

Education Standards & Practices Board Report

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Professional Teacher Competencies

When we as professional educators are called upon to describe the knowledge and skills base required to be a teacher or an educational leader, we often move immediately to describing the content that we teach or the daily routine we follow. We seem to have some difficulty describing what it means to be someone who can successfully help students learn, what an experienced educator can do that the average person on the street cannot do. A study by Allan Glatthorn on Graduate Study and Teacher Effectiveness recently reiterated seven competencies of experienced teachers identified in previous studies by Shulman (1987) and Grossman (1991). They are:

Content knowledge (possessing a depth of knowledge in genetics or geometry, for example);

- Pedagogical content knowledge (knowing how to make genetics or geometry understandable and interesting to young adolescents);
- General pedagogical knowledge (knowing strategies for managing student behavior, or using specific questioning strategies that build student involvement and understanding);
- Curriculum knowledge (knowing the content of the district and state curricula, or understanding the sequence of content taught at each age level);
- Knowledge of learners and their characteristics (understanding levels of child development, how the brain functions in learning, or knowing the special needs of students who are ADHD);

- Knowledge of educational contexts (knowing how schools and classrooms work and how to interact successfully within those settings);
- Knowledge of educational aims, values, and their philosophical and historical grounds (the big picture of why we teach and what students and society want and need).

Both content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge have been shown to be essential for teaching effectiveness in a number of studies.

Much of the effective teaching research conducted during the 1970s and 1980s was undertaken within a "process-product" approach (those teaching processes that increase student achievement). The focus was to identify and describe observable teacher variables related to student achievement such as student engagement time, student-teacher interactions, grouping arrangements, content coverage, etc. More recent research has focused on the internal processes involved in student learning (the teaching of thinking) and how those processes are mediated by students and teachers.

The next time someone speaks about North Dakota students receiving "a good education," we hope they are recognizing the vital importance of teachers in classrooms who know the content area and have the skills and competencies to make education an experience our children and parents believe is "a good education". It takes professional, well-educated, qualified teachers to make "a good education" a reality.

Glatthorn, A. A. (1997). Graduate study and teacher effectiveness: A synthesis of the literature. An issue analysis report prepared for the deans' council on teacher education. School of Education, East Carolina University. [Online]. Available: http://www.ga.unc.edu/21century_schools/reports/graduatestudy.html

Shulman, L.S. (1987) Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57. 1-22.

Grossman, P. (1991). Mapping the terrain: Knowledge growth in teaching. In H. C. Waxman & H. J. Walberg (Eds.), *Effective teaching: Current research* (pp. 203-216). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

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Professional and Recreational Licensure Cost Comparisons

The Education Standards and Practices Board conducted a survey of education standards boards in other states, boards governing other professions within North Dakota, and those issuing recreational licenses within the state. The information gathered included relative costs per year and educational requirements related to these licensures. This information was gathered to assess the cost and value of educational licensure relative to other professional and recreational licensures. The Board will be using this information to support a bill in the coming legislative session to change the references to the "Educator's

Professional Certificate" to the "Educator's Professional License" in state law, giving professional recognition to the certification that educators must hold to practice. The survey will also be valuable as objective information for ongoing reviews of our fee structures. A synopsis of the findings follows.

- Other states with independent licensing boards (fees supported, not receiving state appropriations) charge between \$20-60 per year for certification with most at \$25-35 per year. North Dakota's fee structure is currently \$15 per year.
- Other professional licensure fees required by law in the state ranged from \$20-280 per year. Several have initial application and state testing fees ranging from \$25-280. Fee examples:
 - Dental Hygienist \$55 yr.
 - Cosmetology Mgr. \$20 yr.
 - Manicurist \$20 yr.
 - Elec. Journeyman \$25
 - Master Electrician \$50 yr.
 - Pharmaceutical Technicians \$35
 - Pharmacists \$150 yr.
 - Nurses: LPN \$50 yr. RN \$60 yr.
 - Engineers & Surveyors \$44 yr.
 - State Bar \$225-280 yr.
 - Board of Realtors \$50-60 yr.
 - Optometrist \$150 yr.
 - Social work \$75 2-yr
 - Psychological Examiners \$100 yr.

Recreational (hunting and fishing) licenses averaged from \$15-20 for in-state and ranged from \$10-165 for out-of-state. Recreational license seasons ranged from a few days to a year.

The number of hours of reeducation required to renew professional licenses ranged from 6 to 120 contact hours (clock hours) per year with an average of about 30 hours per year. Current reeducation required for practicing teachers is 4 semester hours every five years which would translate to 12 contact hours (clock hours) per year.

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Funding for National Board Certification

Funding is currently available to assist 10 teachers in seeking certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. During the next biennium, the Governor's budget proposal will include funding to support scholarships and pay incentives for additional teachers. Selection criteria, rules, and monitoring will be handled through the ESPB.

Through these actions, North Dakota joins 32 other states which currently offer monetary, statutory, or certification rules incentives for teachers seeking National Board Certification. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) currently offers seven certifications in the areas of:

- Early Childhood Generalist (student ages 3-8)
- Middle Childhood/Generalist (student ages 7-12)
- Early Adolescence/Generalist (student ages 11-15)
- Early Adolescence/English Language Arts (11-15)
- Early Adolescence & Young Adulthood/Art (11-18)
- Adolescence & Young Adulthood/Mathematics (14-18)
- Adolescence & Young Adulthood/Science (14-18)

NBPTS plans to have five additional certifications available by December 1998:

- Early Adolescence/Mathematics (student ages 11-15)
- Early Adolescence/Science (student ages 11-15)
- Early Adolescence/Social Studies-History (11-15)
- Adolescence & Young Adulthood/English Language Arts (14-18)
- Adolescence & Young Adulthood/Social Studies-History (14-18)

Nine other areas have standards completed and certification under development.

All of the certifications are based upon the following key precepts:

- 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 two-part assessment process is rigorous and includes a four-month portfolio of student work, videotapes, and other teaching artifacts as well as assessment at a state assessment center.

Prerequisites for application eligibility include a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, three years of successful teaching, and proof of valid state licensure for all three of those years. Plans are currently underway to train an in-state facilitator to assist teachers moving through the process. Interested teachers can obtain applications or view detailed portfolio requirements by contacting the North Dakota Education Association at 1-800-369-6332.

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Fingerprinting: Background Check Results

NDCC 15-38-18.2 began requiring fingerprint background checks for initial certification on August 1, 1997. During the first year of the law, the ESPB monitored fingerprint background checks on approximately 1000 applicants and certified 892 new teachers, including new ND graduates and those moving to ND to teach. Those not certified include those who did not meet educational standards, those not passing the fingerprint screening, and those who have not yet returned all of the documentation necessary to review their eligibility. Since the ESPB began to study the results of the background checks, approximately 5% of the checks have revealed some type of criminal conviction. Criminal records checks revealed misdemeanors and felonies ranging from NSF checks and DUI convictions to armed robbery, gross sexual imposition, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, drug possession, theft, assault, terrorizing, and criminal conspiracy. Criminal records were detected through the fingerprint process on several applicants who had stated on the application form that they had no record.

One applicant has been formally denied certification by the Board on the basis of a criminal record and several others have not continued to pursue certification or are currently in the process of providing additional information for the Board's review.

The criteria the Board uses in determining whether an applicant will be denied certification on the basis of a criminal record are stated in NDCC 12.1-33-02 relating to all state occupational and professional licenses. The key factors considered are:

1. whether the nature of the crime has a direct bearing on the individual's functioning as a teacher,
2. whether there is sufficient evidence of rehabilitation, and
3. the amount of time elapsed since the conviction.

The fingerprint screening has been a valuable tool in maintaining safety for students and a high quality teaching force within the state.

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Professional Development Guidelines

The Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) published Professional Development Guidelines: Effective Practices in 1996 to help educators assess whether certain professional development endeavors are going to be effective in helping reach their educational goals. Training sessions were held and additional materials placed at each of the state's ten Teacher Learning Centers.

A second statewide training of trainers will be held in Valley City January 28 and February 16, 1999. The training will help participants understand and use the Guidelines, and to work with districts as they incorporate best practices in professional development into their school improvement process.

The Guidelines were developed as a collaborative project of Valley City Public Schools and the Barnes County Consortium, the ND Teacher Center Network, and the ESPB.

Copies of the Guidelines are available through the office of the ESPB or the Teacher Centers for schools involved in self-study improvement and for individual educators seeking to expand their professional expertise.

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Certification Rules Revisions:

Language Clarification

The ESPB revised its rules of certification, effective July 23, 1998. The changes that were made in this revision were non-substantive, serving only to clarify questions commonly asked by our constituents regarding interpretation of the existing rules. Copies of the rules as revised in July of 1998 are available from the ESPB office.

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Proposed Rules Changes

The Board has written rules additions and changes in the following areas in response to needs in the field. These rules will be read at public hearing on December 16, 1998 and the period for submitting comments to our office will extend until January 16, 1999. A synopsis of these changes follows. Full text of the rules is available upon request.

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Substitute Teachers

The Board has responded to field shortages of substitute teachers with two new rules provisions. Teachers who are retiring will be allowed to drop immediately into the two-year renewal cycle without having to complete an additional five-year certification and four more semester hours. Interim (emergency) certification will now also be allowed for substituting when a documented shortage of substitutes exists in the district.

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Elementary Endorsement Internship

The new internship option would apply only to individuals who are certified to teach K-12 in the areas of art, music, foreign language, special education (non-restricted), and physical education and have already student taught at both the elementary and secondary levels in their specialty area. Under the new proposed rules, they may complete an internship option when seeking an elementary endorsement rather than student teaching

again in a self-contained elementary classroom setting. The internship must still be completed in a regular classroom setting below grade seven and meet all of the requirements for an approved college-supervised internship.

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New Legislation Proposed For Minor Equivalency Endorsements

The Department of Public Instruction ceased to issue minor equivalencies on September 1, 1998 after an attorney general's opinion issued during their rules making process found nothing in law that gave them authority to issue equivalencies. These equivalencies were used to determine whether teachers had the minimum coursework required by school accreditation to teach certain classes within or beyond their transcribed majors and minors. Equivalencies issued prior to September 1, 1998 will continue to be recognized for purposes of school approval and accreditation.

The ruling left the state with no new way of recognizing content area coursework obtained by individuals after graduation unless it constituted an additional degree. The Education Standards and Practices Board will be proposing legislation in January to issue minor equivalency endorsements through teacher certification. This legislation will allow the ESPB to issue an endorsement recognizing that an individual has obtained coursework equivalent to a minor. The Board will work with the colleges of teacher education and consider the DPI rules for school accreditation to determine criteria for the content area minor equivalency endorsements.

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Contact Information

You can reach either our automated line with certification application and renewal information or our staff by dialing 701-328-2264.

The ESPB nine digit zip code is 58505-0080. The last four digits are used in the sorting of mail at the State Capitol. Using all nine digits will assist in timely delivery of transcripts and other information directly to our office. Our fax number is 701-328-2815.

Inquiries regarding certification or added endorsements for kindergarten, elementary, middle school, secondary, or Bilingual/ESL should be made to the Education Standards and Practices Board.

Inquiries regarding K-12 school accreditation or credentials for administration, special education, counseling, driver education, library, or reading should be made to appropriate office at the Department of Public Instruction or to the DPI main switchboard, 701-328-2260.

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Members of the ESPB

- Don Haugen, Langdon (teacher), ESPB Vice-chair
- Randy L. Gordon, Dickinson (teacher, non-public schools)
- Dr. Doug Johnson, Bismarck (administrator)
- Michael Schatz, New England (teacher)
- Linda Davis, Bismarck (teacher), ESPB Chair
- Dr. Mary Harris (teacher education)
- Maryjane Martens, Fargo (teacher)
- Laura Carney, Fargo (school board)
- Beverly Sandness, Minot (administrator)

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Staff of the ESPB

The Board welcomed Janet Placek as their new Executive Director August 15, 1998.

- Janet Placek, Executive Director
- Deb Jensen, Assistant Director, Program Approval & Professional Development
- Diane Weber, Admin. Assistant
- Bonnie Thompson, Admin. Assistant
- Lauri Nord, Admin. Assistant

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