

cape Council for American Private Education outlook

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National Board Certification is Coming

by Susan M. Lloyd

What does national certification mean to private school teachers? It means that we can, if we wish, combine a serious and consequential form of professional development with the opportunity to help develop our profession. Physicians seized the opportunity over half a century ago to radically raise their own standards through board certification; now it is our turn.

For too long, competence in teaching has been defined by state legislatures, administrators who have fled the classroom, and distant licensing agencies, definitions which seriously limit the independence of private schools in many states. And competence has usually meant minimum competence, not excellence. It has been defined by educational credentials not by performance.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards leads a working coalition of public and private school teachers, leaders in business and higher education, politicians and union leaders who agree on one thing: teachers, the people closest to the real business of educating our young, must have a decisive voice in improving schools. National Board certification was a vision in blurry black-and-white as recently as two years ago. Now its shape and scope are increasingly clear, with details being filled in every week.

This is not "America 2000" -- though much of what we are building does sup-

port, I believe, the best of education reform. Teachers in all disciplines will have voluntary board certification available to them before the year 2000. It is taking tremendous energy and tens of millions of dollars, but it's happening. Assessments in the field of English/language arts will be ready for a 2000-candidate field test in 1993; private school teachers of young adolescents will be invited

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to participate. In 1994, Board certification will be open to all such teachers, and soon after, to elementary school generalists and high school math teachers as well.

New funding for the National Board from businesses, foundations and the federal government has enabled us to quicken the pace of assessment development. Committees of teachers and scholars are now at work setting standards for ten certification fields including art, science and social studies/history. At a recent National Board meeting, we heard the views of special education teachers; now we can begin to define the similarities and differences between these teachers' work

and that of others who teach in the corresponding disciplines with "mainstream" children. On our agenda for policy decisions in the near future are questions like these:

- ▶ What should a code of ethics for teachers look like?
- ▶ Can we responsibly use multiple choice tests as one component of our assessments of subject matter knowledge?
- ▶ What should our "scoring" procedures be and where should a "passing" score be set?

Each decision begets a new question. For example, it is clear to us now that essential components of any comprehensive performance assessment must take place within the candidate's own school setting, since good teaching is shaped in profound ways by the particular needs of particular students. But other, more independent measures are also needed, and we must soon decide how teachers' examiners should be qualified and trained to evaluate candidates coming to assessment centers for the final stages of National Board certification.

Why should National Board certification matter to private schools and their teachers? Aren't our schools already successful in attracting and hold the best teachers our money can buy? Don't



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our teachers' excellent qualities come across to potential consumers?

A key advantage of National Board certification is a practical one. Wherever they move, private school teachers who become Board-certified will carry with them convincing evidence of their quality as professionals. This could be particularly helpful to teachers in states like Michigan which require all private school teachers to obtain state licenses by the same routes public school teachers take. State legislatures, searching for "alternative routes" to licensure, are increasingly looking to National Board certification to provide a model going way beyond the emergency licensure provisions which have given alternative licensure a bad name. To the surprise - and sometimes dismay - of the "education establishment", the National Board has adopted prerequisites for the Board certification candidates which recognize that excellent teachers (especially private school teachers) can and do prepare for teaching in a great variety of ways. Thus our prerequisites for candidates are simple and inclusive: a bachelors degree from an accredited college or university and three years of teaching experience. We have held to these prerequisites in spite of some formidable opposition.

Aren't our schools already successful in attracting and holding the best teachers our money can buy? No. Even the most prestigious, highest-paying private schools draw upon a pool of excellence applicants far narrower and more shallow than it ought to be. Teaching is wonderful work, constantly challenging and deeply rewarding, but only a tiny fraction of our top college graduates are willing to enter this field. The low prestige of the profession is only matched by the relatively low pay that goes with it. The broad public assumption still runs, "If you can't do, teach" or, "If you never really grew up, you can work with children." Quality issues have loomed so large for so long that only some widely respected, continuously evolving, *performance-based* assessment system can build public confidence in the profession as a whole, and make manifest the complexity of the teacher's work.

Don't our teachers' excellent qualities come across to potential consumers? Not nearly enough. Parents' uncertainty that

what we offer is worth buying means, unfortunately, that many fine schools close down. We can advertise our schools as "accredited", our teachers as "state-licensed" and we can list advanced degrees. Nothing says much, if anything, about how well our faculty actually teach. Parents try to look beyond these "credentialist" measures, but it is often difficult for them to discern the differences in teaching among our schools or between our schools and public schools. In fact, state licensure as required in some states almost certainly serves to cut out some of the most gifted potential teachers, without guaranteeing anything beyond minimal competence.

National Board certification can help private schools and their teachers on all these fronts. Schools can point to the number of their teachers holding or trying for Board certification. Parents will thus have one new, reliable way to discern the quality of their children's private schools. Fine schools should be all the stronger for this. Through the Board's development of rigorous assessments in over thirty teaching fields, teachers will have a means to demonstrate high competence instead of the minimal competence required for licensure. The process of preparing for National Board assessments should become, in itself, a prime opportunity for professional development.

The conversation is widening; plans are ever more firm. Private school people, long accustomed to collegial decision making and deeply committed to both children and their parents, have special wisdom to contribute to the conversation. We warmly welcome ideas, criticisms and participation from all who have an interest in the long-term future of both teaching and private schools.

The first assessments will be ready in 1993-94.

If you would like to learn more about National Board certification and NBPTS, please write to: Annette Merritt Cummings; 300 River Place, Suite 3600; Detroit, Michigan 48207 or call (313) 259-0830.

Susan M. Lloyd teaches history and music at Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts. She has been on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards since its founding in 1987, serving as private education's only representative.

States: Where Choice Happens

A nationwide survey has just been completed entitled "School Choice Programs: What's Happening in the States". The data gathered show that 22 states already have some form of educational choice, ranging from tax credits for parents sending their children to private schools to open enrollment within public school districts.

The study, published by the Heritage Foundation, looks at existing programs and proposed legislation on choice in the 50 states. Twenty-nine states saw choice legislation introduced last year alone.

So far, five states offer a tax credit or scholarship to parents of private school students: Iowa, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Wisconsin. Nineteen states allow for some level of public school open enrollment, either within or between districts.

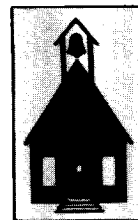
A copy of the study is available for \$5 plus \$1.95 shipping by writing to the Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002-4999.

New Asbestos Guide Published, Grants Awarded

The Environmental Protection Agency has just published "A Guide to Performing Reinspections under the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA)". The booklet is designed to provide a study guide, and checklist for inspectors to assist schools in conducting an effective and thorough reinspection for the hazardous material.

An extensive mailing of 57,000 copies is underway to all local education agencies including private schools, state designees, consultants, training providers, educational organizations and labor unions. An EPA hotline has been established to help distribute the remaining 43,000 copies upon request.

Further, an April 27 mailing of the EPA listed the loan and grant offers for 1992. The agency announced \$54.5 mil-



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lion in fiscal year 1992 funds for financial assistance to public and private schools to fund asbestos abatement projects. Under the Asbestos School Hazard Abatement Act (ASHAA), EPA is offering awards to 128 school districts for 261 abatement projects in 198 schools. The funding is composed of \$14.8 million in grants and \$39.7 million in interest-free loans.

Should any private school not receive their copy of the guide, or wish more information on the awards, you may call the EPA hotline at (202) 554-1404.

Legislative Update

President Vetoes Tax Bill

With his veto message prepared, the President wasted no time in rejecting a tax bill passed by Congress on March 20 to spur the economy. "This is the wrong time to raise taxes, to increase the deficit, or to send a message of fiscal irresponsibility to financial markets," Bush stated as he vetoed **H.R. 4210**.

The legislation included a provision to provide the full deductibility of all charitable gifts of appreciated property, an issue strongly supported by CAPE. However, the President, who also supports that measure, vetoed the \$77.5 billion tax bill due to other provisions.

The Senate passed the bill 50 to 44, while the House passed it on a 211 to 189 tally. The political deadline of March 20 was set by President Bush in his State of the Union address in January for passage of a tax/economic stimulus package. Five days later, the House attempted to override the veto, but failed 211 to 215. It was the 27th veto sustained by President Bush.

No formal plans have been announced with respect to a future tax bill that would include the provision dealing with gifts of appreciated property.

Longer School Year Grants

A bill introduced by Representative Robert G. Torricelli (D-New Jersey) would provide demonstration grants to secondary schools which extend the length of the academic school year.

H.R. 3861 sites a number of reasons why a practical study should be executed, including low U.S. scores on international

tests, less time needed to review material covered in the previous academic year, and studies that indicate significant improvements in actual student learning time, teacher training and parent-teacher interaction.

The bill would require test sites to commit for three years to a school year no less than 200 days long and a school day no shorter than seven hours. The bill would authorize \$10 million for fiscal years 1993 through 1995.

A new national commission on the National Education Commission on Time and Learning created by Congress in June 1991 first met on April 13.

Higher Ed Bill Preserves Tuition Deduction

The Senate and House have appointed Members to a conference committee to begin work on a higher education reauthorization bill, which apparently will preserve the deductibility of private school elementary and secondary tuition in the "family contribution" formula. **H.R. 3553** reauthorizes the Higher Education Act of 1965, which governs all federal financial aid programs as well as those to recruit and train teachers for elementary and secondary schools.

The bill, passed on March 26, retains the present law allowance for families to deduct the cost of private school tuition from their "computation of expected family contribution" toward a college student's tuition. It is an important issue for private school parents as many families with more than one dependent must make difficult decisions on which schools it can afford. The "educational expense allowance" gives families a financial break up to "the national average per pupil cost as published by the Center for Education Statistics" for each child in a private elementary or secondary school.

The Senate passed its version of the bill, **S. 1150**, on February 21.

Children's Bills Offered

In a bi-partisan and bi-cameral effort, legislation has been introduced to address the growing health and nutritional needs of 20% of the nation's children who are growing up in conditions of poverty. **S. 2387** and **H.R. 4822** were introduced with strong Congressional support to boost federal fund-

ing of programs to help low-income families and disadvantaged youth.

The "Every Fifth Child Act", as the legislation is referred, would target three existing programs for major new funding levels: the Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC), Head Start and Job Corps. The measure seek a roughly \$2 billion increase in these programs.

Several churches and educational associations have endorsed the legislation, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and the United States Catholic Conference.

Capenotes:

► The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is the largest education database in the world, containing nearly 735,000 abstracts of documents and journal articles.



Curriculum materials, papers, conference proceedings, and literature reviews from nearly 800 education-related journals can be found in the ERIC database.

ERIC can be accessed at about 3,000 locations worldwide with 900 serving as information providers, such as college and public libraries. Each maintains a substantial microfiche collection and can perform computer searches of the ERIC database.

ERIC, like the National Diffusion Network (NDN), is a service program of the Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement. NDN is a body of exemplary elementary and secondary school programs for teachers, disseminated to private schools through CAPE's Private School Facilitator Project.

For more information about how to use ERIC, call toll free, 1-800-USE-ERIC. For more information about CAPE/NDN, contact Dr. Charles Nunley at (202) 659-0177.

► *The Washington Post* published a March 30 editorial regarding the Milwaukee school choice program. After a decision by the Wisconsin Supreme Court upheld the Constitutionality of the program, the *Post* wrote: "The most interesting question before the court was whether the Milwaukee program violates the state's 'public purpose doctrine', which requires that pub-

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lic funds be spent only for public purposes. The majority found that the \$2.5 million expenditure is inconsequential compared with the \$6.4 billion allotted for public education and that participating private schools ... remain under adequate public supervision by the state superintendent."

The editorial concluded that "other states already allow certain kids to opt for private nonsectarian schools. Still, state legislatures looking for new ways to define the word 'public' in public schools are taking note. The efficacy of carefully crafted choice programs, like Milwaukee's, will never be known unless such experiments are allowed to run their course."

▶ A recently published **international study on student achievement** in mathematics and science showed the U.S. placed 15th out of 20 nations, outperforming only Jordan, Portugal, Brazil, and Mozambique. The test of nine- and thirteen-year olds, administered by Educational Testing Service (ETS), was funded by the U.S. Department of Education and National Academy of Sciences.

Thirteen year olds from the U.S. scored 55 and 67 on math and science respectively, based on the average percentage of ques-

tions answered correctly. Comparable figures showed Swiss students scoring 71 and 74 and students from the former Soviet Union averaging 70 and 71. The average for that age category was 58 and 67.

Information on the study can be obtained by writing the Center for the Assessment of Educational Progress, c/o ETS, Rosedale Road, Princeton, New Jersey 08541-0001.

▶ The Department of Education invites application for grants under the **Fund for Innovation in Education** for projects to identify and disseminate innovative educational approaches at pre-school, elementary and secondary levels. Three to five grants of \$100,000 to \$300,000 will be awarded. Private and public schools are among those eligible to apply by the May 22 deadline.

For more information, contact the Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching Office, 555 New Jersey Ave., NW, Room 522, Washington, DC 20208 or call (202) 219-1496.

▶ **Senator Bill Bradley** (D-New Jersey), co-sponsor of the "Low-Income School Choice Demonstration Project" amendment in the Senate in January, wrote in a recent

Philadelphia Inquirer op/ed piece: "To save the next generation, we need to try anything that might work. We need to try anything that could give families hope and a way out. We have to give them more than better schools -- we also have to give them better chances. We need to be imaginative about using resources for educational opportunity that is already there."

▶ According to the **National Center for Education Statistics** report entitled "Eighth to Tenth Grade Dropouts: Statistics in Brief", the public school dropout rate 1990 was 7.6 percent.

That compares to 1.3 percent for Catholic schools, 0.5 percent in private, nonreligious schools, and 0.04 percent for other private, religious schools.

▶ The projected share of **federal support for elementary and secondary education** for the 1991-92 school year is 5.6%, (\$13.9 billion.) State support averages 42.8% with the local contribution set at 43.6%. Eight percent comes from other sources.

The total estimated direct expenditure for education for elementary and secondary level is \$246.7 billion - an increase of \$10 billion over the 1990-91 figure.

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a coalition of 14 national associations serving private schools K-12

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