

CHAPTER ONE

THE CONFLICTING ROLES OF A SUPPORT PROVIDER

Where does a mentor's loyalty lie? To the teachers you support, or to the district that pays your salary? What do you do when the goals of these parties are at odds with each other and with your own vision of professional development? This case takes up the issue of accountability and the unexpected conflicts of interest that arise when working in a high-stakes, high-profile environment.

CASE

CASE BY ADRIENNE MACK-KIRSCHNER

National Board Certification (NBC), a voluntary assessment of highly accomplished teaching, has attracted individual teachers seeking to improve and validate their practice against the rigorous standards established by the National Board. But what happens to the voluntary nature of NBC when a school district selects this process as its primary professional development vehicle, pays the candidate fees, provides release days for candidates and a highly qualified facilitator, and rewards teachers who attain certification with a substantial annual stipend? And what are the implications for candidates and support providers in such a high-profile district?

Pseudonyms have been used to maintain the confidentiality of people and places in the case.

16 MENTORING TEACHERS TOWARD EXCELLENCE

I have been an education consultant working with schools and districts in all areas around teacher professional development for twelve years. I began as a National Board support provider working with teachers in year-long candidate support groups throughout our large county. For the first several years, candidates mostly came alone, usually the sole maverick teacher from his or her site. As the single candidate, these teachers frequently had to combat the lack of administrative support; even colleagues who did not understand the National Board process frequently criticized them for doing so much work for so little reward. Once certified, these same teachers often returned to a school environment feeling more isolated than they had before.

Dissatisfied with this experience, I shifted my program from countywide support to school or small district support. This allows teacher candidates from a single site, or close cluster of school sites, to work together supporting one another throughout the year. The model also allows me to educate their site administrators and secure additional support for them in the form of fee assistance, release days, salary stipends, videotaping assistance, and encouragement. When the cohorts return to their schools, they do so as leadership groups equipped and motivated to effect school-wide change.

Typically my program begins in the spring with a three-session series of workshops that examine in depth the five core propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

Some candidates determine, after the spring workshops, that they are not ready to pursue certification. Either they need to spend more time developing their teaching practice or the overall time commitment is too much at this point in their lives. The remaining teachers attend a five-day summer workshop in which

we delve deeply into the certificate standards, completing personal inventory profiles to determine what evidence of accomplishment already exists in their teaching practice. Throughout the week, my facilitators and I model best teaching practices, including effective group work, Socratic seminars, searching for meaning in texts, and other practices directly related to the National Board process. Because I know that many of the teachers will choose to not pursue certification, I conduct the week as a professional development institute so everyone benefits. During the year, we meet monthly with the teachers who remain as candidates to continue working on best practices and provide support as they complete the National Board portfolio entries.

In one school district where I work, the superintendent proclaimed his intent on having the highest ratio of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) to students of any district in the state. As a result of this mandate, the administrative staff actively recruited all qualified teachers to apply for candidacy. The board of education supported the superintendent's actions with a commitment to pay all related fees and provide release days, money for supplies, a high-quality support program, and a substantial annual stipend for teachers who certify. Even the union supported the new policy of differentiated pay for teachers because NBC was seen as a more valid assessment than one developed within the district. This was unprecedented since historically, unions have opposed differentiated pay due to concerns about how salary bonuses were assigned and whether they were politically motivated—the “principal's pet” syndrome.

When I was asked to become the official candidate support facilitator in January of that school year, I was thrilled at being part of a districtwide effort to improve teacher quality. I looked forward to working with teacher cohorts from a single site and from several sites within this school district. Teachers throughout the district, I reasoned, could collaborate during the certification process and would also be able to continue working together as colleagues in their own learning community after the certification process was complete. Working in cohort groups would eliminate some of the isolation that is inherent in teaching. Together, teacher candidates and NBCTs would create and sustain programs and policies that could reform their schools, involve more parents and community

18 MENTORING TEACHERS TOWARD EXCELLENCE

partners, and boost achievement for all students. Furthermore, as collaborative groups, they could raise the teaching standards at their sites and be mentors and teacher-leaders for novice and experienced teachers, thereby fostering a school culture that supports high-quality teaching and learning. Over 40 of the 630 teachers in the district applied for certification the first year of this comprehensive support effort.

Coming into the district in mid-school year, I was able to provide only minimum support to the first cohort of teachers, responding to questions about the portfolio entries, conducting group meetings, and fielding candidate concerns; I didn't critique any portfolio entries. But I encouraged the teachers to open their classroom doors, share their lessons, and examine each other's student work—in other words, to be team players working smarter together, not working harder alone. Although this first group began the process late in the year, my initial impression was that most were highly accomplished teachers.

While these teachers were working on their portfolios, others talked excitedly about when they would participate. In the spring, we began the precandidate workshops for the second cohort. Although I was not a district employee, everyone from the district-level offices to the school sites knew I was there to support teachers as they worked toward National Board Certification. Our work was valued and highly visible. I had never worked in such an ideal setting. The certification process was seen as a long-term, districtwide commitment supported by every level of district administration, the teachers, and the union.

By June, the second cohort was already up and running. Twenty-five candidates participated in the five-day summer workshop, and another fifteen signed up soon after the fall semester began. I don't know how many came urged on by the desire to deepen their teaching practice and also earn the high annual stipend, or how many were lured by the expectation of a monetary reward. I know that at one school, nearly the entire faculty came at least partly due to peer and principal pressure and their desire to be part of the district's team of NBCTs. The district and I welcomed everyone's participation, even the latecomers. I attempted to bring the newcomers current by starting them on their portfolio entries. Although I asked them to complete the personal inventory

against the National Board standards as a self-assessment of readiness, not everyone chose to do this exercise. Through observation, reading their preliminary drafts, and discussing their practice, goals for students, and strategies they regularly employ, it didn't take long to suspect some teachers were woefully unprepared.

In November, before the first cohort candidates' scores were released, the superintendent applauded their efforts at a wine and cheese party at the district office. He emphasized the strength of the process, not the certification. Everyone heard what the superintendent said, but since every teacher expected to achieve certification, I don't think his words registered. When it was my turn to speak, I reiterated how proud they should feel about completing this rigorous process: only 2 percent of the teachers nationally had even attempted certification, and the National Board considered this a two- or even three-year program, as teachers who do not certify in their first assessment can continue as candidates for two subsequent years. Teachers left the meeting thanking me for my help during the year but not expecting to see me again. Their anticipation was palpable; they all expected to certify on their first attempt. But I knew that wouldn't happen and had already arranged for an after-school workshop for those who didn't certify.

And then the National Board scores for the first group were released. The district's certification rate was a whopping 67 percent of candidates who submitted portfolios and assessments, which was much higher than the 40 percent national certification rate that year. In spite of the astounding success, I soon began to understand the effects of this highly visible, high-stakes certification process on teachers who attempt but don't achieve certification. There is no way to quietly hide. The names of certified teachers were posted on the district Web site; by omission, everyone knew who didn't certify. The superintendent personally called each participating teacher to congratulate him or her or to encourage continued work; fee and candidate support would continue to be available. But candidates who did not certify were embarrassed. Colleagues didn't know what to say to them. Those who certified were reluctant to shout about their success. Current candidates looked nervously at one another, noting that if teachers they considered outstanding had not certified, what chance would they have? Second-year cohort candidates began to drop out.

I arranged to meet those who didn't certify as a group to examine their scores and discuss how to determine what portfolio entries or assessments to retake. Only six teachers replied but a dozen came—nearly all of the advanced candidates in the district. I was at least as nervous as they were. They arrived one at a time, tentatively entering the computer lab where I was meeting them. Then one of the candidates looked around and said, "I'm in really good company." That broke the ice. I led a discussion about disappointment and the public nature of their status. We went to the National Board Web site and examined together one candidate's scores after I encouraged someone to volunteer. We talked about what the ten scores on the combined portfolio and assessment center represented, where her strengths were, and where she needed to improve. I had deliberately selected a candidate whose score, I already knew, fell only twelve points short of the certification cut-off score. I did a think-aloud, talking to myself as if I were the candidate, considering all of the options I had. It was a highly productive two hours, with most candidates committed to continuing the process.

Jackie hung back at the end. She had the lowest score in the group. We waited until everyone had left before going online to her candidate file. All of her scores were low. She needed to redo nearly all parts of the assessment. Her teaching practice was not yet at the accomplished level, and we both knew it. I had first met Jackie at her school with five candidates. Four were veteran teachers, excited and enthusiastic about the program and eager to have my support. Jackie had expressed concern about her own readiness since she had been teaching for only four years; she was the junior teacher of the group. Nevertheless, her colleagues had urged her to participate and assured her they would help. She reluctantly continued despite her own doubt.

The reality is that it is very difficult to know much about what is happening in another teacher's classroom beyond that person's classroom management. While it is easy to know if the students are out of control, it's more difficult to know if they are progressing as learners. Faced with the standards and the portfolio guiding questions, the individual teacher is the best judge of her own accomplishment. Jackie knew she was not accomplished yet. Just as National Board Certification does not create accomplished teach-

ers—it merely identifies them—the process only identified her weaknesses; it did not create them. While her colleagues' assistance might have helped move her toward higher accomplishment, they could not guarantee her certification.

I wondered what my role as a support provider should have been in this situation. Should I have been more proactive during support sessions by speaking with her privately, discussing her readiness, examining the standards, and helping her do a personal inventory against those standards? Based on our limited conversation, I had suspected she was not ready, but I kept silent. I believe so strongly in the process and how it improves everyone's practice that I remained silent in favor of her making her own decision. She has since decided to wait a year, to work on her teaching practice, and then to return as an advanced candidate for certification.

Gary, another teacher who did not certify, requested a private audience. We arranged for him to come to my house where we could view the videos in question and read his entries without interruption. He was embarrassed about not achieving certification and adamantly believed that the board had erred; most of his scores were quite high, and he had missed the cut-off score by only one point. But the scores for his two video entries were quite low. He was one of the most senior teachers in the district. A highly acclaimed professional respected for his innovative practice working with a dual-immersion program, Gary refused to accept that anything he had done or failed to do on the portfolio or in the assessment center deserved an insufficient score. He wanted to appeal and asked my opinion. I asked him to hold off until we had reviewed his entries and videos; he agreed.

When we read the instructions for the early childhood small-group and whole-group entries together, examined his responses, and viewed the videos, it was immediately evident why his scores were so low: he had not followed the instructions. For example, instead of describing how he planned a lesson and why he chose his instructional strategies, he painted a broad picture of the lesson using general education jargon in his written commentary. And rather than provide evidence of how he interacted with students in small groups, his video showed groups of students engaged in the lessons and impressively working well together, but they were working without him. So it appeared to me that although

22 MENTORING TEACHERS TOWARD EXCELLENCE

he may have exhibited excellent teaching, he simply had not presented what the Board had asked for. There were technical problems as well; the children's voices could not be understood on the videotape. When I pointed out what was lacking based on the instructions, he understood immediately and left convinced that he could redo the two portfolio entries and raise his scores accordingly.

These two experiences and the stories of other advanced candidates left me with many questions about my ideal district-level support model when NBC becomes such a high-profile program. Now in the middle of my second year supporting candidates in this district, I wonder if the district can do anything to diminish the pressure on candidates. About a third of this year's cohort have dropped out. Sometimes teachers feel they are not ready as they get deeper into the candidate process. This might be appropriate for those who decided to become candidates merely because of the financial incentives or peer pressure. But I fear that some excellent teachers may have dropped out after seeing outstanding teachers fail to certify. Is there a way to maintain the excellent professional experience that National Board candidacy offers without putting so much pressure on candidates to achieve?

I also have questions about my role as support provider in this district. Given my personal commitment to using National Board candidacy as a tool for professional development, how do I balance this goal with the candidates' need to focus on their individual portfolios? Should I preview every entry and raise questions when I don't see evidence of standards? Should I voice my opinion when I see gaps? Should I provide more proactive support, like demonstrating model lessons and assisting with their written commentaries? Or should candidates be dependent on their cohort group and the support provider remain hands off? If that's more desirable, what should I do when the cohort group falls apart or members drop out?

Finally, I question my responsibilities to the district; after all, they pay me to support candidates. I want districts to use the National Board Certification process as they focus on teacher quality. But how should they evaluate me? Will district administrators believe that I have failed if some candidates don't certify?

COMMENTARIES

COMMENTARY BY LYNN GADDIS

Just like the consultant in this case, I worked with a supportive administration and the newly named National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) coordinator in a large urban district to begin a candidate support program. We identified similar issues and solutions based on the premise that large percentages of candidates participating in the professional development of the NBPTS process would have a positive impact on school improvement and student learning. I will speak to four of these key issues.

CANDIDATE PREPAREDNESS

In the quest to recruit numbers of candidates in a short amount of time, administrators at awareness sessions motivated teachers to apply for National Board Certification by also offering financial and recertification incentives. Thus, many teachers decided to participate in the NBC process without fully understanding the requirements. Because so many were unprepared and the achievement rate after the first year was low, we decided to develop precandidacy sessions and an application process for the support program. The precandidacy course was similar to the one in this case in that teachers examined their own practice against the NBPTS five core propositions and standards. We chose to design this three-day experience to enable teachers to complete an application to the support program aligned with Charlotte Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* (1996). We did not want participants writing a full National Board portfolio entry, but wanted them to experience conversations and a writing task required to show evidence of practice in thinking through the NBPTS "Architecture of Teaching." In this architecture, teachers are asked to first consider who their students are as learners, what worthwhile learning goals they have set for their particular students, how their instructional design aligns with the goals they have

24 MENTORING TEACHERS TOWARD EXCELLENCE

set, what assessments they will need to have to determine how the students are progressing toward those learning goals, and, finally, how they will set new learning goals for the students based on the assessments they have made. We continually questioned ourselves as to whether we should determine who may participate in the support program, the validity of the application we designed for selecting participants, and whether the in-depth writing was too difficult or redundant for what teachers should do to prepare for National Board candidacy.

QUALITY OF MENTORS

For the first few years, we had few mentors for the large numbers of candidates in the support program, with only four NBCTs for 150 candidates; only two had supported candidates before. We tried to arrange readers, facilitators at sessions, and certificate-alike mentors through any means possible. The administration hired experienced district professional development providers to serve as one-on-one mentors to candidates and delivered a three-day training session to help them understand the NBPTS process. It became apparent within a few weeks of working with the candidates that the mentors would not be able to give in-depth support. We scrambled to arrange for NBCTs in neighboring suburban districts to mentor National Board candidates. Teacher education faculty from my university conducted workshops on content identified by candidates in the weekly session. As year two began, we still did not have many district NBCTs and asked candidates from the previous year who had not yet received their assessment scores to support the new candidates. Once notification of who had (or had not) achieved certification occurred, some of the teachers who had not achieved certification withdrew from mentoring, and some newly identified NBCTs volunteered. Most of the NBCT mentors did not have the knowledge, skills, and experience to mentor candidates. Questions arose for us about how to link candidates with mentors. Who has the knowledge about NBC and is available to support candidates? Who has the skill to mentor candidates so the process remains a professional development experience? How can we train NBCTs as mentors at the same time they are mentoring candidates and continuing to teach their students without burn-

ing them out? What comes first: the NBCTs or the candidates? How does a district build the capacity to develop an effective learning community of NBCTs and candidates?

POLITICS OF PASS RATES

Our program experienced the dilemma of believing NBPTS was a professional development experience that may take three years while answering to a public that wanted immediate results. The school district, a philanthropic foundation, and a state agency offered funds for application fees, incentives for completion and passing, and the implementation of the candidate support program. Policymakers expected pass rates that were higher than the national average because other support programs publicly acknowledged their pass rates of over 60 percent. We empathized with the affective consequences many advanced candidates experienced internally and externally, and we questioned the accountability and responsibility of the mentors to the policymakers. It was difficult to help candidates, teachers, administrators, and policymakers understand that the process was a three-year professional development experience, since release of the names of new NBCTs was highly publicized. In one school, only two of six teachers achieved certification. The principal sent a memo to the staff congratulating all six on participating in a rigorous certification process, noting that two had completed the process and achieved certification and offering support to the four teachers who were continuing as candidates. We shared this letter with mentors so they could understand that completing the process meant exhausting the three years of professional development opportunity available. The question remains as to how we build this perception and community of teachers at all stages of the assessment and certification process.

SUPPORTING ADVANCED CANDIDATES

Like the district in this case, the district I was working in organized a celebration prior to the announcement of results, and the district coordinator held a meeting to support advanced candidates. About fifty advanced candidates attended the latter meeting and expressed anger, embarrassment, frustration, and confusion to the

26 MENTORING TEACHERS TOWARD EXCELLENCE

whole group and to the coordinator, myself, and the newly named NBCTs who were now mentors in the program. We determined that to be more effective the following year, we should interview and survey advanced candidates to learn more about their needs. As a result, we designed support for advanced candidates with fewer meetings than for first-time candidates and more one-on-one mentoring, NBCTs who had been advanced candidates speaking at all meetings, training for NBCTs to mentor advanced candidates, and workshops on topics identified by advanced candidates. We also continued to address the emotional aspects of not achieving certification on the first or second attempt. How can a support program respect the candidates' unique responses and needs in continuing their professional learning through retaking entries and assessment center exercises? How does a support program design a system that addresses the different issues for first-time and advanced candidates? How can school or district programs communicate the message that National Board Certification is a three-year process of learning?

COMMENTARY BY ROSE VILCHEZ

District support programs offer unique opportunities that may benefit candidates, their schools, the school district, and ultimately their students. Adrienne Mack-Kirschner attributes these kinds of opportunities to the sustained and collaborative nature of her year-long program. Her National Board support program encourages cohorts of candidates from multiple school sites to embark on the certification process as learning communities. Furthermore, Adrienne views the certification process as a professional development tool that creates a space for teachers to delve further into their instructional practice while demonstrating accomplished teaching for the purpose of certification. Her vision for this district's support program is admirable, but this case also presents tensions that arise when a highly visible program represents the multiple agendas belonging to Adrienne, the candidates, and the school district. Whether the agendas are aligned or at cross-purposes, tensions arise because the players share neither the same perspectives nor consequences with regard to accomplishing or not accomplishing National Board Certification.

And so Adrienne is left wondering what her role should be in responding to the differing candidate and district needs and expectations to which she answers as the district's support provider. How can she hold true to *her* vision of an ideal support program while remaining true to those she has been hired to support? I will respond to Adrienne's questions by building on my own experiences when developing an equally visible support program with other NBCTs within a large urban school district.

The heart of Adrienne's questions focus on her dual role of supporting candidates to complete the certification process successfully while also using the National Board process as a professional development experience. I too have asked myself this question as I purposefully attempted to develop a professional development frame for the process. My method was using the core propositions globally to make critical inquiries into instructional practices beyond the scope of a single certificate entry. Yet I found that many candidates had more pressing needs directly related to the high-stakes assessment to which they had committed. While I had a long-term agenda of improving practice through examination, inquiry, and reflection over time, my candidates were embroiled in an anxiety-inducing process with a portfolio due date looming on the horizon. Clearly the professional development was *my* agenda; *their* agenda was, not mistakenly, to compose written commentaries that met the rubric expectations. Varying motivations must be acknowledged, taken into account, and made explicit among those who design and participate in the support program. Understanding the individual goals and agendas will allow co-construction of a vision for the support program that may allow for more than one voice. My hope is that candidates will come to see the additional benefits of the National Board process as complementary to their own professional and personal goals and motivations for engaging in it.

These conversations must be ongoing throughout the support process because candidates' understanding of what they have chosen to undertake changes and transforms over time as they become more mindful and aware of their instructional practices. As support providers, it behooves us to explicitly acknowledge our personal and professional goals and agendas and to make clear what the vision and goals are of the support program we are offering.

That means that the program designer must have a vision, as Adrienne does, of what an ideal program can and will offer its participants. It is far too easy to focus on the portfolio and assessment exercises with a mechanistic and rote approach to “passing the test.” This is the true loss of opportunity for creating a rich learning experience for candidates. And I propose these suggestions not because I have managed to balance these roles successfully, but because I had difficulty doing so; my suggestions are based on what I think I would have done next in my role as a support program designer.

The third player in this agenda-setting process is the school district. A district’s agenda, as Adrienne shares, is certainly well intentioned. The goal of recruiting, retaining, and developing as many quality teachers as possible is admirable. This goal is purposeful when it is viewed as a long-term process with ongoing support, as in the district in which Adrienne worked. To reach this goal, the district invests in the support provider, the support program, and the purpose and agenda of that program. Ultimately the district’s investment, even over a three-year period, is in the candidates’ ability to demonstrate accomplished teaching through certification. And so we find Adrienne asking herself, “How should I be evaluated? Will I be viewed by some as having failed when candidates do not certify?” Again, I return to the importance of the purpose, goals, and agenda of the support program, especially as it is situated within the district’s priorities. Goals that focus on increasing the number of NBCTs are different from goals that aim to improve the quality of teaching through a standards-based assessment process. Defining the goals of the program also requires defining the means by which progress toward those goals will be measured.

Adrienne wonders if she should preview every entry in order to ensure that candidates address gaps between their practice and the National Board teaching standards. This is not only impossible for one individual to accomplish, but does not build sustained effort or independence among the candidates. If certification is to be a true professional development tool, shouldn’t candidates in groups be acquiring constructive critical stances toward their own and their colleagues’ teaching practices? How do the candidates benefit when Adrienne is, or for that matter, NBCT coaches, are

solely responsible for providing all the support through model lessons and assistance with written commentaries?

It is too easy for us to label National Board Certification as a professional development tool. It is a tool, but only when it is used purposefully. The purposeful implementation of certification as deep and rigorous professional development requires us to take more time in stating and describing what our vision for professional development is; we must know our agendas. We must extract and make explicit the processes of taking critical stances, self-evaluation, and reflection to coaches and candidates in order to truly use certification as professional development. These processes create a foundation for approaching the National Board portfolio and assessment exercises.

Reference

Danielson, C. *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1996.

TEACHING NOTE

Adrienne, an experienced education consultant and National Board Certified Teacher, works in a school district that chooses National Board Certification as a focus for teacher professional development and school reform. As the support provider for this districtwide program that is well supported financially and politically, Adrienne initially thinks she has helped create an ideal setting for teachers pursuing certification. When some teachers do not achieve certification, Adrienne comes to understand that the high profile National Board Certification receives in the district can be both a blessing and a curse.

This case helps us understand some of the nuances of why some teachers choose to pursue National Board Certification. Adrienne also questions her role as support provider and where her accountability lies—to her own vision of support, to the teachers she serves, or to the district that pays her salary. The commentaries take up the issue of mentoring in high-stakes, high-profile programs and how such programs can sometimes operate with competing agendas.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

What Are the Stakes for Teachers in Mentoring Programs?

Mentoring teachers in programs that are highly visible in a district can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the district is supportive in providing the necessary funds and resources for the mentoring. On the other hand, when the district provides such visible support, the participating teachers are well known to their colleagues. In such cases, the teacher's performance becomes public knowledge—to be celebrated when successful and questioned when unsuccessful. As mentors in such programs, how do you think the participation of teachers should be handled publicly?

Accountability of the Support Provider

Adrienne questions her role as a support provider in this district program. She has a vision of the structure of support that she believes to be beneficial to teachers in broader terms of profes-

sional development, and she knows her limitations of how much of the teachers' work she can read and respond to. She wonders, though, if her vision is enough for the teachers and if she is adequately meeting their needs. She also wonders by what standards she should be (or will be) evaluated by the district. Does the district see her responsibilities as making the certification process a productive professional experience for teachers, as she does, or is their main concern a high pass rate so that they can meet their targeted numbers in the program? The commentaries by Lynn Gaddis and Rose Vilchez, who both worked in similar district-supported programs, raise this issue as well. Lynn discusses the "politics of the pass rate," and Rose explores the competing agendas of the various stakeholders in such programs.

*Tension Between High-Stakes Assessment
Process and Professional Development*

Adrienne believes that the National Board Certification process offers teachers a professional development opportunity, not solely an opportunity to showcase their best work and to be validated by a certifying agency. Her program design for supporting teachers as candidates reflects this belief, as do the programs designed by the two commentators to this case. In other words, Adrienne does not view her program as a preparation program for National Board Certification. How is Adrienne's program structured to support the professional development of the teachers who participate?

Given this view of candidate support, Adrienne did not initially see her role as reading every portfolio entry of the candidates to check their quality and give feedback. After reviewing entries that did not meet the National Board's benchmark scores for passing, she questions whether a little intervention from her would have helped some of the teachers better meet the requirements, potentially saving them and the school district time and money. This leads Adrienne to wonder if she has given her candidates enough support. Is it enough for her to equip the teachers with a set of tools for analysis and thorough grounding in the teaching standards, or should she act as a screener of candidate entries before she allows them to send their portfolios off to the National Board? What would you do in her position?