

NATIONAL BOARD

for Professional Teaching Standards[®]

Policy Guidelines for Ethical Candidate Support

Candidates for National Board certification undergo a rigorous process that requires them to demonstrate content expertise during instruction while analyzing their teaching practices with intense scrutiny. Candidates consistently report that, whether or not they actually achieve certification, the process represents the best professional development experience they have had. During this period, candidates often find they benefit immensely from the aid of a candidate support provider, or professional learning facilitator (PLF).

Supporting candidates involves meeting different needs—providing them with resources, guidance, and technical help, in addition to mentoring and coaching them. The effort integrates intellectual, emotional, logistic, and technical assistance and often begins before teachers actually apply for certification. Candidate support takes different forms, but it always acknowledges that the responsibility for developing and completing certification materials rests solely with candidates.

Assistance may be offered on a formal or informal basis to individuals or groups. Facilitators may be private individuals, such as a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) or another accomplished instructor. They may also be professional development providers, faculty members, and NBCTs or other representatives associated with an agency, organization, or institution of higher education. All facilitators share a desire to improve education and a commitment to working with candidates for National Board certification. Importantly, members of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Board of Directors and NBPTS employees may not serve as PLFs.

Candidates choose whether they will participate in support programs, and it is possible to achieve National Board certification without them. However, teachers state that candidate support keeps them focused and motivated, particularly when performed in groups. At its best, it enhances the understanding that educators have of their teaching practices and the decisions they make in the classroom. Good candidate support is honest yet nonjudgmental. It is constructive, professional, and knowledgeable.

PLFs cannot make choices for candidates or create evidence for them. Instead, they remain sensitive to the emotional needs of candidates while asking questions that encourage them to present their evidence more clearly. Providers show candidates how to create organizational systems so candidates can manage their certification process. They locate resources so candidates can meet technological demands, and they offer models of feedback so candidates can broaden and deepen their analytical abilities. Successful PLFs contribute to the professional development that candidates experience as they take their journey through the documentation of accomplished teaching to the achievement of National Board certification. The thoughtful design and ethical implementation of candidate support in all its aspects can create an intellectual environment that is both inspiring and empowering for candidates.

This document provides PLFs with guidelines to increase their awareness of the issues and actions related to ethical candidate support. Observing these guidelines will allow PLFs to assist candidates while maintaining the rigorous nature of National Board certification, protecting the

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secure processes of the National Board assessment, and upholding the high integrity of NBPTS.

Fundamental Responsibilities

PLFs recognize that the certification process is voluntary and open to all teachers who meet the eligibility requirements defined by NBPTS. Thus, they actively engage all teachers in outreach, pre-candidate, and candidate support programs, dedicating themselves to the inclusion of teachers in under-represented groups. PLFs conduct support programs that recognize the Five Core Propositions as the foundation for accomplished teaching while honoring and respecting the professional decisions that candidates make. PLFs understand that the responsibility of preparing for the assessment center and developing portfolio content and materials rests solely and completely with candidates.

NBPTS does not license individuals or groups that provide candidate support but expects them to adhere to these guidelines for ethical practice. By observing the tenets in this document, PLFs manifest their deep commitment to the teaching profession, to NBPTS, and, above all, to teachers and their students.

Commitment to the Teaching Profession

PLFs believe that teaching is a profession, and they contribute to its growth by upholding these principles.

- Teaching is a public trust requiring adherence to the highest ideals of professional conduct.
- Teachers are lifelong learners who continually deepen their knowledge and skills.
- Teachers keep current with research and information in their field.

Commitment to NBPTS

PLFs understand and maintain the policies set forth by NBPTS. They incorporate NBPTS materials within their programs and base their involvement with candidates on the following set of actions.

- PLFs know and understand NBPTS standards and the assessment process.
- PLFs convey and adhere to the mission, policies, and guidelines adopted by NBPTS, which include these documents:
 - all confidentiality agreements,
 - “Policy for Use of NBPTS-Developed and/or Copyrighted Materials,”
 - “Policy for Use of Trademarks Held by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards,”
 - “Policy Guidelines for the Use of NBCT and Veteran Candidate Assessment Performances,”
 - “Policy Guidelines for ATLAS (Accomplished Teaching, Learning, and Schools),”
 - “Policy and Guidelines for Release of NBPTS Data for Educational Research,” and
 - “Certification Denial or Revocation Policy.”
- PLFs maintain a clear distinction between personal opinions and NBPTS policies.
- PLFs utilize materials provided by NBPTS for use with candidates. Though PLFs do not need to participate in a training sponsored by NBPTS, some Networks may require PLFs

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to complete training before providing candidate support through their organization.

- PLFs stay informed by routinely monitoring resources such as NBPTS.org, ATLAS, social media, other publications, and other research, all to obtain the most current information for candidates.
- PLFs understand that breaches of trust can threaten the validity of the certification process, notably that candidates cannot:
 - falsify or fabricate evidence for any entries;
 - copy the work of other teachers or NBCTs to use within their own portfolios;
 - ask for or receive information on secure assessment materials not contained within ATLAS;
 - ask for or receive ATLAS information from anyone other than an authorized user;
 - share, publish, electronically post, or otherwise reproduce secure assessment materials or information.
- PLFs immediately report violations of confidentiality, falsifications of material, or breaches of assessment security to NBPTS by calling 1-800-22TEACH[®].
- PLFs only share information intended for candidates, some of which is held within ATLAS and available for viewing per the provisions of the ATLAS policy.

Therefore, any individuals (including, but not limited to, staff members, consultants, scorers, and board members) who have access to confidential information about NBPTS assessment exercises, scoring, or performance standards shall not reveal this information. Further, these parties will not give the impression that they can determine whether a candidate will be or should have been successful in achieving a particular score or certification decision.

Commitment to Teachers and Students

PLFs recognize the responsibility they have to interact with the teachers they support in an ethical manner. They meet this responsibility when designing support programs and providing pre-candidates, candidates, and NBCTs with assistance during the certification and re-certification process.

- PLFs direct candidates to NBPTS standards documents throughout the certification process.
- PLFs acknowledge that there are multiple paths to certification.
- PLFs understand that candidates are solely responsible for the creation of their certification materials. PLFs stress that all work submitted by candidates must be their own.
- PLFs require their candidates to behave in an honest and ethical manner. As necessary, they remind candidates of the agreements they signed upon commencing the certification process.
- PLFs endorse collaboration within learning communities as part of the professional development experience while emphasizing the importance of individual responsibility and accountability in the development of candidate work.
- PLFs do not present their own submissions or teaching practices as models of correct practice.
- PLFs present ATLAS materials as examples of accomplished practice rather than

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prototypes inviting the exact replication of strategies, techniques, or practices for the purpose of certification.

- PLFs provide assistance in a manner that is honest, knowledgeable, constructive, professional, and nonjudgmental.
- PLFs research models of effective professional development and adult learning, which inform their programs and methodology.
- PLFs help candidates locate resources and comply with assessment procedures.
- PLFs communicate high expectations that encourage self-discovery while promoting honesty, integrity, and trust. They ask questions that probe ideas and help candidates clarify their views and beliefs.
- PLFs encourage deep analysis and reflection based on evidence collected in the classroom.
- PLFs give candidates feedback without ever estimating their scores.
- PLFs honor the agreements they make with candidates and the time they commit to working with them.
- PLFs direct candidates with certification questions to 1-800-22TEACH and www.nbpts.org as primary sources for answers.
- As appropriate, PLFs refer candidates to local resources including, but not limited to, university faculty, NBCTs, ATLAS subscribers working with candidates, and subject matter experts.
- PLFs design programs that promote fairness and equity, advance objectivity, maintain confidentiality, and embody sound ethical practice.

Resources

PLFs can obtain the following documents at www.nbpts.org or by contacting NBPTS.

- Policy for Use of NBPTS-Developed and/or Copyrighted Materials
- Policy for Use of Trademarks Held by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
- Policy Guidelines for the Use of NBCT and Veteran Candidate Assessment Performances
- Policy Guidelines for ATLAS (Accomplished Teaching, Learning, and Schools)
- Policy and Guidelines for Release of NBPTS Data for Educational Research
- Certification Denial or Revocation Policy
- Policies on Intellectual Property and Proprietary Rights and Release of Data for Educational Research (which contains the four policies related to NBPTS materials, NBPTS trademarks, NBCT and veteran candidate assessment performances, and NBPTS data)