measuring.

**Assessor(s)**—The teacher(s) trained to score NBPTS portfolio entries and Assessment Center exercises.

**Assignment/Prompt**—This is a term frequently used to describe directions from the teacher to elicit written student work. It could be a defined assignment, such as “write a paragraph about ...,” or it might be a

situation in which the teacher presents something (a photograph, a verbal scenario, a piece of writing, or a set of mathematics problems) and directs the students to respond to it in writing.

**Concrete Evidence**—Evidence that has a solid foundation in fact and that would be convincing to most people. The basis for this kind of evidence is strong, clear, and convincing. It is not easily disproved by a difference in interpretation.

**Instructional Materials**—Items used or produced during a teaching sequence that will help assessors better understand the activity featured in your videotape or written commentary.

**Interpretation**—The explanation of a conclusion you reached about the results of a teaching situation. An interpretation explains to assessors how you understand the results of an event and what these results mean to you. This is a basic definition. See *Writing about Teaching* in Part 1 of the *Portfolio Instructions* for more detailed explanations and writing samples.

**Prompt**—Anything that causes or stimulates students to produce responses. A prompt can be formal or informal, and could be anything from a specific assignment to a piece of art, a photograph, or a theory in your field of teaching.

**Retired Prompts**—An Assessment Center exercise administered in a previous NBPTS assessment cycle. These exercises have been included in *Assessment at a Glance* to help you become familiar with the structure of Assessment Center exercises and to help you understand the rubrics.

**Scoring Guides**—The NBPTS *Scoring Guide for Candidates* is designed primarily to help you understand how scores are determined in each certificate area assessment. More specifically, the guide provides you with the information that will enable you to understand the features of Level 3 and Level 4 responses that are consistent with the standards assessed by each entry and exercise and the criteria in the rubrics.

**Scoring Rubric**—Assessors use a four-level rubric to score each candidate response, where a Level 4 or Level 3 score represents accomplished practice for that particular entry. *Assessment at a Glance* for each certificate area provides the Level 4 criteria that are used by the assessors for that particular entry.

**Student Response**—Any kind of student work that results from an assignment by the teacher. This may be a formal writing assignment, a drawing, a journal entry, or any other work a student completes under a teacher's guidance.

**Student Work**—Student work samples submitted with your portfolio should follow the requirements in the format specifications sections of each entry. Be sure to submit only the number of student work samples that is required by the entry. Remember that nothing submitted with your portfolio will be returned, and all student work should show only the first names of students to ensure their anonymity. Consult the directions in each portfolio entry for page limits on student work samples submitted.



## ***A Guide to Understanding National Board Certification: 2009–10 Candidacy Cycle Survey***

We would like to get a better understanding of how this guide is being used in the field. Please take a few moments and respond to our usage survey below. Thank you for providing us with information that will help us to continue to refine this document.

**Check the item(s) below that best describe you:**

- National Board candidate
- Candidate support provider
- National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please describe.)

**How did you get a copy of *A Guide to Understanding National Board Certification: 2009–10 Candidacy Cycle*?**

- Local affiliate/union of the AFT or the NEA
- State affiliate/federation of the AFT or the NEA
- Candidate support provider
- School district personnel
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please identify the source.)

**On a scale of 1 to 5, circle how well this guide provided you with a solid overview of the National Board Certification process.**

**Lowest 1      2      3      4      5      Highest**

**How likely are you to recommend this guide to another teacher or counselor who is interested in understanding the National Board Certification process?**

**Lowest 1      2      3      4      5      Highest**

**Use the space below to share suggestions on how this document might be improved to assist candidates. (If you need additional space, continue your comments on the back of this form.)**

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**Are you a member of:**

- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- National Education Association (NEA)
- Other teachers union \_\_\_\_\_(Please write the name.)
- I am not a member of a teachers union.

**On a scale of 1 to 5, circle how important it is to the profession that the AFT and NEA help candidates understand the National Board Certification process.**

**Not Important                      1            2            3            4            5            Very Important**

**Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. Please fax or mail the survey to one of the individuals below.**

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