

ENHANCING PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS FOR CALIFORNIA

*A Report of The California Task Force on the
National Board For Professional Teaching Standards*

September, 1994

California Department of Education, Sacramento

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The California Task Force On the National Board For Professional Teaching Standards

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Introduction

ABOUT THE TIME THAT the school year begins in 1994, California teachers will encounter an invitation that reads something like this:

**Teachers are invited to apply for
National Board Certification
In the fields of
Early Adolescence/Generalist
Early Adolescence/English Language Arts**

Applicants must have at least three years of teaching experience and hold a B.A. degree from an accredited institution.

For information, contact: The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

By 1997, the invitation will apply to teachers in nearly 30 fields, extending its reach to virtually all elementary and secondary teachers.

What is the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards? What does it mean for California's more than 200,000 teachers and for the communities in which they work? How can a national system of voluntary certification give new vitality and stature to teaching?

This document is an initial response to such questions. It is the product of nearly eight months of deliberation by 35 teachers, administrators, teacher educators, parents, school board representatives, and foundation officials — the California Task Force on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The Task Force was convened by California's four highest ranking education officials: the Secretary of Child Development and Education, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the chairs of the Assembly

Education Committee and the Senate Education Committee. With financial support from the Stuart Foundations of San Francisco and staff support from Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), the Task Force held a series of intense conversations, discussions, and debates.

The California Task Force examined the fit between California's educational landscape—its present reform agendas, its economic and political conditions, and the daily realities of teaching—and the purposes of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. We sought answers to these questions:

- What does the National Board mean by a system of voluntary certification? What are its standards for accomplished teaching? How does it propose to assess teachers' knowledge, skill and judgment? Will assessments yield reliable and valid evidence of accomplished teaching?
- To what extent do the National Board's ideas parallel California's own improvement agendas? Can the proposed system of certification add momentum to educational reform in the state?
- What is the incentive for individual teachers to pursue Board certification? What recognition can certification bring a teacher? Put in other terms, how might the presence of Board certified teachers affect the system of career incentives and rewards in teaching?
- What is the potential benefit from Board certification to students, parents, and communities? Could Board standards and assessments help to provide public assurance about the quality of the state's teachers?

These questions, and the information and preliminary answers in this report of the California Task Force, are designed to open debate and dialogue—among educators and the wider California community concerned about continued improvement in our schools.

National Certification For California Teachers

BEGINNING IN THE FALL of 1994, experienced teachers in California schools and across the United States will be invited to earn a certificate valued nationwide as an objective indicator of a teacher's command of subject matter knowledge, knowledge of students and practice, professional judgment, and the ability to act effectively on that judgment.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has been created to certify the demonstrated teaching excellence of teachers nationwide. The program is completely voluntary: individual teachers will decide if and when they want to apply. Certification will complement existing state teacher licensing programs. While state licensing establishes mandatory entry level standards and qualifications for *beginning* teachers, National Board certification will establish advanced standards for highly accomplished, *experienced* teachers.

The National Board's goal is *not* to isolate a small, elite group of teachers. Its goal is to bring together a large segment of the nation's teachers, offer them a series of shared experiences that emphasize the best in teaching practices and professional collaboration, and motivate them with a common goal that will define excellence in their profession.

Certification will serve:

Students, first and foremost, by helping their teachers to teach better;

Individual teachers by offering them an objective measure of their professional accomplishment; a tool for developing their knowledge and skills; and an opportunity for professional advancement;

The teaching profession by establishing and communicating national standards for what constitutes state-of-the-art teaching, and by raising the overall quality of teaching as individuals proceed through the process;

School districts by giving direction and material support to their improvement and professional development efforts; and,

The general public by educating citizens about what constitutes excellence in teaching, and by providing an accepted, objective, nationwide measure of accountability for teaching practice.

When Will Certification Begin?

National Board certification in California is scheduled to begin during the 1994-95 school year with the offering of certificates in two fields: Early Adolescence/English Language Arts, and Early Adolescence/Generalist. Assessments for these two fields are being field tested during the 1993-94 school year.

The National Board plans to add five additional certificates in the following year: Adolescence Young Adult/Social Studies History; Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Mathematics; Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Art; Middle Childhood/Generalist and Early Childhood/Generalist. The Board hopes to launch as many as 16 certificate fields within the program's first four years.

Certification Fields

When the complete program of certifying teachers is in place, teachers in California and across the country will be able to demonstrate and certify their expertise and ability in up to 33 different subjects and student developmental levels. Individual teachers may choose to qualify for more than one certificate. Certification will be offered for:

Early Childhood (Ages 3-8)

- Generalist

Middle Childhood (Ages 7-12)

- Generalist

- English Language Arts

- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies-History

Early and Middle Childhood (Ages 3-12)

- English as a New Language
- Exceptional Needs/Generalist
- Foreign Language
- Art
- Guidance Counseling
- Library and Media
- Music
- Physical Education

Early Adolescence (Ages 11-15)

- Generalist
- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies-History

Adolescence and Young Adulthood (Ages 14-18+)

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies-History

Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood (Ages 11-18+)

- Art
- English as a New Language
- Exceptional Needs/Generalist
- Foreign Language
- Guidance Counseling
- Health
- Library and Media
- Music
- Physical Education
- Vocational Education

Eligibility

Teachers will apply directly to the NBPTS for certification. In California, any teacher with three years teaching experience in one or more elementary or secondary schools and a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college is eligible to apply for certification.

Assessment requirements will also make it necessary that the applicant be teaching in a California school at the time of application. Certification is open to all teachers in public, private, and parochial schools who have met the previously described eligibility requirements.

How Will Teachers Qualify?

AS TEACHERS HAVE ALWAYS known, good teaching is not accurately measured by paper and pencil tests. It is demonstrated by classroom practice and engagement in a professional community. National Board Certification will capture the genuine intellectual, social, and practical demands of teaching. The methods of assessing these qualities must be credible, both to the public at large and to the members of the profession. Certification will reflect standards that are ambitious, yet attainable by large numbers of knowledgeable and well-prepared teachers. The full impact on the teaching profession of National Board Certification cannot be achieved unless significant numbers of teachers find certification desirable and within reach.

The activities leading to National Board Certification are designed to reflect the real world of teaching, with all of its many complexities, ambiguities, and challenges. Assessment takes place over the course of a school year. Although it does entail considerable writing, this is not a paper and pencil, multiple choice, one-right-answer exercise. The National Board believes there are multiple approaches to advancing student learning that have merit, and a mark of excellence is a teacher with a rich repertoire to engage students with diverse needs and interests. National Board Certification provides teachers with several opportunities to display their subject matter knowledge, their conceptions of good teaching, and the ways in which they interact with students, colleagues, and parents.

The process of qualifying for National Board certification is an educational and positive one, *even for candidates who may not succeed in their first efforts*. The true value of participating resides in the personal and professional growth experienced by the candidates as they meet, deliberate, and learn from one another. A vital part of the assessment process is the constructive feedback that will be provided to all participants, including those who

do not initially meet National Board standards.

The assessment will consist of two parts: a professional portfolio constructed by teachers during the school year based on activity in their own classrooms and in the larger professional community; and exercises conducted during the summer in a National Board assessment center. The National Board's goal is to operate a sufficient number of assessment centers so that teachers will not be required to travel more than 100 miles to reach one.

Evaluation of candidates will be conducted by peers, exemplary teachers in the field who have been trained to be reliable assessors. In the future, examiners will be National Board Certified teachers.

The National Board is calling upon the nation's finest educators and scholars to create fair and credible means of assessing teacher performance. Assessment methods are being field tested by 27 different contractors throughout the nation, including 15 public school districts serving cities as diverse as New York, San Diego, Detroit, Fresno, and Fairbanks, Alaska. A total of 112 school districts that together employ 165,000 teachers—or seven percent of the nation's teacher corps—are participating in the field tests.

The Professional Portfolio

Upon applying to participate in the assessment, teachers will receive a portfolio binder. Its separate sections guide the development of a portfolio during a school year. Portfolios typically will include samples of student performance, teachers' curriculum planning and lesson ideas and their analysis of student programs against these plans, descriptions of activities with colleagues at school, and examples of professional activity beyond the school. Such activities could include work on district curriculum and projects, special professional development training, or participation in state

subject matter associations. Each portfolio will include a videotape on which the teacher will be asked to record examples of "best teaching." The National Board encourages teachers to work collaboratively with colleagues to prepare portfolios. It is estimated that accumulation of portfolio materials will require between 50 and 75 hours of the candidate's time during the school year.

Example: Teacher Portfolio

Early Adolescence/English Language Arts

Teachers collect information about their professional activities, and include items from their classrooms and written reflective commentaries for the following:

Student Learning Exercise. Candidates demonstrate how they monitor student learning over a period of months by keeping folders on different students' writing that include analyses of their writing development and commentary on how their instruction influenced that development.

Post-Reading Interpretive Discussion. Candidates submit a written commentary on, and a videotape of a 15-20 minute session in which they engage students in discussions of a particular literary work to help them build interpretations and develop their discussion abilities.

Planning and Teaching Exercise. Candidates submit a statement of goals, a daily chronicle of classroom activities, and a videotape of instruction to document both their teaching over time and the kinds of decisions they make as they plan and adapt their teaching.

The Assessment Center

At the assessment center, teacher candidates for National Board Certification will participate in exercises such as: an oral defense of their portfolio; an assessment of their knowledge of the subject matter; and a series of simulations of classroom teaching situations. Candidates will spend two entire days at the assessment center to complete the exercises for their certificate program.

Teacher candidates will know well in advance

of their arrival at a National Board assessment center:

- The purpose of each exercise they are asked to perform;
- Which skills or knowledge are being assessed by each particular exercise;
- What the candidate is expected to do; and,
- How they should prepare.

The portfolio defense will take the form of an interview designed to elicit candidates' capacities to reflect on their practice and to be articulate in discussing the purposes and thinking behind their intentions with colleagues, parents and others.

The content knowledge exam will allow teachers to display their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they regularly teach. Candidates typically will write a set of essays responding to tasks derived from their particular teaching field. The goal is not simply to answer an essay question, but to have an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, judgment and creativity in responding to realistic challenges that teachers face every day.

Example: Content Knowledge Exam

Early Adolescence/English-Language Arts

Assessment for this certificate will be field tested during the 1993-94 school year.

Candidates are asked to demonstrate their knowledge of literature; their knowledge of reading and writing; and their knowledge of language development.

Text Selection. Candidates consider material for inclusion in an anthology.

Theory of Response to Literature. Candidates read an article, summarize key issues, and relate the author's theory to their teaching experience and professional knowledge.

Language Variation. Candidates read statements about language variation and apply them to the instruction of young adolescents.

Simulation exercises are, for example, group activities that offer teachers opportunities to demonstrate their ability to work with colleagues solving

everyday instructional problems and improving techniques and practice. Candidates may be asked to analyze segments of another teacher's instruction, design an instructional unit with a group of colleagues, evaluate samples of student writing, or conduct a parent conference.

Example: Assessment Center Exercises
Early Adolescence/English-Language Arts

Assessment for this certificate will be field tested during the 1993-94 school year.

Candidates respond to three standardized situations.

Cooperative Group Discussion. Candidates participate in a discussion with three other candidates on which four of eight novels to include in a list of reading for young adolescents. Materials are sent to candidates a month in advance of assessment center activities.

Instructional Analysis. Candidates give a written analysis of a teacher's videotaped instruction and accompanying commentary.

Analysis of Student Writing. Candidates discuss their analyses and characterizations of the writing of ten students.

What Is An “Accomplished Teacher”?

REACHING AGREEMENT ON THE COMMON attributes of good teaching required much discussion, thought, reflection, study, and debate. The consensus reached on the national level is a positive reflection on the efforts and conclusions of education reformers in California and other states.

National Board standards and assessments have established five professional attributes as the basis for certification. Each certificate will require demonstration of these five attributes:

Teachers are committed to students and their learning. They:

- Recognize individual differences in their students and adjust practices accordingly;
- Understand how students develop and learn;
- Treat students equitably; and,
- Are interested in the whole student, including their self-concept, character, motivation, aspirations, peer relationships, and social awareness.

Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach them. They:

- Know the origin, facts, and the process of development of their subject;

- Know how their subject is linked to other disciplines; and,
- Know how to convey and reveal a subject to students.

Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning. They:

- Have clear learning goals for their students;
- Use multiple methods to meet their goals;
- Orchestrate learning in groups;
- Engage students; and,
- Assess student progress regularly.

Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience. They:

- Make difficult choices that continually test their judgment; and,
- Seek advice and draw on research to improve their practice.

Teachers are members of learning communities. They:

- Contribute to school effectiveness by collaborating with other professionals;
- Work collaboratively with parents; and,
- Utilize community resources.

Background Of The National Board

National Education Reform

Certification of accomplished teachers across the United States by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is an important step in the process of national education reform. The nation's contemporary education reform movement was launched a decade ago with the release of *A Nation At Risk*. This slender report, by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, unleashed a flurry of reform activities in the states and local school districts with its now famous warning that a "rising tide of mediocrity" threatened to engulf the nation's schools. Education improvement became an issue of the highest priority for many elected officials and policy makers, business leaders, concerned citizens, and the education community itself.

Within months of the release of *A Nation At Risk*, dozens of state level commissions were busily generating reform plans and programs. What prompted this outpouring of education reform vigor?

Debates about school reform resounded with worried discussion of an education system gone soft and a nation unprepared to meet the challenges of a global economy. Strengthening American economic competitiveness was linked to a better prepared, more highly skilled work force. Investment in human capital—in the people who would power the economy—was key. A departure point for national economic revitalization was the nation's public school system.

This reform movement was different from other movements in the past. A principal focus of this reform effort was to "professionalize" teaching. Proponents of school reform, including governors, corporate executives, teacher leaders, and school system superintendents argued that teachers were too often treated more like factory workers than educated professionals. Too often teachers were told by others what to do and how to do it.

Too often their professional judgment was not sought or was ignored. Too often teachers' professional discretion was circumscribed by a complex web of unexamined rules, regulations, and traditions. This, argued the reformers, must change if the nation was to reinvigorate its school system and begin the process of revitalizing its economy.

Thus, a principal challenge of education reform lay in reconceptualizing teachers' work lives. Teachers should have substantially more professional decision making authority. The teaching occupation should be crafted to be intellectually challenging, financially remunerative, and professionally rewarding so that capable individuals—the nation's "best and brightest"—would be persuaded to choose a teaching career and so that the nation's strongest teachers would elect to remain in the classroom to assist in restructuring the system from the inside.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

In 1985 the Carnegie Corporation of New York created the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy because it believed that the kind of education reform the nation needed would not be found in a quick fix but would require sustained engagement on several key facets of the system. Its first task was to concentrate on the quality of teaching. The Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession issued its report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, in 1986. This report's leading recommendation was to establish an independent organization to define standards for high quality teaching and to offer a process of voluntary certification nationwide to experienced teachers who demonstrate they meet these standards. The following year, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was born.

As in any profession, from medicine to law to education, those best qualified to evaluate perfor-

mance are practicing professionals themselves. Of the National Board's 63 members, 42—or two-thirds—are teaching professionals and 34—a majority—are practicing elementary and secondary teachers. The presidents of the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) have been important members of the National Board from its inception, as have been leaders, past and present, of subject matter associations (i.e., National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Science Teachers Association, etc.) Other teachers were invited to partici-

pate because of their leadership in subject matter or specialty fields, or because of their record of accomplishment in the classroom. The Board also includes school administrators, local school board members, state governors and other policymakers, teacher educators affiliated with colleges and universities, children's advocates, and business leaders.

As the National Board begins to certify significant numbers of teachers, those who fill the 42 teacher professional seats will be elected by Board Certified teachers themselves.

National Board Certification and California

Why California Is Unique

To say California's education system is large, diverse, and complex is barely to do justice to the challenge. California's schools are organized into more than 1,000 school districts ranging in size from Los Angeles Unified, with more than 650,000 students, to tiny rural districts with fewer than a dozen students. Each year some 15,000 newly employed teachers enter California schools.

California's students represent a rich array of diverse backgrounds and heritages. For the past three years, the state's public school student body has had no majority ethnic group. Whites comprise less than half of the student population (44.5%). Hispanics, the fastest growing segment of students, make up more than a third (35%); African Americans and Asians comprise approximately eight percent each; and American Indians, Filipinos, and Pacific Islanders constitute the rest. While such diversity is a strength, it is also a special challenge. One of every five students in California public schools is limited-English-speaking.

The cultural and ethnic diversity of California classrooms is matched only by a few other places in the nation. Moreover, although more than half of the student population belongs to one of the state's numerous minority groups, fewer than one in seven teachers is a minority.

Changing social conditions in the nation and state are reflected in California's schools, and these factors profoundly affect children's ability to succeed in school. Nearly 20 percent of the state's students come from poverty households. Many suffer from inadequate health care and various forms of abuse and neglect. The state's population of special education students is increasing steadily, and every classroom teacher—not only the specialist—must find ways of educating children with special needs.

Finally, California faces the task of supporting its schools on a revenue base that is declining in real dollars per student. California's per pupil expenditures, which ranked sixth among states in the nation in 1965, have not kept pace with inflation, student population growth, and spending in other states. As of 1992, California ranked 41st of the 50 states in public education spending per student.

California's Challenge To National Board Certification

California represents the nation's biggest challenge to the National Board's commitment to honor diversity among students and teachers. How can a national certificate, designed to assess and recognize accomplished teaching anywhere in the United States, realistically reflect the knowledge and skills required by California teachers and the challenges posed by California classrooms?

The process of National Board Certification offers California a valuable tool in meeting some of the state's unique challenges. To earn a certificate anywhere in the country, teachers must demonstrate the skills and knowledge needed to teach a diverse student population. The need to reflect the diversity of America's student body has been an important factor in every step in the process of designing the National Board's program of advanced teacher certification. The National Board's Cultural Diversity and Equity Panel is specifically charged with reviewing all of the Board's proposed standards, assessment instruments, and scoring criteria. The National Board's standards committees, charged with forging a professional consensus in each field, have strong participation by minority teachers and scholars, many of whom are California educators. The Board's contractors, charged with developing assessment instruments, employ

minority staff and advisors. The field test process includes both rural and urban districts with very diverse student populations and numbers of minority teachers. The Board's trained assessors—who are themselves teachers—will be drawn from various regions of the country, from widely diverse teaching settings, and will include minority teachers.

The National Board has invested enormous resources—well beyond what is available to an individual state—to develop credible standards and valid assessments. California has been well represented in these developmental efforts. National Board vice-chair Claire Pelton is a San Jose

Unified School District teacher. California sites are important components of the Field Test Network. California teachers and other educators serve on a variety of National Board committees. The state's public institutions and its private sector will play important roles in fostering participation by interested teachers by monitoring success rates, and by providing access to certification and to the resources that will enable teachers to prepare for it. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of Californians and California institutions to ensure that teachers representing all groups and teaching situations are adequately prepared for National Board Certification.

National Board Certification and Education Reform

CALIFORNIA HAS BEEN A leader among states in education reform since the early 1980s. Senate Bill 813, the state's 1983 education reform legislation, enacted more than 80 separate reforms, including the Mentor Teacher Program, higher graduation standards, and improved student counseling. SB 813 was the result of a remarkable coalition of teachers and their unions, administrators, school boards, parents, and business leaders. Concurrently, California began to develop curriculum frameworks which are now recognized as national models. The state's student performance assessment system continues to pioneer cutting edge methods of "authentic" student assessment. The state Subject Matter Projects, long hailed as models of effective staff development, have been expanded in both scope and content.

California has also paid close attention to the preparation of new teachers. The California New Teacher Project (CNTF) confirmed the importance of systematic support for individuals as they begin their teaching career. Encouraged by the project's results, the Legislature authorized the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) initiative. Additionally, the sponsors have taken the next step and drafted a framework of essential knowledge and skills that will shape professional expectations for incoming teachers.

Education reform naturally has focused on teachers, and continued reform today carries with it the challenge to build a framework of change that "makes sense" to professionals in the classroom. The goal is a teaching profession that can attract new, capable people into teaching careers, while also keeping today's fine teachers in the state's public schools and providing them with opportunities to grow and develop.

The California Task Force believes that National Board Certification in California ties to-

gether components of the state's education reform efforts in powerful ways:

Curriculum standards. California's curriculum frameworks occupied a prominent place in the National Board's process of designing standards for certification. Standards developed thus far for the first two early adolescence certification closely match California's expectations.

Student assessment. California's shift toward performance-based assessment will be supported and extended by the National Board's own assessment methods. The teacher portfolio and the classroom simulations incorporate samples of student work, and require that teachers be conversant with methods of performance assessment. In addition, the National Board's own approach relies on performance assessment, thus creating for teachers the same form of authentic assessment that they are constructing for students.

Instructional methods. National Board standards combine teachers' knowledge of their subject, their knowledge of how to teach the subject, and knowledge of their students' ability to learn the subject. The National Board reflects California's interest in "developmentally appropriate" instruction, and its standards already developed for early adolescence certification are compatible with the principles of California's *Caught In The Middle* report on middle grade education. It is anticipated that standards developed for certificates in early and middle childhood and adolescence through young adulthood will be compatible with California's elementary education report, *It's Elementary*, and with the state's high school education report, *Second To None*.

School restructuring. Many California schools are actively seeking new forms of school organization and governance that envision new professional

roles for teachers. The State Department of Education and local districts have recognized the importance of broader participation of teachers and other education professionals in school governance; a closer partnership between families and schools; and stronger ties among schools, business, and community service organizations. The National Board, in its early materials, publicly recognized

the importance of these extended partnerships. In developing standards for individual certification, the National Board included specific standards to gauge the family-school relationship. Other standards place value on how teachers draw upon their colleagues and upon community resources to strengthen curriculum and instruction.

National Board Certification and The Teaching Profession

NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION PROMISES to have as great an impact on the teaching profession and California's collective teacher corps as it will have on the individual teacher who studies, prepares, and earns a certificate.

National Board Certification is an important new step in a profession that recognizes and values the continuous development of knowledge, skill, and judgment. The Board's standards build on the principles and standards that guide a contemporary vision of teacher preparation, but they reflect an added depth of understanding and contribution that can only be acquired with years of experience working with diverse students in the classroom, and that can best be demonstrated by knowledgeable and dedicated teachers.

As National Board Certification comes on line, it will encourage a reexamination of approaches to professional development and support. National Board Certification can serve as a catalyst for a new form of professional development that relies less on a parade of unrelated workshops and more on providing teachers with opportunities to study, assess, and strengthen their work. The National Board's standards and assessments represent a consensus on the most effective teaching practices available today. Few actions could bring these "state of the art" skills into the typical California classroom more quickly than a statewide effort to qualify as many teachers as possible.

National Board Certification will be for many teachers their introduction to the creative use of portfolios, videotape, essays, and classroom simulations. California's newest teachers may have watched themselves and others on video in their teacher preparation classes; they may have assembled a portfolio of their work; and they may have worked together in collegial groups to develop curriculum ideas. Generally, however, these

modes of assessment have only recently been introduced into teacher education programs, and they remain nearly non-existent in school programs of staff development or teacher evaluation. Thus, the process of preparing for National Board Certification will afford experienced teachers an opportunity to think differently about, reflect on, and demonstrate their own best teaching practices using a variety of formats.

National standards will build on the important progress already made in California's efforts to advance the teaching profession. The state has placed progressively greater emphasis on professional development programs that are close to the classroom and the school, that combine subject knowledge with teaching skill, and that underscore the role that teachers themselves play as informed colleagues and leaders.

The network of state-funded Subject Matter Projects, which now includes eight subject areas at 94 sites across the state, provides one powerful example. These projects are housed mainly on college and university campuses and operate as "learning communities" that offer teachers a place to join one another and university faculty in examining issues of teaching and learning in specific subject disciplines. Their activities include intensive two- and four-week summer institutes and sessions during the year that build on the institute experiences.

The California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Project, jointly sponsored by the State Department of Education and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, also provides an effective model of support and assistance. Currently operating in over 115 school districts, this project offers over 1,100 beginning teachers the opportunity to consult with more experienced colleagues and to cooperate in supporting one another. Legislation

passed in 1988 (SB 148) calls for the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to evaluate systematically both teacher preparation programs and their graduates. By concentrating on the demonstrated results of these programs—what their graduates know and are able to do—these assessments will also be a valuable introduction for beginning teachers to the kinds of procedures they can expect to encounter later in their careers should they seek National Board Certification.

Mathematics, science, and humanities collaboratives, supported by major foundations, have demonstrated the power of a network of teachers to build knowledge, skill, and professional involvement. Most collaboratives involve teachers not only with one another, but also with university faculty and with subject experts in business and industry.

The “video clubs” created by the National Board in the San Francisco Bay Area as part of its field test activities provide a model for another form of local support. Teachers who were trained to “score”—or evaluate—videos as part of the assessment process found themselves absorbed by the possibilities to collaborate on new ideas, using the videos to share one another’s experiments in practice. The video clubs provide an interesting and inexpensive variation on the peer coaching programs introduced by many districts.

National Board Certification, combined with important state efforts like these, and with innovations taking place in schools across California, promises to help redefine how teachers work together, study together, and teach students together. This multiplier effect will result in a better learning environment for all of California’s schoolchildren.

Introducing National Board Certification In California

"What's the incentive for a teacher to become Board Certified?"

THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL Board Certification will depend first on the response of individual teachers who must find it sufficiently rewarding to participate, and who must succeed in sufficient numbers to make certification visible and credible to the profession. It will also depend on the response of local districts and schools as they work to design the incentives and rewards that will make National Board Certification meaningful to teachers. Finally, over the long term, California's successful use of National Board Certification may require modifications in state law and education policy. As advanced certification demonstrates its value in improving instruction, the state may wish to raise its level of support, both for funding incentives to individual teachers and for promoting the kind of professional development programs that will help teachers reach their goal of earning a certificate.

A principal incentive for teachers to achieve National Board Certification will be their initial commitment to excellence and their interest in professional recognition by their peers. Beyond this personal satisfaction for the individual teacher, our education system must encourage outstanding teachers to continually refine and improve their practice, find new ways to contribute to their schools and their profession, and to accept new responsibilities *without leaving a career in teaching*.

The process of certification of accomplished teachers also holds great potential for enhancing the status of the teaching profession and raising the overall quality of instruction in California schools. Realizing that potential will require:

Public awareness of what certification represents;

Professional acceptance of the value of both the process of certification and the level of skill and

expertise which the certificate itself represents; and,

Professional incentives that will motivate individual teachers to begin the process of preparing for and earning National Board Certification.

Public Awareness

The first step toward a meaningful national program of professional certification for teachers is to broaden the public discussion of certification standards, assessments, and the National Board. The California Task Force strongly encourages teachers, administrators, school boards, and parents to learn about the National Board's program for certifying accomplished teachers. The greatest responsibility for helping the public understand the meaning and importance of National Board certification will be in the hands of the many professional and community interest organizations and associations whose memberships have a stake in quality education. These groups are encouraged to educate their members about the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the process for awarding National Board Certification to qualified teachers, and the positive contributions National Board Certification can make to improving student learning.

Teachers

The California Teachers Association and the California Federation of Teachers plan to inform their members about National Board Certification through their regular newsletters and conferences, and with the help of special task forces on certification. Other professional educator associations, such as those based on subject fields or on other specializations, have played an important role in developing National Board standards and are expected to

help communicate with their memberships about certification. Certification of accomplished teachers represents a major event in the development of the teaching profession in California and across the nation. Both the policy bodies and the communication forums that bind the profession together will greatly influence the success of the program.

Administration

It is crucial that local school boards and district administrators understand how certification can benefit students. The California School Boards Association and the Association of California School Administrators will undertake a campaign to inform their members about the history of the National Board and the potential benefits of a program of certification. These statewide groups can stimulate discussions in every local district about how teachers can be encouraged to pursue certification, how these accomplished teachers could best be deployed, and many other local issues.

State Agencies

The government agencies that fund and regulate education will have important opportunities to disseminate information about National Board Certification. The California Department of Education, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and other state agencies must provide information about the National Board to their own staffs and to directors of special projects supported by the state and encourage participation among teachers. For example, teachers involved with the state Subject Matter Projects, schools receiving school restructuring grants under SB 1274, and teachers participating in the California School Leadership Academy will all have a special interest in National Board Certification.

Parents

Education reform efforts have emphasized, and must continue to emphasize, the partnership between families and schools. Parents care about who is teaching their children, and they will be very interested in National Board Certification when they understand what it can tell them about their

children's teachers and school. The state Parent Teacher Association should initiate a campaign to inform its members about the National Board, and local PTAs should be encouraged to learn as much as possible about the process and what it can mean for teachers.

Professional Acceptance

The National Board's teaching standards represent a professional consensus on what constitutes best teaching skills and strategies, and what are the best ways to demonstrate their application. The credibility of National Board Certification depends first and foremost on its acceptance by teachers and the teaching profession. That credibility must first be established and then continually renewed as the profession evolves in the coming years.

This process logically begins where teachers receive their training in preparation for beginning their new career. Accreditation and regular program review of teacher education programs—whether at colleges and universities or elsewhere—should examine how teacher candidates are beginning to be prepared to achieve the standards established by the National Board. In addition to preparing teachers to *begin* their careers by earning a teaching credential, programs should also prepare teacher candidates to *excel* in their careers by earning a National Board certificate.

Teachers certified by the National Board as "highly accomplished" will be in an excellent position to assist in the preparation of the next generation of teachers. Colleges and universities may consider giving preference to National Board Certified teachers for positions as teacher educators or as clinical and adjunct faculty in teacher preparation programs. California's colleges and universities will also continue to have a valuable contribution to make as informed advisors to the National Board, particularly on the process of assessing accomplished teaching in a multilingual and multicultural environment.

Beyond operating teacher preparation programs, institutions of higher learning should be encouraged to serve as resources to teachers interested in achieving National Board Certifica-

tion. When the National Board teacher certification process is understood and properly valued, colleges and universities across the country will have incentives to redeploy the subject matter specialists on their faculties and to reshape their advanced degree programs to better serve practicing teachers pursuing Board Certification. Teachers themselves also are likely to become a much more demanding clientele for graduate programs which will have a healthy effect on the quality of these offerings.

Local school districts can be leaders in accepting National Board Certification by emphasizing its standards and assessment methods in their regular evaluation of teacher performance, in their professional development programs, and in their hiring practices. Many school districts still rely on informal or subjective evaluations of teachers' work in their classrooms. National Board Certification offers school districts and teachers' organizations a valuable tool for competent professional evaluation. The performance-based assessment methods to be used by the National Board will be particularly useful as a model for local district evaluation standards and procedures.

California government agencies that fund and regulate public education will also have significant influence on the acceptance of National Board Certification by the teaching profession. The state's mentor teacher and staff development programs could dedicate resources to the preparation of teachers pursuing Board Certification. A first priority will be to offer equal access to the process for teachers of different backgrounds, working in different regions of the state. Special efforts will need to be made, for example, to encourage teachers in rural and urban areas to enter the process.

California's Subject Matter Projects are nationally-recognized models of teacher-centered professional development, and are logical instruments for assisting teachers to prepare for National Board Certification. The Center for School Restructuring and the California School Leadership Academy are two other organizations with strong teacher contacts that could help introduce teachers and administrators in local school districts to the con-

cepts and qualifications of advanced certification. How the private sector and professionals in other fields view teacher certification will be an important factor in the professional acceptance of a National Board certificate. Companies that employ local students after graduation, and large firms recruiting from area colleges and universities typically are interested in the quality of instruction at public schools in the elementary and secondary grades. It is important that the private sector be introduced to National Board Certification as an important measure of educational accountability. Private sector support should be sought to help underwrite the expense of preparing teachers to enter the process and to help defray the costs of the process itself.

Professional Incentives

Because National Board Certification is designed to be an objective, nationally recognized indicator of teacher achievement, it logically will be a factor to be considered in the collective bargaining process. Representatives both of district administrations and teacher organizations will have an interest in negotiating how certification can be recognized, for example, in local district salary schedules. Adding another column to the salary schedule for Board Certified teachers could be "brought to the table," as could allowing Board Certification to fulfill the advanced degree requirements for placement in higher salary columns. Alternatively, districts might consider providing Board Certified teachers with stipends not attached to the salary schedule. National Board Certification can also be a factor in negotiating criteria and processes for evaluation of teacher performance.

National Board Certification could become an important factor in selecting teachers for leadership roles at the school and district level. For example, district teachers and administrators may choose to give preference to Board Certified teachers when appointing mentor teachers or other teacher leaders. Similarly, districts may choose to adopt National Board standards and assessment procedures as part of their process for selecting lead teachers or specialists.

Both district administrations and teacher organizations may wish to consider developing local programs to assist teachers in preparing for National Board Certification. Such assistance might include, for example, the establishment of district-sponsored professional development study groups. The study groups might well be structured so as to become ongoing institutionalized components of a district's professional development program. National Board Certification builds on the notion that a professional has a responsibility to keep abreast of new developments in the field and maintain a consistent quality of practice. As teachers will be required (every 7-10 years) to renew their Board Certification, continuing collegueship and professional growth is essential.

Other important professional incentives for teachers to enter the National Board Certification process could be developed in conjunction with the state's process for licensing teachers. Individuals entering teaching today must meet certain re-

quirements to qualify for a preliminary credential, and then must meet additional requirements within five years for a "professional clear" credential. Teachers with the "clear" credential must document 150 hours of additional professional growth training to qualify for a renewal of their clear credential every five years. Preparation for National Board Certification could be considered in lieu of the 150 hours.

Teachers in private and parochial schools are not required to hold state credentials, yet they are eligible to earn a National Board certificate. Similarly, teachers with licenses in other states that do not have formal reciprocity agreements with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing are also eligible for Board Certification. The preparation, study, knowledge, and experience that goes into earning a national certificate should be considered in lieu of certain requirements should such teachers decide to earn credentials and teach in public schools.

Afterword

AS WITH ANY NEW undertaking, National Board Certification brings with it its share of uncertainties. Much of the program must still be worked out as the standards and assessments for each certification field are added to the palette of choices available to California teachers.

The organizations and individuals represented on the California Task Force on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards see a great potential for Board Certification to help improve professional development in California, strengthen

the skills of individual teachers, enhance the stature of the teaching profession, and build education's credibility with the tax-paying public.

Much work remains as the goals and theories of certifying accomplished teachers are hammered into a real system of choices for teachers. The California Task Force is committed to providing the involvement, advice and cooperation that will make National Board Certification meaningful and productive in this state.