



National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS®) Guidelines for Ethical Candidate Support

Candidates for National Board Certification® complete a rigorous process, requiring both intense self-analysis of their teaching practices and demonstration of their content expertise. Candidates consistently report that the process itself, independent of whether or not they actually achieve certification, is the best professional development they have experienced. Candidates also report that they benefit immensely from the support of a facilitator, or candidate support provider, during the certification process.

Candidate support includes providing resources, mentoring, coaching, guidance, and technical assistance to candidates. It incorporates intellectual, logistical, emotional, and technical support; however, the responsibility of developing and completing the certification materials always rests with the candidate. Candidate support may be offered individually or in groups, by individuals or through an organization, association, or institution of higher education. It can be formal or informal. Candidates may elect whether or not to participate in a candidate support program, and it is possible to achieve National Board Certification without participating in candidate support. However, teachers reported that candidate support, particularly when done in groups, kept them focused, motivated, and enhanced their understanding of their teaching practices and the decisions they make in the classroom. Good candidate support is nonjudgmental, honest, constructive, professional, and knowledgeable.

Candidate support providers are those individuals who facilitate candidates through the certification process, often starting before the teacher actually applies for certification. They may be National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs), other accomplished teachers, staff developers, higher education faculty, or other persons concerned about improving education by making a commitment to work with candidates for National Board certification. Candidate support providers cannot make choices or create evidence for the candidate. Rather, the candidate support providers ask questions that help a candidate show evidence more clearly. Candidate support providers are sensitive to a candidate's emotional needs, help candidates create organizational systems to manage the process, locate resources to help with technology demands, and provide models of feedback that broaden and deepen the candidate's own analytical abilities.

Candidate support providers have the opportunity to maximize the professional development experience of the National Board Certification process as they facilitate each candidate's journey towards documenting accomplished teaching. Thoughtful design and implementation of all aspects of candidate support create an intellectual and ethical environment that enhances the experience of teachers as they complete the process. This document provides guidelines to increase awareness of issues and actions relating to the ethical aspects of candidate support, to uphold the high integrity of NBPTS, to maintain the rigorous nature of National Board Certification, and to protect the secure processes of National Board assessments.

Fundamental Responsibilities

Candidate support providers recognize that the National Board Certification process is voluntary and open to all teachers who meet the eligibility requirements defined by NBPTS. Accordingly, candidate support providers actively engage all teachers, including those in under-represented groups, in outreach, pre-candidate, and candidate support programs. Candidate support providers recognize the Five Core Propositions as the foundation for describing accomplished teaching. Candidate support providers acknowledge that the responsibility for developing NBPTS portfolio content and materials, and preparing for the assessment center, rests solely and completely with the candidate. Therefore, candidate support providers conduct support programs that honor and respect the professional choices and decisions made by candidates. NBPTS does not license individuals or groups providing support to candidates for National Board Certification but expects that candidate support providers ascribe to these guidelines for ethical candidate support. Candidate support providers manifest a deep commitment to the profession of teaching, NBPTS, the needs of teachers as candidates and pre-candidates, and, above all, students.

Commitment to the Teaching Profession

Candidate support providers believe that teaching is a profession, and they contribute to its growth by acknowledging that:

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

Commitment to NBPTS

Candidate support providers understand, incorporate, and act to uphold the policies and materials of NBPTS. Candidate support providers:

Policies

- Convey and uphold the mission, guidelines, and policies adopted by NBPTS, including all confidentiality agreements, the Certification Denial or Revocation Policy, the Policy for Use of NBPTS-Developed and/or Copyrighted Materials, the Policy for Use of NBCT and Veteran Candidate Assessment Performances (which includes portfolio content), the Policy for Use of Trademarks Held by NBPTS, and the Policy and Guidelines for Release of NBPTS Data for Educational Research;
- Understand that breaches of trust can destroy the validity of the certification process, notably that candidates cannot: 1) falsify or fabricate evidence for any entries; 2) copy the work of other teachers or NBCTs to use in their own portfolios; 3) give, ask for, or receive information on secure assessment materials or information; or 4) share, publish, electronically post or otherwise reproduce secure assessment materials or information; and
- Share only information that is public for all candidates. Therefore, any individuals (including but not limited to staff members, consultants, scorers, and members of the board) with access to confidential information about NBPTS assessment exercises, scoring, or performance standards shall not reveal information or give the impression that they can determine whether a candidate will be or should have been successful in achieving certification or a particular score.

Actions

- Know and understand NBPTS Standards and the assessment process;
- Stay informed by using the NBPTS Web site, publications, research, and other resources to have the most up-to-date information;
- Maintain a clear distinction between personal opinions and NBPTS policies;
- Immediately report to NBPTS violations of confidentiality, incidents of falsified information or materials, or breaches of security at assessment centers by calling 1-800-22TEACH®; and
- Participate in NBPTS-sponsored training and use resources provided by NBPTS.

Commitment to Teachers

Candidate support providers recognize their responsibilities to teachers (as pre-candidates, candidates, and NBCTs) in the design of programs and as they facilitate candidates. Candidate support providers:

- Acknowledge that there are multiple paths to certification;
- Understand that candidates alone are solely responsible for their certification materials and remind candidates of this;
- Conduct support in a manner that is nonjudgmental, honest, constructive, knowledgeable, and professional;
- Incorporate high expectations that encourage self-discovery and embody honesty, integrity, and trust; and
- Maintain agreements and commitments regarding the investment of time with the candidates they agree to facilitate.

Designing Programs

- Incorporate research and models of effective staff development and adult learning into programs and candidate support techniques;
- Design support programs that are equitable, maintain confidentiality, and are models of sound ethical practice; and
- Promote collaboration in professional learning communities as part of the professional development experience but emphasize individual responsibility and accountability in the development of candidate work.

Facilitating Candidates

- Provide information about NBPTS in an equitable manner to all teachers and candidates;
- Direct candidates to specific NBPTS Standards documents throughout their certification process;
- Direct candidates to 1-800-22TEACH and www.nbpts.org as primary resources for candidate questions;
- Refer candidates to local resources including, but not limited to, university faculty, other NBCTs, and subject matter experts when appropriate;
- Demand honest and ethical behavior in candidates, reminding candidates of the agreements they signed upon application to the process;
- Provide support that is fair, objective, equitable, and respects confidentiality;
- Stress that all work submitted must be the candidate's own;
- Ask probing and/or clarifying questions;
- Encourage deep analysis and reflection based on evidence collected in the classroom;
- Do not hold their own submissions or teaching practice as models of correct practice;
- Give feedback, never estimated scores; and
- Help candidates find resources and comply with assessment procedures.

Resources

Guidelines for the following resources can be found at www.nbpts.org or by contacting NBPTS:

- [Certification Denial or Revocation Policy](#)
- [Policies for Intellectual Property](#)
 - [Policy for Use of NBPTS-Developed and/or Copyrighted Materials](#)
 - Policy for Use of [NBCT and Veteran Candidate Assessment Performances](#) (includes portfolio content)
 - Policy for Use of [Trademarks Held by NBPTS](#)
 - Policy and Guidelines for [Release of NBPTS Data for Educational Research](#)

Programs designed to support individuals or groups as they proceed through the assessment process cannot be conducted by a member of the NBPTS Board of Directors or an NBPTS employee.

