

NBPTS Middle Childhood Generalist STANDARDS

Second Edition



for teachers of students ages 7-12

***T**he National Board would like to express appreciation to the U.S. Department of Education for its support of the cost of developing this standards document.*

***T**his project is funded in part with grants from the U.S. Department of Education and the National Science Foundation. Through September 2000, NBPTS has been appropriated federal funds of \$90.8 million, representing approximately 55 percent of the National Board Certification project. More than \$75.5 million (45 percent) of the project's cost will be financed by nongovernmental sources.*

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and the reader should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards™, National Board Certification®, National Board Certified Teacher®, and the NBPTS logo™ are trademarks and service marks of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

© 2001 National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

All rights reserved.

Middle Childhood/Generalist

STANDARDS

(for teachers of students ages 7–12)

Second Edition

Preface	v
Introduction	1
Overview	5
The Standards	7
I. Knowledge of Students	7
II. Knowledge of Content and Curriculum.....	11
III. Learning Environment	23
IV. Respect for Diversity	27
V. Instructional Resources	31
VI. Meaningful Applications of Knowledge.....	35
VII. Multiple Paths to Knowledge.....	39
VIII. Assessment	43
IX. Family Involvement	47
X. Reflection	51
XI. Contributions to the Profession	55
Epilogue	59
Standards Committees	61
Acknowledgments	65

The world-class schools the United States requires cannot exist without a world-class teaching force; the two go hand in hand. Many accomplished teachers already work in the nation's schools, but their knowledge and skills are often unacknowledged and underutilized. Delineating outstanding practice and recognizing those who achieve it are important first steps in shaping the kind of teaching profession the nation needs. This is the core challenge embraced by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards™ (NBPTS). Founded in 1987 with a broad base of support from governors, teacher union and school board leaders, school administrators, college and university officials, business executives, foundations, and concerned citizens, NBPTS is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization governed by a 63-member board of directors, the majority of whom are teachers. Committed to basic reform in education, NBPTS recognizes that teaching is at the heart of education and, further, that the single most important action the nation can take to improve schools is to strengthen teaching. To this end, NBPTS has embraced a three-part mission:

- to establish high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do;
- to develop and operate a national voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet these standards; and
- to advance related education reforms for the purpose of improving student learning.

Dedication to this mission is elevating the teaching profession, educating the public about the demands and complexity of accomplished teaching practice, and making teaching a more attractive profession for talented college graduates with many other promising career options.

National Board Certification® is more than a system for recognizing and rewarding accomplished teachers. It offers both an opportunity to guide the continuing growth and development of the teaching profession and a chance to design ways to organize and manage schools so as to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers®. Together with other reforms, National Board Certification is a catalyst for significant change in the teaching profession and in education.

The Philosophical Context

The standards presented here lay the foundation for the Middle Childhood/Generalist certificate. They represent a professional consensus on the aspects of practice that distinguish accomplished teachers. Cast in terms of actions that teachers take to advance student achievement, these standards also incorporate the essential knowledge, skills, dispositions, and commitments that allow teachers to practice at a high level. Like all NBPTS Standards, this standards document is grounded philosophically in the NBPTS policy statement *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*. That statement identifies five core propositions.

1) Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Accomplished teachers are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They act on the belief that all students can learn. They treat students equitably, recognizing the individual differences that distinguish their students from one another and taking account of these differences in their practice. They adjust their practice, as appropriate, on the basis of observation and knowledge of their students' interests, abilities, skills, knowledge, family circumstances, and peer relationships.

Accomplished teachers understand how students develop and learn. They incorporate the prevailing theories of cognition and intelligence in their practice. They are aware of the influence of context and culture on behavior. They develop students' cognitive capacity and respect for learning. Equally important, they foster students' self-esteem, motivation, character, sense of civic responsibility, and respect for individual, cultural, religious, and racial differences.

2) Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

Accomplished teachers have a rich understanding of the subject(s) they teach and appreciate how knowledge in their subjects is created, organized, linked to other disciplines, and applied to real-world settings. While faithfully representing the collective wisdom of our culture and upholding the value of disciplinary knowledge, they also develop the critical and analytical capacities of their students.

Accomplished teachers command specialized knowledge of how to convey subject matter to students. They are aware of the preconceptions and background knowledge that students typically bring to each subject and of strategies and instructional resources that can be of assistance. Their instructional repertoire allows them to create multiple paths to learning the subjects they teach, and they are adept at teaching students how to pose and solve challenging problems.

3) Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

Accomplished teachers create, enrich, maintain, and alter instructional settings to capture and sustain the interest of their students. They make the most effective use of time in their instruction. They are adept at engaging students and adults to assist their teaching and at making use of their colleagues' knowledge and expertise to complement their own.

Accomplished teachers command a range of instructional techniques and know when to employ them. They are devoted to high-quality practice and know how to offer each student the opportunity to succeed.

Accomplished teachers know how to engage groups of students to ensure a disciplined learning environment and how to organize instruction so as to meet the schools' goals for students. They are adept at setting norms of social interaction among students and between students and teachers. They understand how to motivate students to learn and how to maintain their interest even in the face of temporary setbacks.

Accomplished teachers can assess the progress of individual students as well as the progress of the class as a whole. They employ multiple methods for assessing student growth and understanding and can clearly explain student performance to students, parents, and administrators.

4) Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

Accomplished teachers are models of educated persons, exemplifying the virtues they seek to inspire in students—curiosity, tolerance, honesty, fairness, respect for diversity, and appreciation of cultural differences. They demonstrate capacities that are prerequisites for intellectual growth—the ability to reason, take multiple perspectives, be creative and take risks, and experiment and solve problems.

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of human development, subject matter, and instruction, and their understanding of their students, to make principled judgments about sound practice. Their decisions are grounded not only in the literature of their fields but also in their experience. They engage in lifelong learning, which they seek to encourage in their students.

Striving to strengthen their teaching, accomplished teachers examine their practice critically, expand their repertoire, deepen their knowledge, sharpen their judgment, and adapt their teaching to new findings, ideas, and theories.

5) Teachers are members of learning communities.

Accomplished teachers contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development, and staff development. They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of school resources in light of their understanding of state and local educational objectives. They are knowledgeable about specialized school and community resources that can be engaged for their students' benefit and are skilled at employing such resources as needed.

Accomplished teachers find ways to work collaboratively and creatively with parents, engaging them productively in the work of the school.

The Certification Framework

Using the Five Core Propositions as a springboard, NBPTS sets standards and offers National Board Certification in nearly 30 fields. These fields are defined by the developmental level of the students and the subject or subjects being taught. The first descriptor represents the four overlapping student developmental levels:

- Early Childhood, ages 3–8;
- Middle Childhood, ages 7–12;
- Early Adolescence, ages 11–15;
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood, ages 14–18+.

The second descriptor indicates the substantive focus of a teacher's practice. Teachers may select either a subject-specific or a generalist certificate at a particular developmental level. Subject-specific certificates are designed for teachers who emphasize a single subject area in their teaching (e.g., Early Adolescence/English Language Arts, Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Mathematics); generalist certificates are designed for teachers who develop student skills and knowledge across the curriculum (e.g., Early Childhood/Generalist, Middle

Childhood/Generalist). For some subject-specific certificates, developmental levels are joined together to recognize the commonalities in teaching students at those developmental levels (e.g., Early and Middle Childhood/Art).

Standards and Assessment Development

Following a nationwide search for outstanding educators, a standards committee is appointed for each field. The committees are generally made up of 15 members who are broadly representative of accomplished professionals in their fields. A majority of committee members are teachers regularly engaged in teaching students in the field in question; other members are typically professors, experts in child development, teacher educators, and other professionals in the relevant discipline. The standards committees develop the specific standards for each field, which are then disseminated widely for public critique and comment and subsequently revised as necessary before their adoption by the NBPTS Board of Directors. Periodically, standards are updated so that they remain dynamic documents, responsive to changes in the field.

Determining whether or not candidates meet the standards requires performance-based assessment methods that are fair, valid, and reliable and that ask teachers to demonstrate principled, professional judgments in a variety of situations. A testing contractor specializing in assessment development works with standards committee members, teacher assessment development teams, and members of the NBPTS staff to develop assessment exercises and pilot test them with teachers active in each certificate field. The assessment process involves two primary activities: (1) the compilation of a portfolio of teaching practice over a period of time and (2) the demonstration of content knowledge through assessment center exercises. Teachers prepare their portfolios by videotaping their teaching, gathering student learning products and other teaching artifacts, and providing detailed analyses of their practice. At the assessment center, teachers write answers to questions that relate primarily to content knowledge specific to their fields.

The portfolio is designed to capture teaching in real-time, real-life settings, thus allowing trained assessors from the field in question to examine how teachers translate knowledge and theory into practice. It also yields the most valued evidence NBPTS collects—videos of practice and samples of student work. The videos and student work are accompanied by commentaries on the goals and purposes of instruction, the effectiveness of the practice, teachers' reflections on what occurred, and their rationales for the professional judgments they made. In addition, the portfolio allows candidates to document their accomplishments in contributing to the advancement of the profession and the improvement of schooling—whether at the local, state, or national level—and to document their ability to work constructively with their students' families.

Teachers report that the portfolio is a professional development vehicle of considerable power, in part because it challenges the historic isolation of teachers from their peers. It accomplishes this by actively encouraging candidates to seek the advice and counsel of their professional colleagues—whether across the hall or across the country—as they build their portfolios. It also requires teachers to examine the underlying assumptions of their

practice and the results of their efforts in critical but healthy ways. This emphasis on reflection is highly valued by teachers who go through the process of National Board Certification.

The assessment center exercises are designed to complement the portfolio. They validate that the knowledge and skills exhibited in the portfolio are, in fact, accurate reflections of what candidates know and can do, and they give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills not sampled in the portfolio because of the candidate's specific teaching assignment. For example, high school science teachers assigned to teach only physics in a given year might have difficulty demonstrating in their portfolio a broad knowledge of biology. Given that the NBPTS Standards for science teachers place a high value on such capabilities, another strategy for data collection is necessary. The assessment center exercises fill this gap and otherwise augment the portfolio. Each candidate's work is examined by trained assessors who teach in the certificate field.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards believes that a valid assessment of accomplished practice must allow for the variety of forms sound practice takes. It must also sample the range of content knowledge that teachers possess and must provide appropriate contexts for assessments of teaching knowledge and skill. Teaching is not just about knowing things; it is about the use of knowledge—knowledge of learners and of learning, of schools and of subjects—in the service of helping students grow and develop. Consequently, NBPTS believes that the most valid teacher assessment processes engage candidates in the activities of teaching—activities that require the display and use of teaching knowledge and skill and that allow teachers the opportunity to explain and justify their actions.

In its assessment development work, NBPTS uses technology for assessment when appropriate; ensures broad representation of the diversity that exists within the profession; engages pertinent disciplinary and specialty associations at key points in the process; collaborates closely with appropriate state agencies, academic institutions, and independent research and education organizations; establishes procedures to detect and eliminate instances of external and internal bias with respect to age, gender, and racial and ethnic background of teacher-candidates; and selects the method exhibiting the least adverse impact when given a choice among equally valid assessments.

Once an assessment has been thoroughly tested and found to meet NBPTS requirements for validity, reliability, and fairness, eligible teachers may apply for National Board Certification. To be eligible, a teacher must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution; have a minimum of three years' teaching experience at the early childhood, elementary school, middle school, or high school level; and have held a valid state teaching license for those three years or, where a license is not required, have taught in schools recognized and approved to operate by the state.

Strengthening Teaching and Improving Learning

The National Board's system of standards and certification is commanding the respect of the profession and the public, thereby making a difference in how communities and policymakers view teachers, how teachers view themselves, and how teachers improve their

practice throughout their careers. National Board Certification has yielded such results in part because it has forged a national consensus on the characteristics of accomplished teaching practice in each field. The traditional conversation about teacher competence has focused on beginning teachers. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has helped broaden this conversation to span the entire career of teachers.

Developing standards of accomplished practice helps to elevate the teaching profession as the standards make public the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of accomplished teachers. However, making such standards the basis for National Board Certification promises much more. Since National Board Certification identifies accomplished teachers in a fair and trustworthy manner, it can offer career paths for teachers that will make use of their knowledge, wisdom, and expertise; give accomplished practitioners the opportunity to achieve greater status, authority, and compensation; and accelerate efforts to build more successful school organizations and structures.

By holding accomplished teachers to high and rigorous standards, National Board Certification encourages change along several key fronts:

- changing what it means to have a career in teaching by recognizing and rewarding accomplished teachers and by making it possible for teachers to advance in responsibility, status, and compensation without having to leave the classroom;
- changing the culture of teaching by accelerating growth in the knowledge base of teaching, by placing real value on professional judgment and accomplished practice in all its various manifestations, and by encouraging teachers to search for new knowledge and better practice through a steady regimen of collaboration and reflection with peers and others;
- changing the way schools are organized and managed by creating a vehicle that facilitates the establishment of unique teacher positions, providing accomplished teachers with greater authority and autonomy in making instructional decisions and greater responsibility for sharing their expertise to strengthen the practice of others;
- changing the nature of teacher preparation and ongoing professional development by laying a standards-based foundation for a fully articulated career development path that begins with prospective teachers and leads to accomplished teachers;
- changing the way school districts think about hiring and compensating teachers by encouraging administrators and school boards to reward excellence in teaching by seeking to hire accomplished teachers.

Although National Board Certification has been designed with the entire country in mind, each state and locality decides for itself how best to encourage teachers to achieve National Board Certification and how best to take advantage of the expertise of the National Board Certified Teachers in their midst. Across the country, legislation has been

enacted that supports National Board Certification, including allocations of funds to pay for the certification fee for teachers, release time for candidates to work on their portfolios and prepare for the assessment center exercises, and salary supplements for teachers who achieve National Board Certification. Incentives for National Board Certification exist at the state or local level in all 50 states and in the District of Columbia.

As this support at the state and local levels suggests, National Board Certification is recognized throughout the nation as a rich professional development experience. Because National Board Certification provides states and localities with a way to structure teachers' roles and responsibilities more effectively and to allow schools to benefit from the wisdom of their strongest teachers, National Board Certification is a strong component of education reform in the United States.

Accomplished Middle Childhood/Generalist teachers enjoy working with young children. These teachers support the energy of their students as well as their students' curiosity, enthusiasm, thinking, and the goals to which the students aspire. Accomplished generalists who teach 7- to 12-year-olds also pursue a distinctive mission. They seek to expose students to the wide range of knowledge that humans have accumulated over time, the variety of their ideas, and the possibilities their lives represent.

Fulfilling this mission may mean introducing students to methods of inquiry associated with a particular discipline. It may also mean helping students to explore topics that relate to the curriculum and methods of more than one of the subjects taught in elementary school. Regardless of the topics taught, the accomplished Middle Childhood/Generalist ensures that learning activities and the connections made in interdisciplinary study are meaningful and are based on the appropriate skills, methods, concepts, and perspectives of each discipline. In addition to developing connections among various subjects, generalists relate their instruction to students' lives and help students to become independent thinkers and learners who make sense of themselves and their world.

Accomplished Middle Childhood/Generalists may teach all subjects in a self-contained classroom, one or more subjects on an interdisciplinary team, or a single subject they infuse with ideas from other subjects. These teachers also may teach in multiage classrooms, may teach in dual language settings, or may teach the same students for two or more years. Accomplished Middle Childhood/Generalist teachers may also teach in full-inclusion classrooms where students with exceptionalities are full members of the classroom community. These teachers distinguish themselves not only by their command of the subjects they are assigned to teach but also by their orientation to their students, their commitment to the integration of knowledge, and the pedagogy they use to enhance their students' learning and development. They are unique not only by the scope of their knowledge but by how they teach it.

This emphasis on interdisciplinary studies stems from a desire to help students to see important connections among ideas and to find relevance and meaning in their assignments. Moreover, the world outside the classroom requires a multifaceted approach to thinking and acting; seldom do people face compartmentalized tasks that require knowledge of only one discipline. For example, pressing concerns such as protection of the environment require knowledge derived from biology, ecology, statistics, law, economics, and other fields. For many, the world of work will require the integration of mathematics, computer science, technology, writing, and speaking. For these and other reasons, including the opportunity it provides teachers to maximize the time they devote to in-depth, substantive inquiry, accomplished generalists emphasize integrated learning.

Not all interdisciplinary teaching meets the criteria implied by these standards. If interdisciplinary instruction involves little genuine inquiry, or links subjects artificially, it will fall short of illuminating topics in a powerful manner. Accomplished teachers know the difference between shallow and substantive teaching and learning, and they have a myriad of ways in which to engage students in serious and sustained study.

In order to teach in an integrated manner, accomplished generalists possess knowledge and skills in the core subject areas (English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and health) of the elementary school curriculum that serve as a foundation for their practice. This knowledge provides teachers with the flexibility to vary their approach, depending on their students' needs and their immediate teaching goals. It also allows them to distinguish

between significant ideas and topics and those of lesser importance. Teachers' extensive knowledge bases allow them to set ambitious but reasonable expectations for student learning; to sequence learning activities in ways that make sense conceptually; to see the underlying structures and connections among various branches of knowledge; and to coordinate strategies and ideas as part of an interdisciplinary team. Accomplished teachers can judge the quality and appropriateness of various curricular materials and resources. They can create, adapt, and use a wide range of materials and resources to meet all students' learning needs. They also can develop compelling themes that interest students and invite them to apply knowledge, skills, and understanding across subjects. Such teachers also understand the intrinsic value of the arts and their importance as alternate forms of expression. In addition, they introduce their students to sound health practices. As the ability to use and understand technology becomes increasingly important, accomplished teachers ensure that they and their students are comfortable using the tools and ideas of a technological society in developmentally appropriate ways.

At the same time, generalists cannot be expected to have the same command of subject matter that characterizes the practice of specialists. Given the explosion of knowledge and materials in any discipline, such expectations are unrealistic. Nevertheless, generalists, like other teachers, display a capacity to extend their knowledge and continue to learn and expand their repertoire over time. Although they may not be expert in some facets of a given core subject, they have a foundation of knowledge in each field and a disposition to learn that allows them to explore new territory with their students. This foundation includes the ways in which each core discipline builds knowledge and understanding, uses multiple technologies, conducts inquiries, weighs evidence, and organizes itself. Moreover, the scope and capacity of their practice are extended by their readiness to engage colleagues whose expertise in various areas complements their own.

Accomplished teachers also understand the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and ethical development of young people. They know that students at this stage in their development are eager to learn and can begin to make inferences, explore topics deeply, and establish informed points of view. These students are likely to be well motivated when tasks relate clearly and immediately to their lives. They can extend their thinking and experiences, or stretch their imaginations. Students at this age are usually willing to conform to adult expectations, often seeking approval and recognition from parents, families, and teachers. At the same time, teachers know that students' behavior is affected by their growing interest in peer approval and their ability to cope with the transition between home and school activities. Accomplished teachers recognize that parents and guardians are important partners in the education of students. As a result, teachers look for opportunities to initiate positive interaction with their students' families.

Teachers use the understanding of children's social development to shape the learning environment and their personal interactions with students. They work with their students to create a classroom management system that responds to students' needs and fosters democratic ideals and social responsibility. Teaching young people the skills they need to cooperate with adults and peers and to become responsible members of a learning community is important for several reasons. Teachers know that children who function well in school and experience tangible growth in learning view themselves as competent and valuable members of the community, eager to come to school and explore new horizons. Consequently, they encourage students to try new tasks, to put forth persistent effort, to participate in classroom discourse, and to have confidence in their own ability to perform well.

Accomplished practitioners employ a wide variety of teaching and learning strategies. They understand that learning requires more than the presentation of large amounts of seemingly unrelated information or the rote memorization of facts divorced from major themes, concepts, or principles. They use instructional strategies that actively engage all students, promote collaboration, provide for various levels of concrete and abstract thought, and foster student inquiry. They seek to build on students' prior knowledge, introducing new concepts and information that will extend student understanding by applying knowledge in meaningful directions. Sensitive to their students' individual differences, including variations in cultural and linguistic backgrounds, accomplished teachers tailor their instruction and evaluation procedures accordingly. They see these differences as a challenge and an opportunity for enlarging the vision of their students.

Accomplished teachers use planning, organization, and management skills to design a learning environment that promotes a caring community of active learners. Through the planning of explanations, activities, and materials, optimal time is spent responding to and interacting with the individual learning patterns of the student. The classroom organization is designed by the teacher to involve learners actively in the appropriate use of equipment, materials, and activities.

The schedule for learning experiences encompasses the comprehensive objectives and goals for supporting an integrated curricula based on student mastery and application of skills and concepts articulated from the school criteria for expected learner outcomes. Classroom management focuses on motivating and engaging students through activities that stimulate creativity, problem solving, and critical thinking.

In sum, the teachers described in the following pages are reflective practitioners who are dedicated to their students and to their craft. They exemplify a high level of professionalism, constantly seeking to improve their practice. They exercise sound and principled judgment while acting in the best interests of their students.

Developing High and Rigorous Standards for Accomplished Practice

In 1991, a committee of Middle Childhood/Generalist teachers and other educators with expertise in this field began the process of developing advanced professional standards for teachers of students ages 7 to 12. The Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards Committee was charged with translating the Five Core Propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards into a standards document that defines outstanding teaching in this field.

In early 2000, a committee comprising original committee members and a new group of educators (including National Board Certified Teachers) was convened to examine and update as necessary the published *Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards*. This second edition of the standards is the result of the committee's deliberations at meetings and their input into working drafts of the standards.

This NBPTS Standards document describes in observable form what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. The standards are meant to reflect the professional consensus at this point about the essential aspects of accomplished practice. The deliberations of the Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards Committee were informed by various national and state initiatives on student and teacher standards that have been operating concurrently with the

development of NBPTS Standards. As the understanding of teaching and learning continues to evolve over the next several years, *Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards* will be updated again.

An essential tension of describing accomplished practice concerns the difference between the analysis and the practice of teaching. The former tends to fragment the profession into any number of discrete duties, such as designing learning activities, providing quality explanation, modeling, managing the classroom, and monitoring student progress. Teaching as it actually occurs, on the other hand, is a seamless activity.

Everything an accomplished teacher knows through study, research, and experience is brought to bear daily in the classroom through innumerable decisions that shape learning. Teaching frequently requires balancing the demands of several important educational goals. It depends on accurate observations of particular students and settings. And it is subject to revision on the basis of continuing developments in the classroom. The professional judgments that accomplished teachers make also reflect a certain improvisational artistry.

The paradox, then, is that any attempt to write standards that dissect what accomplished teachers know and are able to do will, to a certain extent, misrepresent the holistic nature of how teaching actually takes place. Nevertheless, the fact remains: Certain identifiable commonalities characterize the accomplished practice of teachers. The 11 standards that follow are designed to capture the craft, artistry, proficiency, and understandings—both deep and broad—that contribute to the complex work that is accomplished teaching.

The Standards Format

Accomplished teaching appears in many different forms, and it should be acknowledged at the outset that these specific standards are not the only way it could have been described. No linearity, atomization, or hierarchy is implied in this vision of accomplished teaching, nor is each standard of equal weight. Rather, the standards are presented as aspects of teaching that are analytically separable for the purposes of this standards document but that are not discrete when they appear in practice.

The report follows a two-part format for each of the 11 standards:

- I. **Standard Statement**—This is a succinct statement of one vital aspect of the practice of the accomplished Early Childhood/Generalist. Each standard is expressed in terms of observable teacher actions that have an impact on students.
- II. **Elaboration**—This passage provides a context for the standard, along with an explanation of what accomplished teachers need to know, value, and do if they are to fulfill the standard. The elaboration includes descriptions of teachers' dispositions toward young learners, their distinctive roles and responsibilities, and their stances on a range of ethical and intellectual issues that regularly confront them.

Middle Childhood/Generalist STANDARDS

(for teachers of students ages 7–12)

Second Edition

OVERVIEW

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has organized the standards for accomplished Middle Childhood/Generalist teachers into the following 11 standards. The standards have been ordered to facilitate understanding, not to assign

priorities. They each describe an important facet of accomplished teaching; they often occur concurrently because of the seamless quality of accomplished practice. These standards serve as the basis for National Board Certification in this field.

I. Knowledge of Students (p. 7)

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of child development and their relationships with students to understand their students' abilities, interests, aspirations, and values.

II. Knowledge of Content and Curriculum (p. 11)

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of subject matter and curriculum to make sound decisions about what is important for students to learn within and across the subject areas of the middle childhood curriculum.

III. Learning Environment (p. 23)

Accomplished teachers establish a caring, inclusive, stimulating, and safe school community where students can take intellectual risks, practice democracy, and work collaboratively and independently.

IV. Respect for Diversity (p. 27)

Accomplished teachers help students learn to respect and appreciate individual and group differences.

V. Instructional Resources (p. 31)

Accomplished teachers create, assess, select, and adapt a rich and varied collection of materials and draw on other resources such as staff, community members, and students to support learning.

VI. Meaningful Applications of Knowledge (p. 35)

Accomplished teachers engage students in learning within and across the disciplines and help students understand how the subjects they study can be used to explore important issues in their lives and the world around them.

VII. Multiple Paths to Knowledge (p. 39)

Accomplished teachers provide students with multiple paths needed to learn the central concepts in each school subject, explore important themes and topics that cut across subject areas, and build overall knowledge and understanding.

VIII. Assessment (p. 43)

Accomplished teachers understand the strengths and weaknesses of different assessment methods, base their instruction on ongoing assessment, and encourage students to monitor their own learning.

IX. Family Involvement (p. 47)

Accomplished teachers initiate positive, interactive relationships with families as they participate in the education of their children.

X. Reflection (p. 51)

Accomplished teachers regularly analyze, evaluate, reflect on, and strengthen the effectiveness and quality of their practice.

XI. Contributions to the Profession (p. 55)

Accomplished teachers work with colleagues to improve schools and to advance knowledge and practice in their field.

The pages that follow provide elaborations of each standard that discuss the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and habits of mind that describe accomplished teaching in the field.

Standard I: Knowledge of Students

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of child development and their relationships with students to understand their students' abilities, interests, aspirations, and values.

To chart an educationally sound course, accomplished teachers must know their students as individuals and as learners and know how to relate to them in a variety of ways. To help students grow and develop, teachers¹ constantly work to understand what students know, how they think, what they value, who they are, where they come from, and what motivates them. To do this, they consistently observe and listen to students as they work, learn, and play in a variety of settings. As their knowledge of students increases, teachers use this understanding to determine the direction, approach, and content of their teaching. The more they learn about their students, the more they can tailor their teaching to motivate their students and meet their specific needs.

Teachers Understand and Appreciate the Ways in Which Each Student Is Unique As Well As the Commonalities of Middle Childhood Students

Teachers' understanding of their students is informed by their appreciation of the intellectual, social, physical, ethical, and emotional development that characterizes middle childhood. Accomplished teachers know that middle childhood students are maturing in their abilities to think concretely, symbolically, and abstractly; are beginning to consider perspectives other than their own;

and are becoming more aware that learning has intrinsic value. Although various generalizations can be made about students at this age, teachers understand that each class and each student is unique. These teachers realize that each student begins the school year with a particular mix of capabilities, interests, and dispositions toward learning. During the course of the year, teachers recognize the subtle but significant changes in students' patterns of behavior, reactions, overall performance, and social interactions.

Teachers use their knowledge of cognitive development to design and provide appropriate instruction. They know the importance of working at a concrete level, providing materials such as maps, timelines, manipulatives, and tools for organizing and interpreting data. They understand that students of this age may have a limited understanding of time, which may affect their learning in a variety of dimensions, including their ability to comprehend fully such historical concepts as change over time. As students mature, teachers are aware of the development of analytic and abstract thinking abilities. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for students to challenge themselves. Such teachers also understand that even the youngest student has the capacity for evaluation and analysis and is shortchanged if schooling is confined to the rote memorization of facts. At the same time, teachers recognize that learning meaningful facts is essential and that students often enjoy such learning. Therefore, when appropriate, these teachers directly teach techniques for locating, retaining, and using facts.

1. All references to teachers in this document, whether stated explicitly or not, refer to accomplished Middle Childhood/Generalists.



Teachers understand that such factors as language, socioeconomic status, family configuration, sexual orientation, body image, physical or mental condition, ethnicity, and gender can influence learning. They see student diversity as an asset that can facilitate the pursuit of academic, social, and civic goals. For example, children of various cultures might be called upon to share their life experiences. Teachers also might use English language learners who are fluent in another language as a resource and ask these students to explain how a concept or an idea is expressed differently in their native tongues. Such teachers know that culture may affect the nature of the interactions they have with students. They realize that children from various cultural backgrounds might be accustomed to differing authority structures or forms of social interaction. These teachers are aware of gender, racial, ethnic, and other stereotypes and work to counter their influence through both their oversight of the classroom environment and their selection of topics for study that provide opportunities to address constructively the issue of stereotyping. Teachers' knowledge of the challenges many young people face—such as poverty, family violence, health issues, divorce, and societal ills—influences them as they design curricula, assignments, teaching strategies, and evaluation techniques.

Teachers recognize as assets their students' inquisitiveness, energy, sense of fair play, and, as students get older, their skepticism and cynicism. They take advantage of these characteristics to enhance the teaching-learning community. Teachers acknowledge and make use of student differences, but they also seek to capitalize on the similarities that serve as a common bond for young people. For example, teachers know that the interest shared by young people in many aspects of popular culture, such as music and sports, can suggest ways to engage students in learning and foster class cohesion.

Teachers are aware that not all young people learn in the same way. Some students are more comfortable than others working in teams. Some express themselves more easily in writing than in group discussions. Others thrive on fieldwork or abundant visual cues. The practice of accomplished teachers encompasses varied approaches that foster learning in all students. It reflects the high expectations they have for all students and recognizes that each student benefits when challenged to pursue important ideas from different perspectives.

Teachers Are Keen Observers of Students

Teachers are adept at learning about their students when students are at work and at play. Teachers consider similarities and differences in culture, language, ethnicity, physical or mental condition, learning style, and gender as they observe their students in various settings and circumstances. Teachers can identify the areas in which students are knowledgeable and the areas in which the students are less adept. The teachers draw on their ongoing interactions with students as well as their contact with students' families and their knowledge of the cultural backgrounds of the families and communities from which the students come. (See Standard IX—*Family Involvement*.) They know that changes in a child's tone of voice, enthusiasm, demeanor, or schoolwork may signal the start of a significant developmental breakthrough or a problem needing attention. These teachers respond to individual changes by providing each student additional opportunities to learn important concepts and ideas and to find success, enjoyment, and a growing measure of self-confidence through their schoolwork.



Whatever the setting, accomplished teachers seek ways to connect with their students. Their expanding knowledge of their students, including insights about those with disabilities or exceptional needs or talents, enriches their

interactions with their students and enables them to frame their practice equitably to meet the needs of each of their students.



Reflections on Standard I:

Lined area for reflections, consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

Standard II: Knowledge of Content and Curriculum

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of subject matter and curriculum to make sound decisions about what is important for students to learn within and across the subject areas of the middle childhood curriculum.

Accomplished teachers have clear purposes and exercise good judgment in sorting through the many, often conflicting, demands and requests placed before them. They establish realistic and worthwhile goals for learning by selecting major ideas, concepts, themes, and issues appropriate to their students' needs. In so doing, they build from their particular strengths in certain academic areas as well as from cross-curricular knowledge. Teachers are able to apply content and curriculum to a wide range of learners by using a variety of approaches and by being attuned to students' individual differences.

As generalists, these teachers are adept at providing an engaging starting point in one subject and using it to draw in other subjects. For instance, a study of local ecology may expand into multiple aspects of science as related concepts, themes, and skills are studied. This integrated approach allows generalist teachers to reinforce regularly the ways in which particular subjects relate to one another. While doing so, these teachers consistently make sound and principled judgments about the knowledge, strategies, skills, attitudes, and values they seek to develop in their students. They engage students in activities that have real outcomes and that require that work be completed not as separate, isolated tasks but as integrated components of the curriculum. Accomplished teachers know how to engage children in applied activities so that they understand learning in

context. As appropriate, they know how to engage children in the inquiry process on topics that emerge from their own interests as part of complex projects.

Teachers Have a Firm Foundation in the Subject Matter of the Middle Childhood Curriculum

Middle Childhood/Generalists know that having a firm foundation of the major concepts, methods, and modes of inquiry in the subjects that make up the curriculum (English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and health) is essential not only for this standard but for almost all that follow. Although generalists cannot be expected to have a specialist's in-depth, subject-specific knowledge in each and every aspect of the curriculum, they possess a solid base of understanding and a disposition to extend continually their knowledge of the disciplines on their own and in the company of their students. This knowledge allows teachers to establish high standards for student performance. Teachers create or select powerful tasks for students to explore, and they choose important topics and quality materials that use students' time wisely. Teachers also recognize when a shift in focus might take advantage of new opportunities for learning that emerge during instruction.



A solid core of knowledge in the range of subjects a generalist may be responsible for teaching is necessary to support practice at a high level, but by itself it is not sufficient. Accomplished teachers also bring these subjects to life and engage students in their central concepts and ideas, building knowledge, skill, understanding, and an eagerness to learn.

Teachers Use Their Subject-Matter Knowledge to Make Sound Curricular Decisions

Teachers use their subject-matter knowledge to make connections between and among topics within and across disciplines. In doing so, they foster student understanding of the central ideas in the major subject areas of the middle childhood curriculum, of their interrelationships, and of their application to daily life. The comprehensive view that accomplished teachers have of the major concepts in each subject they teach enables them to base sound decisions about what is important for a student to learn on their assessment of the student's intellectual development. They have a repertoire of topics from which to choose. These topics are connected to their students' lives and will engage students, leading them to new areas of knowledge and new ways of thinking. Accomplished teachers have the skills and knowledge to use technological tools in developmentally appropriate ways to support learning across the curriculum.

These teachers select meaningful tasks that give focus to students' work, and they can articulate the purposes and expected benefits of each planned activity. They can clearly identify and justify their goals for the year, month, week, or unit of instruction and

explain how larger and smaller planning units fit together. They know the strengths and weaknesses of their instructional decisions, and they are prepared to adapt their plans as circumstances dictate. Because of their knowledge of subject matter and how it connects across curricular lines, accomplished teachers do not feel locked into a prescribed curriculum; instead, they explore new and promising learning paths to enrich their students' experiences as opportunities present themselves.

Accomplished teachers recognize that educational goal setting is an interactive process. In many cases, instructional goals are defined in broad terms at the national, state, and district levels; however, accomplished teachers are not limited by externally imposed goals or assessments. Within this framework, such teachers establish long-term learning goals based on student needs.

Teachers help students develop insights into the subjects they study so that they may better address complex real-world issues. Frequently, such issues are not fully understood through the tools and knowledge of a single discipline. Consequently, teachers accept the special challenge of helping students not only to understand those aspects of the work that fit within disciplinary boundaries but also to explore and connect important subjects and topics that cut across those boundaries. This integration of subject matter contributes to enriching and enhancing the relevance of schoolwork and helps middle childhood students gain in-depth understanding of important ideas. (See Standard VI—*Meaningful Applications of Knowledge* and Standard VII—*Multiple Paths to Knowledge*.)

What follows are descriptions of the six subject-matter domains that accomplished generalists are expected to know, along with a discussion of how they might use this knowledge. Although some teachers may have more extensive knowledge in one or

more of these subject areas, all Middle Childhood/Generalists should be able to teach their students the major ideas, themes, topics, and applications described here.

English Language Arts

Steady progress in the language arts is essential to success in all subject areas. Accomplished teachers know the important themes, ideas, concepts, and strategies central to learning how to read, write, speak, view, and listen. They know how children acquire and become adept at using oral and written language, and teachers are familiar with a wide variety of textual materials.

Accomplished teachers provide balanced reading programs that include guided reading, shared reading, independent reading, and read alouds. Whether students are early, emerging, or accelerated readers, teachers incorporate reading strategies that meet idiosyncratic needs. These programs may include graphophonemic awareness, decoding skills, vocabulary building, comprehension, and fluency.

These teachers regard reading and writing as reciprocal processes that result in the construction of meaning and understand the vital role that oral language plays in learning. They also know that oral and written language are best learned in language-rich environments that provide multiple opportunities to vary language use, depending on audience, situation, and purpose. When working with students with exceptionalities and students for whom English is a new language, teachers employ special strategies, adaptations, and resources designed to aid their language development. With students for whom English is a new language, teachers also focus on the transference of language skills to English.

Teachers provide a variety of ways for students to explore written and oral language

so that they can communicate effectively in society and achieve personal goals. They do this in part through their knowledge of materials that vary in style and subject matter and that enable them to teach students how to construct and interpret an author's message. Teachers emphasize the importance of critical listening so that students understand that listening well contributes to communication and thorough understanding. They are also adept at teaching young readers and writers how speaking relates to writing and how to recognize and use the conventions of written English. They draw on a variety of texts as needed to teach particular strategies (e.g., interpretation of text or approaches to spelling) so that students know when, why, and how to use them.

Capable writers themselves, accomplished practitioners teach students to approach writing as a process of communicating to others and for themselves. To advance student facility with the writing process—prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing—teachers skillfully incorporate strategies and skills in their instruction. Making use of available technology, they lead students to develop useful, practical, and comfortable approaches to writing, regardless of the writing task. To encourage persistence and commitment in students, teachers design many assignments around subjects that students are likely to find especially engaging. They scaffold student learning through modeling and group-assisted writing activities. They understand that writing can help develop thinking skills, facilitate personal expression, and enable students to explore the use of different voices with different audiences. They provide students with many different writing experiences across the curriculum—for example, keeping journals; writing explanations of solutions to mathematical problems; creating stories, poems, and plays; producing newsletters; writing historical accounts of events; recording scientific observations; sending business letters; and engaging in numerous other activities that



make writing meaningful. These teachers also provide many real and significant opportunities before, during, and after reading and writing in which all students can express themselves orally, thereby helping students become articulate about the subject being studied and develop their analytical skills.

Teachers know that oral language and written language are socially, politically, historically, and culturally defined and that language use varies by ability, gender, region, socioeconomic status, education, and culture. To facilitate meaningful communication, they provide opportunities for students to express themselves in group settings. They help different groups understand and appreciate diversity in language and communicative styles, and they model the fluent use of spoken English in its many forms. Teachers know and communicate to their students when to use those forms of language that carry greater access to economic success, political influence, and independence. They also know that having a shared form of English facilitates communication across societal divisions. However, they also respect that certain dialects or language expressions may be important to students' home and community lives and understand that these contribute to students' feelings of belonging. Consequently, while protecting the integrity of their students' primary dialect or language, they help every student gain command of the standard dialect.

Accomplished teachers are extensive readers, and they know a wide range of children's and young adult literature, as well as traditional fables, folktales, fairy tales, rhymes, and myths. They provide their students with access to a variety of classic and contemporary texts in various genres, including works from varied perspectives and different ethnic and cultural traditions that represent a range of subject-matter areas, styles, and communicative purposes. They challenge the prejudices that students may hold by exposing them to texts that counter stereotypes. They

use this broad base to develop students' analytical skills and strategies as well as their aesthetic sensibilities. Their students learn to read for different purposes, including for critical understanding, essential information, and personal enjoyment.

Teachers help students learn to interpret a variety of fiction and nonfiction, thereby helping them understand how authors organize and express ideas for different purposes through different forms. These teachers go beyond relying on printed texts to include critically viewing and listening to materials from various media (e.g., television, film, the Internet, and music) that enrich the curriculum. Students are given multiple opportunities to gain access to information and to use their developing analytic capacity to compare and study the use of oral, visual, and written language, not only across subject areas but also across media. Teachers encourage students to generate multiple interpretations and to provide rationales for their conclusions. Consequently, they foster students' ability to understand multiple viewpoints, traditions, customs, and beliefs, as well as instill in them a lasting love of reading.

Teachers are adept at observing their students' progress in reading, writing, speaking, viewing, and listening and at determining what they need to learn next. They know that language is learned through approximation and that making mistakes is an integral part of learning. They provide students with multiple opportunities to interpret as well as produce work that students can assess themselves while receiving constructive feedback from their peers and teachers. Accomplished teachers excel at using a wide range of response activities, such as journals, dramatic productions, and stories, for the purpose of ongoing assessment. These and other activities give teachers multiple opportunities to measure student understanding and to determine the extent to which they are reaching immediate and long-term instructional objectives.

Accomplished teachers incorporate their students' language strategies and skills into other areas of the curriculum. They understand that the entire school curriculum employs reading, writing, listening, viewing, and speaking skills, and they emphasize to students the usefulness of these skills in all subject areas as well as in nonschool settings. They understand and communicate to their students the importance of multimedia literacy in an information-rich, global society. Teachers design significant tasks across the curriculum that help students see the usefulness of reading and writing as tools for learning, as ways of acquiring and organizing new information, and as a means for enjoyment.

Mathematics

Accomplished teachers know the major concepts, procedures, processes, and ideas of mathematics that define number systems and number sense, computation, geometry, algebra, measurement, and statistics and probability. They know the curriculum of their school and how their mathematics instruction fits into this sequence, building on students' prior knowledge as well as anticipating key concepts that students will encounter in subsequent years. They also understand how knowledge in mathematics is created, organized, and linked to other subjects, and they recognize that research on how children learn mathematics continues to evolve. These teachers are acutely aware of the need to prepare students for a global and technologically rich society. They understand and can use current technology, including computers and calculators, and they view technology as an important component of mathematics instruction. To stress the importance of employing mathematics to solve common and complex problems, they encourage students to become active participants in the "doing" of mathematics.

In the classrooms of such teachers, students are encouraged to converse, collaborate, and interact with one another as they experiment with approaches to problems and discover the impact of mathematics on their lives. They help their students discover patterns in mathematics, create nonstandard problem-solving methods, articulate their thinking, justify their answers, and apply mathematics to real-world problems in which math intersects other subjects in the curriculum. Opportunities to use, explore, invent, discover, and think critically about mathematical relationships enable students to perceive the value, importance, and beauty of mathematics.

Teachers command a specialized knowledge of how to involve students in mathematics in order to make the subject relevant and compelling. They serve as advocates to ensure that female students, minority students, students with exceptional needs, and students for whom English is a new language achieve success in mathematics and the sciences and have the same opportunity to take challenging math classes. They know how to build on children's intuitive or informal knowledge as a link to formal mathematics. They help students establish strong number sense through counting, mental computation, meaningful repetition, estimation, and an understanding of the effects of operations. They also provide experiences in developing symbol and spatial sense. Many of the tasks, strategies, and activities that these teachers use in their teaching are based on situations and problems recognizable and interesting to their students. Skilled at using textbooks creatively, accomplished teachers can reorder scope and sequence to make texts more accessible and understandable. Using this approach wisely will allow children to succeed beyond the scope and sequence dictated by those texts. Accomplished teachers seek mathematical tasks that demonstrate the applicability of mathematics.

Teachers create varied opportunities for students to explore and discuss mathematics and to build a deep understanding of mathematical concepts and processes. They create—and have their students create—situational problems that can be solved in different ways and that may have more than one correct answer. They challenge students with open-ended problems and guide students through effective questioning techniques to discover and explore multiple solutions. They use manipulative and pictorial representations to establish conceptual understanding and to help students link the concrete to the abstract. Hands-on activities are plentiful and provide additional opportunities for students to personalize mathematics.

Accomplished teachers also develop their students' abilities to solve problems by using appropriate tools and technologies. Throughout the problem-solving process, they encourage students to explain their thinking and justify their answers. For instance, some teachers have students keep journals to reflect on their approaches to problems and how problems and solutions apply to their daily lives. Another teacher might create settings that foster student-to-student discussion and debate about mathematics and collaborative efforts to solve meaningful problems. As their students experiment with a variety of tools and approaches to mathematics, accomplished teachers know what mathematical preconceptions, misconceptions, and error patterns they need to monitor. They recognize and value the different ways students think and understand. They encourage students to use multiple strategies and reasoning processes to arrive at an answer. They also encourage students to perform error analysis—to find and correct their errors in their own solutions.

Teachers recognize the interrelatedness of mathematical ideas and topics, and they extend the skills, processes, and concepts of mathematics into other subject areas. They teach their students how to recognize when

principles of mathematics are embedded in other disciplines and in their daily lives. They know the productive connections and decision-making skills that exist between mathematics and other fields, and they emphasize both the procedural and conceptual aspects of mathematics so students can effectively apply their understanding of mathematics in a variety of areas. Through this diverse approach to teaching mathematics, teachers create a learning environment that supports and encourages the development of mathematical reasoning skills and habits and presents mathematics as an ongoing human activity.

Science

Accomplished teachers understand the nature of science, including the various inquiry processes that scientists use to discover knowledge. These teachers also understand the characteristics of scientific thinking and reasoning—objectivity, intellectual honesty, skepticism, openness to new ideas, and curiosity. They design activities to introduce students to several major thematic ideas that cut across all the sciences—systems, order, and organizations; evidence, models, evaluations, and explanations; energy, constancy, and patterns of change; scale and measurement; evolution and equilibrium; and form and function. To do so, they draw on their knowledge of fundamental ideas and concepts in earth and space science, life science, and physical science and their relationships to one another and to other disciplines. For example, students exploring patterns of change may examine glaciers as an example of change over time and volcanoes as an example of spontaneous change.

For topics in which their understanding is not deep, teachers know where and how to find information. Their knowledge of science

enables accomplished teachers to frame their instruction in such a way that students are encouraged to study, question, and explore fundamental scientific ideas, topics, and concerns. Their expectation that all students can become scientifically literate leads to a curricular approach designed to prepare children for adult roles in a global community that will be rich in science and technology.

Teachers use their awareness of the connections among science, technology, and society to help children appreciate the impact of science on their lives. They help children discuss and explore ideas about science as students begin to understand the social, personal, and ethical considerations involved in its application. They stimulate the natural curiosity that children have about the world around them, encouraging them to explore the scientific phenomena they encounter daily. They do so by having students apply the principles of scientific thinking both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers recognize and address the misconceptions most children have about such phenomena. They know that children continually try to structure and understand the living world and that direct experience is one of the most promising routes to building understanding. As part of a larger strategy to address such matters, teachers organize cooperative-learning experiences and group projects that encourage students to discuss and share their scientific discoveries about significant scientific concepts.

With their understanding of and sensitivity toward the human aspects of scientific investigation and progress, teachers further personalize science through projects and hands-on activities that develop important scientific concepts and themes. This student-centered learning approach helps students develop a strong understanding of the concepts and processes taught. Teachers also introduce students to a historical perspective about science through stories about scientists and

their careers, their doubts and struggles in coming to understand an area of science, the length of time involved in scientific investigations and progress, and ways in which fear and intolerance of new ideas have worked against progress in science. Thus, accomplished teachers humanize the study of science for their students.

These teachers are familiar with a variety of science curriculum resources—including texts, curriculum packages, laboratory equipment, computer software, videodiscs, electronic databases, telecomputing networks, and other materials. Teachers choose wisely among media in designing their science curriculum. They do not rely solely on texts but also use and adapt other sources, including activities and units they have designed themselves. In choosing among curriculum resources within their school's physical and budgetary constraints, they are guided by their knowledge of children's development and learning in science; research on the features of effective science curricula; and a concern for what is familiar, accessible, and concrete for children.

Teachers know and are able to use the language of science, when appropriate, in their classroom science lessons and in collaborating with colleagues and community members. They help students develop an understanding of appropriate vocabulary and encourage them to use the language of science. They are aware of the important role that dialogue with colleagues plays in scientific progress, and they arrange their classrooms and lessons to encourage children to actively participate in such dialogues. These teachers also take advantage of the resources available in the local community to enrich the science curriculum, and they encourage students to apply their new knowledge to science-based problems and issues within the community. They seek out community members who might make a significant



contribution to the enrichment of the science program, including parents, business people, science and engineering professionals, and university faculty members.

Accomplished middle childhood teachers integrate science into other disciplines in a variety of ways. They encourage students to transfer skills learned in other subjects to their study of science by designing lessons that provide opportunities for students to make connections to broader themes that deepen student understanding. They are skillful at data collection and interpretation, and they are knowledgeable about the methods that scientists use in establishing scientific understanding, including the role of intuition, creativity, and accident. Being aware of the different means of scientific development, these teachers help children see science from several vantage points that have relevance to many other topics and subjects. They encourage children to be curious, skeptical, open to new ideas, reflective, creative, and inventive in their approach to science, while applying scientific theory and inquiry skills to a variety of subject areas.

Social Studies

Accomplished teachers know the major issues, concepts, themes, and ideas in social studies. These teachers draw on a solid foundation in social studies (e.g., history, civics, economics, geography). They also have an appreciation for and understanding of current issues and events in their community, the nation, and the world that allow them to make sound curricular choices and formulate meaningful instructional activities. Such teachers use their knowledge of social studies to instill democratic values and the fundamentals of good citizenship, to develop their students'

understanding of where they fit in the framework of society, and to heighten students' awareness of the multicultural world and communities in which they live.

Teachers possess knowledge of important social themes, the facts that support those themes, and how the body of research interrelates within them. Therefore, they bring to their practice an understanding of the evolution and interdependence of nations; the ways in which systems of trade developed and influenced change throughout the world; the nature and impact of war and peace; the impact of religions and other belief systems on historical processes; the ways in which the arts, popular culture, and technology have influenced and affected interpretations of the past; and the quest for equality. From this knowledge base, teachers bring to life the emergence and evolution of democratic values, systems, and institutions and the central role they play in daily life. Using subject-matter knowledge as a springboard, teachers help students understand the key concepts and issues that explain the growth, development, and function of societies.

Teachers know that the study of social studies lends itself to involving students in projects and research. In their classrooms, interaction focuses on sustained examination of a few important themes rather than on shallow coverage of many topics. Teachers help students build a repertoire of facts and information to undergird their study of history and the social sciences. Well-designed social studies activities encourage respect for opposing points of view, appreciation of well-supported opinions, sensitivity to cultural differences, and commitment to the social welfare of the community. Teachers link new content with pre-existing knowledge and beliefs, often encouraging community investigations through which students apply their knowledge to current

issues. They develop programs that feature active learning, incorporating group settings, student interactions, and collaboration.

Teachers help generate an understanding of American cultures and societies, as well as an understanding of other cultures and societies. They encourage students in the exploration and study of social systems, in part, by focusing on critical periods in the history of the United States and the world. They explore with their students commonalities and differences among cultures. For example, they may take an anthropological perspective to introduce their students to both the common and the unique aspects of the social arrangements practiced by several cultures.

These teachers help students see social studies as a dynamic interaction of human beings and an examination of ethical dilemmas and choices. Recognizing that social studies integrates the social sciences and humanities, teachers often extend student inquiries into the literature, art, drama, music, dance, religion, philosophy, and architecture, as well as the science and technology, of a period that gave it shape. This interweaving of subjects creates a stimulating environment in which students address current and future global challenges.

To foster the growth of civic competence in students, teachers create group activities that require the practice of democratic processes, rights, and responsibilities. These activities encourage students to reason and make judgments, think logically, acquire and evaluate data, and exercise their application of English language arts and communication skills. They also teach students the relationship between critical thinking and compromise when forging consensus among people with divergent views and differing values as well as the importance of protecting the rights of those whose opinions do not prevail. For example, some teachers encourage students to participate in community or school service

projects that contribute to the well-being of the community or to the students' understanding of local government and democratic processes. In addition, these activities help students appreciate the similarities and differences that characterize American society by focusing on the presence of its many diverse ethnic groups. These activities also serve as a basis for helping students understand the democratic values system and institutions that lie at the heart of the American system of government. By teaching students how to delve into knowledge in many ways, these teachers raise their students' awareness of the significance of social studies in their lives.

Teachers also model the use of the tools for investigating and communicating about social studies. Their students become comfortable with the use and importance of primary source materials, timelines, maps, and surveys. The students also understand the importance of weighing the quality of opposing arguments about social issues. Whenever possible, teachers make social studies learning hands-on. In economics, for example, when exploring concepts of resource allocation and scarcity, they might have students design, manufacture, and market their own products at a school fair. Teachers respect the opinions of their students and foster that same respect in student-to-student interactions. They give students time and guidance to develop reasoned arguments and learn to distinguish between well-defended positions and opinions unsupported by facts or logic. With sensitivity, teachers call attention to misconceptions, flaws in arguments, or unrecognized complications.

Accomplished teachers use the social studies curriculum to develop civic competence in their students and an understanding of how societies function. Their students grow to see their place and role in the global community. Teachers model, as well as teach, civic involvement and social responsibility. These

teachers create authentic activities that allow students to gain a greater understanding of their national identity; constitutional and democratic traditions and heritage; and the values, rights, and responsibilities that mark good citizenship.

The Arts

Accomplished teachers understand the intrinsic value of the arts and their usefulness in providing insight into other disciplines. Dance, music, theater, and the visual arts individually and collectively contribute to the stimulation of imagination, creativity, and cognitive growth, while providing unique vehicles for creative expression. Therefore, teachers include the arts in their classrooms for their aesthetic, intellectual, and perceptual values. They see the teaching of the arts as a way to help students develop specific knowledge and skills that can challenge, expand, and enrich their lives. By doing so, either on their own or with the help of subject-area specialists, and by taking advantage of available community resources, teachers ultimately foster a more thoughtful and lively learning environment. They know that involvement in the arts will expand their students' thought processes, deepen their understanding of other academic areas, promote their understanding of different cultures, and enrich their lives.

Teachers share their personal artistic perspective with their students, while providing them with the opportunities, resources, and encouragement they need to explore their own emerging tastes in the arts. These teachers recognize the value the arts have in bringing pleasure, enthusiasm, and heightened motivation to their students. To these ends, they create environments that nurture their students' individual expression in and experimentation with the arts. They provide

students with opportunities to develop skills in the arts for their inherent creative value and as a means of communicating about interests and issues of importance to them. In doing so, they give students insight into differences in aesthetic values and the social uses of art during different eras, and they help students blend their knowledge of the arts with other subject areas, fostering student creativity, expressiveness, and critical thinking. Through the investigation and study of a variety of historical eras and developments in the arts, students in these classes gain an understanding of their own artistic heritage, taste, and creativity, as well as an appreciation for the artistic talent of others.

Accomplished teachers help their students use their developing knowledge of the arts to extend their study of other subjects by drawing their attention to similarities among major ideas and themes. To enhance their students' understanding of the creative processes in other fields, these teachers find ways to expand the creative processes that students exhibit when engaging in art studies or art creation. For example, teachers might emphasize similarities between the process of writing and the process of painting to strengthen the understanding of each. They might relate the relevance of the arts to other events from the same time period to enrich students' understanding of the social context. They might also explore concepts and phenomena in mathematics and science, such as the relationship of the principles of mathematics to music and how the symmetry in certain organisms applies to art, to deepen students' knowledge in these fields.

Health

Accomplished teachers understand that a sound health education program in schools is comprehensive in nature—focusing on



students' physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. These teachers create opportunities for students to develop and practice skills that contribute to good health. The teachers are alert to major health issues concerning children and to the social forces that affect them. They are particularly aware of the need to impart such information sensitively. Therefore, when presenting health-related information, they provide appropriate opportunities for students to share personal concerns, sometimes with one another and other times privately with the teacher. They address these issues in ways that help students recognize potentially dangerous situations, clarify misconceptions, and find reliable sources of information.

Teachers understand the foundations of good health, including the structure and function of the body and its systems and the importance of physical fitness and sound nutrition. Drawing on this knowledge, they help students understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle for themselves and others and the dangers of diseases, as well as the

activities that may contribute to each. These teachers communicate this knowledge in a number of ways, including class discussions, role playing, hands-on activities, and multimedia presentations. In this way, they focus on developing in their students an awareness of how to deal with and stay informed about numerous health-related issues, concerns, and questions facing children today.

On their own or in cooperation with specialists, these teachers plan, organize, and carry out programs in health education that reinforce the major concepts, ideas, and actions that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Their awareness helps teachers represent good health practices as an immediate and vital part of a lifestyle that they encourage students to adopt. These teachers know how to help students separate facts from myths regarding the benefits and dangers of various aspects of health and physical activity.



Reflections on Standard II:

Standard III: Learning Environment

Standard III

Accomplished teachers establish a caring, inclusive, stimulating, and safe school community where students can take intellectual risks, practice democracy, and work collaboratively and independently.

Accomplished teachers know and uphold school safety policies and create a physically and emotionally safe environment where students feel they belong and can take risks, make mistakes, and explore alternatives. The supportive, congenial, and purposeful learning environment established by such teachers promotes active learning, exposes students to a variety of intellectual challenges, and prepares them for independent learning opportunities. Because these teachers demonstrate interest in students' lives, ideas, and activities and dignify students' efforts, they create an atmosphere where students feel welcomed, valued, and respected. Accomplished teachers manage learning in ways that enable children to experience success.

Teachers Place a Premium on Equity, Fairness, and Student Effort

Accomplished teachers create learning environments that foster a sense of a caring community. They sensitively apply principles of fairness, particularly when grouping students; recognizing competence, effort, or performance; providing students with learning and performance options; and allocating time, learning opportunities, or other resources.

These teachers hold high expectations for all students and communicate their belief that all students will participate and learn, including students for whom English is a new language and students with exceptional needs. They use many strategies to promote conceptual understanding and to encourage innovation, creativity, independent inquiry, and student engagement, making it a point to provide consistent recognition for a wide variety of student accomplishments and positive behaviors. Such actions, grounded as they are in student achievement of meaningful goals, contribute to building in students a sense of self-efficacy. These actions foster students' beliefs that they can succeed in school, that they have a role and purpose in the classroom community, and that through their own work they are making a significant contribution to the intellectual life of the school.

From the start of the school year, teachers involve their students in setting clear expectations for classroom behavior, and they uphold these expectations consistently. Through democratic processes, they develop and discuss classroom rules, consequences, routines, and behaviors for effective learning. In so doing, these teachers create a climate for working together as a community of learners that embraces all students. Throughout the school year, teachers maintain a productive, open, and enriching learning environment. These teachers use a well-developed repertoire of strategies, skills, and procedures that allow their classrooms to function smoothly



and that enable them to change directions effectively when they do not. They work in close proximity with students to facilitate communication and encourage personal interactions. Teachers combine a sense of knowledge, preparedness, caring, and direction to keep students engaged in a wide range of productive activities. By gaining their students' trust and confidence early in the school year, and by modeling behavior that encourages students to internalize responsibility for their own actions, they help students develop a sense of responsibility and a sense of belonging to a learning community.

Teachers recognize the importance of instilling in their students the idea that learning is challenging, that experimenting is essential, and that recognizing and correcting mistakes are as important as noticing successes. This orientation fosters learning environments that engage students, recognize individual differences, encourage choice and expression, and promote inquiry and the independent pursuit of learning. In these learning environments students enhance the learning of their classmates, acquire first-hand knowledge, gather information, and present findings or products to others. Teachers provide support and opportunities for students to practice giving and receiving feedback with peers in ways that raise the group's awareness of each student's value.

Teachers Emphasize Democratic Values in the Classroom

Students need a caring, inclusive, healthy, stimulating, and supportive work environment that engages them in participatory activities if they are to thrive. Nonetheless, they may find themselves in settings where abusive language and bigotry are regarded as acceptable and where various types of prejudice and disrespect exist. From the outset of

the school year, teachers actively counter these attitudes as they establish instructional settings that promote learning for all students. To foster a sense of community, these teachers encourage positive student interactions that show concern and respect for others, deal constructively with socially inappropriate behavior, and appreciate humor and use it when appropriate. Teachers know that by showing their own respect for the thoughts and judgments of their students, they establish a climate that can lead to an increased sense of self-worth in students. Through their regard for and attentiveness to students' comments, concerns, and activities—in and out of the classroom—these teachers instill dignity in their students. (See Standard IV—*Respect for Diversity*.)

An instructional climate that upholds the dignity of the students and is time-efficient requires skill, planning, flexibility, judgment, and discretion. Accomplished teachers have these qualities and use them in ways that signal self-confidence and respect for their students. Their lessons are smooth, clear, and coherent. Instruction reflects the learning objectives through the use of questions, nonverbal cues, and other means to maintain the flow of the lesson. Teachers model, teach, practice, and monitor rules and routines needed for the smooth flow of activities so that learning proceeds virtually uninterrupted. Therefore, classroom management seems almost effortless, transitions flow easily, few disruptions mar the focus on learning, and children and teacher work together harmoniously.

Teachers Address Disciplinary Problems Forthrightly

All teachers experience times when classroom procedures break down and when students act in an unproductive or counterproductive

manner. Accomplished teachers anticipate what may provoke these situations, and they know how to prevent them or mitigate their effects. In addition, these teachers manage and resolve unanticipated crises and conflicts, and they identify behaviors or activities that may lead to unrest or violence. They seek order, not for its own sake but to provide a safe environment in which spontaneous and varied activities can occur. When disciplinary action is necessary, teachers act promptly and equitably. They do so in ways that do not cause embarrassment, explaining to the disciplined student what prompted the action and what changes in behavior are expected. They correct disciplinary problems with minimal disruption to the flow of the class. Soon after disciplining a student, these teachers will usually provide opportunities for the student to re-establish himself or herself as a positive member of the class. These teachers consistently try to make all students part of a congenial and purposeful environment in which learning and growth can occur.

Teachers Create a Physical Environment That Supports Learning

Accomplished teachers know that the physical setting, including the placement of furniture, materials, and students, can facilitate the learning process and help extend student learning, engagement, and exploration. Students with exceptional needs and students learning English as a new language can be placed strategically to maximize the benefits of the physical environment. Teachers make accommodations for students who are physically challenged. For example, an accomplished teacher will ensure that a student using a wheelchair is seated in ways that promote easy eye contact and sharing with other students, whether in large or small groups.

These teachers monitor the functioning of the physical arrangement of the classroom and rearrange it as needed, depending on changes in children's skills and development and changes in class activities.



Reflections on Standard III:

Standard IV: Respect for Diversity

Accomplished teachers help students learn to respect and appreciate individual and group differences.

**Standard
IV**

Accomplished teachers nurture the development of sound civic values in their students as they seek to develop them academically and socially. They teach and model concern for the rights of all students, including those with physical and intellectual challenges, those with learning disabilities, and those with abilities to speak a variety of languages or dialects at home. They work toward these ends by helping students understand and use democratic principles of freedom, justice, and equity and by helping them recognize discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes when they occur in their classroom and elsewhere. These teachers design activities and raise questions that require students to think about ethical issues and conflicts from a variety of perspectives. They foster civic and personal responsibility in their students by providing opportunities for joint decision making and rule making and by encouraging students to address actively the social, economic, and environmental issues in their community. Teachers make use of available community resources in meeting their learning goals for students.

Teachers Foster Students' Social and Emotional Growth

Accomplished teachers observe, foster, and assess the social and emotional growth of their students, noting whether they are enjoying school, making friends, developing a sense of belonging, accepting responsibility,

acting with integrity, and displaying concern for others. These teachers recognize their power to influence, support, and affirm their students' personal worth. From such teachers, students receive encouragement and direction in how to state their personal ideas and feelings forthrightly and in a manner that commands respect for themselves and conveys respect for the opinions of others. Students learn from teachers that it is possible to disagree without being disagreeable, and they understand the value of taking a stand on an issue and defending their position. Students also learn and appreciate how others have confronted and solved important problems.

Teachers Encourage the Development of Sound Social and Ethical Values

Teachers capitalize on their students' diversity as they teach about equity, fairness, justice, and the advantages of a pluralistic society. They recognize opportunities to address these issues, and they use these opportunities to teach awareness, acceptance, and cooperation. Their students learn the value of initiating and sustaining interactions; of adjusting to the initiatives and responses of others; of listening and sharing ideas; of resolving conflicts respectfully; and of strengthening their capacities for cooperation, negotiation, and problem solving. Students thereby learn that they are responsible for their own actions and statements. Students also learn how their

Standard V: Instructional Resources

Accomplished teachers create, assess, select, and adapt a rich and varied collection of materials and draw on other resources such as staff, community members, and students to support learning.

Standard
V

Accomplished teachers understand that the lesson, textbook, teaching strategy, activity, assignment, or assessment tool that worked well in one situation will not necessarily succeed in another. Therefore, they seek to enrich and deepen the array of resources and materials at their disposal to meet the instructional needs of all their students. In building their resource base, they constantly look for opportunities to expand their instructional options, evaluating a wide variety of materials for their suitability. They look beyond the textbooks in their classroom to determine how various materials, including new learning technologies and human resources, might benefit their students. Accomplished practitioners are particularly adept at drawing on their experiences and available materials to create resources that will enrich their teaching.

Teachers Carefully Develop and Select Diverse Resources

Teachers are open to a wide range of resources that go well beyond textbooks and workbooks. They critically evaluate commercial materials to determine which ones can be used or adapted to their students' needs. They blend materials from several sources to serve their broad curricular objectives. They know that technological resources can be labor-saving, intellectually

enabling tools, and they are adept at evaluating the usefulness of these tools. For example, they know the value of telecommunication and technological resources in providing ideas and information that will assist them in integrating content from various subject areas. They apply technological skills to accomplish a variety of learning tasks. (See Standard VI—*Meaningful Applications of Knowledge* and Standard VII—*Multiple Paths to Knowledge*.) They also use their resourcefulness and creativity to adapt materials and activities as necessary to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities.

Teachers seek materials that will help them connect significant aspects of their students' lives to events and people in the community, the nation, and the world. To do so, they gather and create high-quality resources that are diverse in several regards, including form, style, theme, gender and cultural appeal and awareness, level of difficulty, and intergenerational perspective. Their continual exploration of new resources and technologies, study of professional literature, and participation in advanced education programs all contribute to professional growth and continual self-renewal that broaden and deepen their repertoire.



Teachers View Colleagues and the Community as Important Resources

Teachers appreciate and use their colleagues' skills and recognize the circumstances in which their colleagues' talents can best complement their own. For example, a classroom teacher may collaborate with a special education teacher to determine the most effective strategies to use with a child who has a learning disability or to elicit support to modify texts and materials used in the classroom. Accomplished teachers are adept at managing additional classroom personnel such as instructional assistants. These teachers enlist the knowledge and expertise of fellow faculty members to provide students with rewarding learning experiences. Colleagues may share resources, serve as special consultants in specific areas of

expertise, provide background on students' personal histories, or collaborate in planning and conducting interdisciplinary studies.

Teachers see their local community as an extension of the school and the classroom, and they recognize the importance of students' valuing and using community resources. They actively recruit and involve families and other community members, agencies, universities, and businesses as partners in the school program and take advantage of local cultural, economic, and physical resources (e.g., the local ecosystem) to enrich the curriculum and enhance student learning and development. For example, they may invite from the community professionals whose primary language is not English to share their experiences and successes with students and parents.



Reflections on Standard V:

Standard VI: Meaningful Applications of Knowledge

Accomplished teachers engage students in learning within and across the disciplines and help students understand how the subjects they study can be used to explore important issues in their lives and the world around them.

Accomplished teachers involve students in activities designed to develop their capacity to think critically and analytically while extending their knowledge and understanding of the world. Such teachers create tasks and problems that extend students' abilities and habits to think deeply and incisively about the world and their place in it.

Teachers Select Worthwhile Topics for Study

Accomplished teachers understand that scant substantive learning occurs when students are presented with large amounts of seemingly unrelated information or are required to memorize facts divorced from major themes, concepts, or principles. Meaningful learning develops when teachers help students delve into topics deeply, drawing on their experiences, perspectives, skills, concepts, and knowledge from several disciplines. Through such learning, students come to understand that many important daily events extend beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. Teachers also create real-world opportunities for students to experience working as writers, scientists, historians, geographers, mathematicians, artists, or other professionals. Teachers themselves model some of the ways of working in these fields.

Teachers plan for instruction that deepens and becomes more challenging as students develop, mature, and become more skilled. Teachers structure tasks that foster inquiry, encourage students to stretch their abilities, and require students to explain their thinking to build students' capacity to construct important ideas and materials. These teachers sometimes learn alongside their students, so they can model how to proceed when on unfamiliar ground. They may join their students in gathering, processing, and synthesizing information. As their students explore important issues, teachers anticipate and address students' common confusions and misconceptions. Whatever the approach they take, teachers use complex and challenging strategies to provide meaningful learning experiences rather than splintered tasks that may not be genuine, enriching, or significant. Therefore, in their efforts to help students learn how to learn, accomplished teachers not only teach about important concepts, ideas, events, and people but also teach process and problem-solving skills. These teachers demonstrate these abilities as important parts of conceptual understanding, skill development, and subject-matter mastery.

Teachers do not view the prescribed curriculum as a limit on their practice. Instead, as students' needs dictate, they incorporate related topics and issues that will stretch students' minds and horizons, extend their knowledge and understanding of the world, and ultimately enrich their education.

Standard VI



Teachers Build Student Capacity to Learn, Apply Knowledge, and Act Independently

In making instructional decisions, teachers place high value on meeting criteria for relevance and applicability. They recognize that today’s complex world requires a multifaceted approach to thinking and acting. Teachers promote students’ understanding not only of their coursework and the societal issues they are preparing to confront but also of their own personal development. Teachers do so by helping students develop the critical-thinking skills essential to their growth. Accomplished teachers understand that their teaching has greater impact when it relates to their students’ lives. Consequently, they seize opportunities to help students form valid and significant connections between and among subjects, schoolwork, and daily life.

Teachers guide student learning in promising directions without taking over the work by helping students use previous knowledge as the basis from which to pose, explore, and solve new problems. Encouraging such independence helps students gain confidence in

their problem-solving abilities. Accomplished teachers encourage students who challenge assumptions, initiate projects and activities, take risks, share insights, persist in their exploration of difficult material, think substantively, explore unfamiliar technologies, and demonstrate a commitment to master the topics under consideration.

As appropriate, accomplished teachers create opportunities for students to pursue their passions and interests by undertaking real tasks and engaging in reflection on their successes. Accomplished teachers also select a varied audience for student work and engage appropriate community members to view and acknowledge student work. For example, during a unit of study on communities in which students apply their knowledge to create a city, a teacher might invite an architect to help students develop and discuss their projects. As a result, teachers help build children’s capacity for critical self-reflection based on observations from a number of sources, which contributes to students’ ability to become more reflective about their own work.



Reflections on Standard VI:

Standard VII: Multiple Paths to Knowledge

Accomplished teachers provide students with multiple paths needed to learn the central concepts in each school subject, explore important themes and topics that cut across subject areas, and build overall knowledge and understanding.

Accomplished teachers use their broad knowledge of curriculum and instruction and how children learn to provide multiple ways for students to pursue a rich understanding of many important topics. Teachers help students stretch their thinking and learn skills that will serve them well throughout their lives. The varied approaches these teachers use benefit all students by giving them many opportunities to express their understanding. These teachers foster their students' success by contributing to their enjoyment of school, by raising their level of self-confidence, and by deepening their grasp of the topics and skills studied.

Teachers Create Instructional Tasks That Respond to Both the Commonalities and Differences among Learners

The individual student differences that mark all classrooms require teachers to have many ways to engage students with important ideas. To provide varied entry points into the substance of the curriculum, teachers must be especially attuned to their students' individual differences, including differences in ability, educational backgrounds, proficiency in English, disposition toward different types of schoolwork, exceptional needs, cultural backgrounds, and physical and mental conditions. The understanding that teachers have of these

factors leads them to design a variety of approaches for the well-being of the class as a whole, while acknowledging the individuality of its various members. Such variation is found not only in the substantive tasks that teachers assign students but also in the roles that teachers adopt. Sometimes, these teachers lead the class as a whole; at other times, they encourage small groups or individuals to explore on their own. They also enable students with exceptional needs and capabilities to participate fully in the life of the class, adapting their practice and the routines of the classroom as needed and working collaboratively with specialists. Teachers are knowledgeable about the technology available to assist students with exceptional and diverse learning needs and use it whenever appropriate to differentiate instruction and maximize student learning.

Teachers Provide Students with Multiple Perspectives on Key Matters of Interest

Teachers give students the opportunity to explore issues from a variety of aspects, in part by providing them with open-ended opportunities to address significant problems. This approach may yield a variety of appropriate solutions, which will increase students' abilities to complete their assignments successfully. At other times, teachers acquaint students with techniques that others have used

**Standard
VII**



to confront and solve important problems. These teachers also achieve this objective by varying instructional formats and implementing them effectively. For example, teachers may use a demonstration to spur students to consider new ways of thinking. They may use directed instruction to facilitate skill learning or cooperative group work and discussions to foster creative thinking and open-mindedness. In addition, they draw on a variety of metaphors, analogies, illustrations, and models to extend their students' thinking and to develop students' capacity to reason incisively. These teachers may also use a variety of technological resources appropriate to situations and topics that arise. By doing so, the teachers foster students' competence and confidence in the use of such devices. Whatever their approach, teachers choose wisely from a wide repertoire of strategies, tasks, demonstrations, experiments, and cases.

Teachers Use Time Efficiently and Adjust Their Plans as Circumstances Dictate

Teachers' knowledge of their students, subject matter, and resources helps them choose compelling topics and materials that make the best use of their own time and that

of their students. They base their choices on their assessment of the physical and intellectual needs of their students, as well as on the big picture of curricular needs and requirements. These teachers also shift their focus when unforeseen difficulties arise or when classroom discussions suggest more enriching paths to follow.

The ability to vary their approach to major topics, themes, and skills allows teachers to slow or accelerate the pace of instruction or change the focus of discussion in response to student performance. The facility to make immediate adjustments to the events of the moment, when such changes in direction are desirable and necessary, is a mark of accomplished practice.

These teachers consistently broaden the opportunities for students to enter into the exploration and discussion of central ideas in each field. They establish learning situations that appeal to students' individual strengths, thereby increasing the likelihood of involving them in learning. In addition, they encourage students to express their understanding in a variety of ways. The varied approaches that accomplished teachers take in educating children help create a classroom climate of high expectations, respect, common goals, and mutual support among students.



Reflections on Standard VII:

Standard VIII: Assessment

Accomplished teachers understand the strengths and weaknesses of different assessment methods, base their instruction on ongoing assessment, and encourage students to monitor their own learning.

Gauging student progress and understanding lies at the heart of teaching that strives to be learner-centered. Consequently, the regular observation and assessment of students guide teachers' short-term and long-term decision making. Accomplished teachers assess students on an ongoing basis and use multiple evaluation methods, formal and informal, to read and interpret student behavior and work. The information they gather on the progress of individuals and on the class as a whole allows them to evaluate the relative success of their instructional strategies and serves as a guide for improving practice.

Teachers Employ a Variety of Assessment Methodologies

Accomplished teachers understand that the timing, focus, and purposes of an evaluation determine its form. They do not rely on a single method of assessing students because they know that performance is influenced by the setting in which it occurs and that students have skills that will not emerge in certain settings or during the course of a single assignment. Therefore, they track student progress and assess classroom climate with a variety of evaluation methods, each with its own set of purposes, strengths, and weaknesses. Their knowledge extends to creating their own tools for evaluation, including journals, portfolios, demonstrations, exhibitions, oral presentations, and videotapes. They also check for understanding through questioning, monitoring, and observing and through written and oral

performance assessments. Accomplished teachers also consider the specific needs of all students and create alternative assessments as necessary.

Teachers know the benefits and limitations of different methods of evaluation and can justify the methods selected, including those based on the unique needs of students with exceptionalities and students for whom English is a new language. Teachers often provide students with models, and in collaboration with their pupils, teachers develop rubrics that give students explicit evaluation criteria. Teachers are careful to match assessment techniques to students' developmental levels and to the particular attributes being assessed. These teachers conduct ongoing assessments of individual progress, and the progress of the class as a whole, before, during, and after instruction. They gather information about students' ideas and thinking that is related to concepts that are difficult for the age groups they are teaching. Teachers use these findings in determining their course of action.

As they continually monitor their students, teachers celebrate students' successes and help students realize that occasional moments of confusion and uncertainty are part of the learning process. These teachers present critiques in a nonthreatening, nonderisive manner, and they encourage students by framing suggestions for improvement around a manageable number of areas. As they help students improve, teachers encourage them to set high goals for themselves and teach them how to evaluate their own progress toward these goals. They encourage students to take active roles in, and increasing responsibility for, their own learning, in part by having them

Standard
VIII

share their thinking and their reflections on their work with peers. They also engage students in assessing the work of their peers. By providing students with specific criteria for evaluation, they give students fresh perspectives on their own work. Through this process, students learn to value their fellow students' views in judging the strengths and weaknesses of their work.

Teachers Focus Assessment on Students' Capacity for Critical Thinking and In-Depth Understanding

Regardless of the method of evaluation, teachers focus on gauging students' conceptual understanding, critical-thinking skills, and problem-solving abilities—not just their capacity for memorizing facts and figures. Teachers assess for breadth and depth of learning and for misconceptions that may influence students' thinking. Their purpose is to gain perspective on their students' ability to apply knowledge to real-world situations and to make connections among various forms of knowledge. They monitor the development of their students' higher-order thinking skills and their readiness to grasp new ideas, theories, and concepts. As part of their ongoing assessment, accomplished teachers also monitor the affective and expressive qualities of their students' work.

Accomplished teachers recognize the limited utility of standardized testing programs that are not well integrated with their curriculum. When high-stakes standardized tests are administered (e.g., state-mandated tests that may have bearing on the ranking of a school or students' advancement to the next grade level), teachers help students succeed by integrating approaches to test taking with normal classroom instruction that will advance overall learning. They help students and parents understand that the results of these assessments represent only some of the many different types of data that provide a complete picture of student performance.

Accomplished teachers know that using a variety of assessment techniques is essential. However, they also understand that these techniques work best when students, parents, and other stakeholders receive accurate, clear, and focused feedback that fits their levels of understanding.

Teachers use the results of assessments to identify students whose learning problems have gone unrecognized and to track the progress of all students. Teachers also use the results to help students understand and expand on their strengths and to identify and improve on their weaknesses, as they encourage students to continue their commitment to learning.



Standard IX: Family Involvement

Accomplished teachers initiate positive, interactive relationships with families as they participate in the education of their children.

With today's wide variety of family situations, accomplished teachers recognize parents or other adult caregivers as their peers and their strongest allies in the education of young children. Parents² are usually keen observers and accurate reporters of their children's strengths and needs. They have a continuing and critical influence on their children's development and attitudes toward school and learning. Accomplished teachers understand and value the distinctive role of parents and guardians, learn from them, and seek to help them promote their children's growth. Consequently, they clearly signal through word and deed the importance of families as partners with the school, working especially hard at keeping lines of communication open and seeking opportunities to invite parents into the school. Accomplished teachers strive to ensure that all families, including those whose primary language is not English, feel included in the school community and communication processes. Teachers' actions make clear the mutual interest that teachers and family members share in seeing the young people in their charge succeed.

Teachers Gain Insight about Students through Partnerships with Families

Involvement with parents helps teachers learn about students' families, including their background and culture. This knowledge provides teachers with insights into parents' expectations and hopes for their children. Accomplished teachers realize that gaining an understanding of students' lives outside school is often valuable in tailoring curriculum and instruction within the school. Through regular interaction with parents, teachers gain an understanding about students and establish a rapport with the family.

In interacting with students' families, teachers seek to create a positive working relationship. They attempt to accommodate and respond to different family lifestyles in order to open and maintain lines of communication. Such teachers create opportunities for parents to learn firsthand what the school offers. Teachers explain the school's objectives as well as the reasons for group or individual assignments. They share with families their children's accomplishments, successes, and needs for improvement, including the means for accomplishing higher goals, and they attempt to respond thoughtfully to families' concerns. Teachers interpret and discuss the body of students' work, including portfolio entries and assessment performances, in a manner that gives parents an accurate portrait of their children's progress.

2. The word "parents" is used in this document to refer to the people who are the primary caregivers and guardians of the child.

Standard IX

Teachers Cultivate Families' Interest in Supporting Their Children's Education

Teachers collaborate with parents and guardians to involve them in their children's education. Although some adults are not comfortable interacting with the school, teachers continue to seek ways to reach them and to show them that the school welcomes their participation. For example, on Back-to-School Night, teachers find ways to communicate with and include non-English-speaking parents. Accomplished teachers help mobilize and shape parental support and involvement, and they work with parents to help them understand middle childhood development, the school's educational goals, and their approach to instruction. They also share with families their professional expertise about the value of unstructured play and about how parents might help their children develop good learning habits and study skills, complete homework, set goals, and improve performance.

As necessary, the teacher may assist families in finding additional resources and services outside the school, such as health care, English-language classes, and counseling. Teachers realize that such guidance can be invaluable in those instances when one or more family members need professional help. When encountering children who are in abusive situations, teachers take what actions

they can to protect their students and ensure their well-being.

However, teachers know that their role with parents is not only to provide input. Accomplished teachers recognize that parents have experiences, expertise, and insights that enrich the quality of education for students. Teachers therefore treat parents and guardians with respect and understanding as they seek to elicit their perspectives on their children's development. In doing so, teachers recognize that families often have differing views about the goals and public purposes of schooling and the essentials of good practice. Teachers seek common ground with such parents, attempting to build relationships that will best serve students' interests. Teachers do so without sacrificing the important goals they hold for students or being disrespectful of family, cultural, or community values.

Accomplished teachers actively seek to involve families in every aspect of the educational process, keeping them informed through both structured and informal means. When necessary, they assist families by serving as advocates for students within the school. They see collaboration with families as an essential tool in providing students with the support, motivation, and understanding that will enhance their education.



Standard X: Reflection

Accomplished teachers regularly analyze, evaluate, reflect on, and strengthen the effectiveness and quality of their practice.

New information about teaching proliferates at an accelerating rate as educators rethink, reinvent, and debate a broad range of pedagogical and content issues. Motivated by changes they see around them and their desire to equip students for a changing future, accomplished teachers constantly engage in the process of reflection, professional growth, and self-renewal.

Accomplished teachers continually reflect on their practice to extend their knowledge, perfect their teaching, and refine their evolving philosophy of education. The deliberate study of their own practice helps them determine their strengths and weaknesses and use that knowledge in their analysis and planning. These teachers stay abreast of developments in the profession, analyze the relative merits of teaching practices deemed accomplished, and judge the appropriateness of these practices for their own particular circumstances. They strengthen their subject-matter base through research, reading, study, and collaboration with colleagues. They display openness to change and innovation.

Teachers Evaluate Results and Seek Systematic Feedback on Their Teaching from a Variety of Sources

For accomplished teachers, every class and every activity provides opportunities for

reflection and improvement. When they review their students' work, these teachers assess themselves as well. They gain insight and direction about classroom climate and interactions through their conversations with students.

Accomplished teachers carefully analyze information received from parent-pupil-teacher conferences, parent-teacher conferences, and informal conversations with parents and other family members. They carefully analyze students' standardized test scores and other data (e.g., demographic data) to gain insights that may inform their curricular decisions and instructional practice. Teachers also seek advice and critiques on their practice from their colleagues on a regular basis through formal and informal discussions, classroom observations, and collective examination of student work. These observations and discussions influence teachers as they reflect on their techniques of planning, monitoring, collaborating, assessing, and instructing. As models of educated persons who are continual learners, teachers are willing to adjust their practice as a result of analysis and reflection.

Teachers may also conduct action research in their classrooms or collaborate with educational researchers to examine their teaching practice critically. They share such scholarship with their peers. Accomplished teachers continue to grow professionally as they sharpen their judgment, expand their repertoire of teaching methods, and deepen their knowledge base.

Standard
X



Teachers Are Open to New Ideas and Continually Refine Their Practice

Teachers explore the role that their own cultural background, biases, values, and personal experiences play in their teaching. They do so in part by reading and by participating in workshops and courses that challenge their current thinking and practice. Through involvement in advanced education programs, the exploration of new resources, and the study of professional literature, these teachers engage in continual self-renewal. They use the results of various introspective activities to enrich their practice. Such work helps them articulate for students, parents, and colleagues the rationale for what they do, and it contributes to the artistry and knowledge they need to make on-the-spot decisions in the classroom.

Teachers thoughtfully consider the prevailing research about child development, learning, and intelligence, while maintaining an awareness of its limitations. They are knowledgeable about the political context surrounding the major controversies and debates in the

disciplines and in the profession, have a perspective on their legitimacy, and can articulate their position on them. Teachers study prevailing theories, emerging practices, and promising research findings, and they select those ideas and techniques that could improve their practice. In doing so, they explore topics in which they may have limited expertise and experiment creatively with alternative materials, approaches, and instructional strategies.

Accomplished teachers embrace the lifelong study of the art and science of teaching. They are able to respond constructively to the many demands of the profession while recognizing the importance of balance and self-renewal. As a result, they transfer to their students a curiosity, an enthusiasm, and a passion for learning. These teachers exemplify the highest ethical and moral ideals. They take responsibility for their own professional growth, embrace professional standards in assessing their teaching, and reflect on their profession to ensure that they are bringing dignity to their practice.



Reflections on Standard X:

Standard XI: Contributions to the Profession

Accomplished teachers work with colleagues to improve schools and to advance knowledge and practice in their field.

Accomplished teachers define their responsibilities as professionals to include a commitment to the continuing growth and development of their colleagues, their school, and their profession. They see themselves as members of a larger learning community with responsibilities that extend beyond their classrooms. They collaborate with peers and other school professionals to shape the professional culture of the school and to strengthen their schools' programs and education in general. Consequently, they can be found serving as peer coaches or mentors to student teachers, new teachers, or experienced colleagues. They may work with colleagues to design, improve, or evaluate staff development plans and practices. They may provide leadership and information to other teachers. Teachers also meet this obligation by contributing to the review, revision, or redesign of curriculum guidelines; making presentations at professional meetings; contributing to professional magazines and journals; or serving as members of education policy committees or councils. They may also collaborate with educators from colleges, universities, or other institutions and agencies to pilot programs; conduct action research projects or ethnographic studies; teach post-secondary courses; or guide and support student teachers and interns.

Teachers Contribute to the School's Intellectual Life and Overall Quality of Instruction

As a result of their various interactions with colleagues and the profession, teachers question ideas, requirements, curricular assumptions, and other factors that may limit teaching effectiveness, school quality, and student learning. They do so in ways that have a positive impact on the learning community. They are advocates for programs and policies that benefit their students, their school, and their profession. They actively influence professional norms in the school, encouraging an attitude of experimentation and collaboration among other colleagues.

These teachers work with varied experts, including researchers, other teachers, and administrators, to understand and improve the scope and sequence of instruction so that primary students have a successful transition to the middle grades. In so doing, these teachers help ensure the greatest possible chance for success as students move from a familiar to an unfamiliar setting. Such teachers also skillfully coordinate their work with counselors and resource teachers so that students who need custom-tailored instruction are properly identified, curricula are well integrated, and special services meet students' needs. In addition, they participate effectively on school committees and projects with other educators to improve school policies, organization, or procedures.

**Standard
XI**

The 11 standards in this document represent a professional consensus on the characteristics of accomplished practice and provide a profile of the accomplished Middle Childhood/Generalist. Although the standards are challenging, they are upheld every day by teachers like the ones described in these pages, who inspire and instruct the nation's youth and lead their profession. By publishing this document and offering National Board Certification to educators, NBPTS aims to affirm the practice of the many teachers who meet these standards and challenge others to strive to meet them. Moreover, NBPTS hopes to bring increased attention to the professionalism and expertise of accomplished generalists and in so doing, pave the way for greater professional respect and opportunity for those essential members of the teaching community.

In addition to being a stimulus to self-reflection on the part of teachers at all levels of performance, *Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards* is intended to be a catalyst for discussion among administrators, staff developers, and others in the education community about accomplished practice in this field. If these standards advance the conversation about accomplished teaching, they will provide an important step toward the National Board's goal to improve student learning in our nation's schools.

Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards Committee

Developers of First Edition



Gerviece H. Brown—Chair
Principal
Jean Callison Elementary School
Vacaville, California

Julia V. Heaton
Second-Grade Teacher
Monterrey Elementary School
Carlsbad, New Mexico

Jay Sugarman—Vice Chair
Fourth-Grade Teacher
Runkle School
Brookline, Massachusetts

Tarry L. Lindquist
Fifth-Grade Teacher
Lakeridge Elementary School
Mercer Island, Washington

Patsy T. Arrouet
Fourth-Grade Teacher
Indialantic Elementary School
Brevard County Schools
Indialantic, Florida

Jacquelyn Ann Smith
Sixth-Grade Teacher
Ronald McNair Intermediate School
East Palo Alto, California

Yolanda D. Chapa
Assistant Superintendent for
Administrative and Support Services
McAllen Independent School District
McAllen, Texas

M. Trika Smith-Burke
Professor
Early Childhood and Elementary
Education Program
New York University
New York, New York

Sharon Feiman-Nemser
Professor
Department of Teacher Education
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

Susan S. Stodolsky
Professor
Departments of Education
and Psychology
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Marilyn Gore
Third-Grade Teacher
Bowman Foster Ashe Elementary School
Miami, Florida

John Swang
Fourth–Sixth-Grade Teacher
Mandeville Middle School
Mandeville, Louisiana

Marcy Greenspan
Director
Rochester Teacher Center
Rochester, New York

All job titles reflect those held by committee members at the time the first edition of *Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards* was adopted by the NBPTS Board of Directors.

Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards Committee

Developers of Second Edition

**Jay Sugarman—Chair**

Fourth-Grade teacher
Runkle School
Brookline, Massachusetts

Susan LaSpina

Third-Grade Teacher
Public School 153
Bronx, New York

Dorothy Strickland—Vice Chair

State of New Jersey Professor of Reading
Rutgers University
Graduate School of Education
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Toni Lofgren

Gifted and Talented Teacher
American Indian Magnet School
St. Paul, Minnesota

Kathleen A. Bearer, NBCT

Fourth-Grade Teacher
Bath Elementary School
Akron, Ohio

Maria Martinez

Teacher
Weems Elementary School
Manassas City, Virginia

Gerviece H. Brown

Principal
Jean Callison Elementary School
Vacaville, California

David H. Millstone

Fifth-Grade Teacher
Marion W. Cross School
Norwich, Vermont

Elizabeth A. Butler

Fifth-Grade Teacher
Inkom Elementary School
Pocatello, Idaho

Jane B. Moriarty

Curriculum Facilitator
Birmingham-Covington 3–8 School
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Yoland D. Chapa

Assistant Superintendent for Administration
and Support Services
McAllen Independent School District
McAllen, Texas

Marie E. Mullins, NBCT

Fourth-Grade Teacher
West Edgecomb Middle School
Rocky Mount, North Carolina

Sharon Feiman-Nemser

Professor
Department of Teacher Education
College of Education
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

Donna Richardson

Full Professor
Family Educational Institute for Research
and Training
Oklahoma City University
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

JoAnn Fox

Fourth-Grade Teacher
Cumberland Road Elementary School
Fishers, Indiana

Lonna Sanderson, NBCT

Third-Grade Teacher
Davis Elementary School
Austin, Texas

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' *Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards, Second Edition*, reflects more than a decade of dialogue about accomplished teaching in the middle childhood curriculum. These standards derive their power from an amazing degree of collaboration and consensus. Through the expertise and input of two standards committees, convened nine years apart; numerous reviews by a 63-member board of directors; and two periods of public comment by educators, policymakers, parents, and the like; as well as through the intense study of candidates for National Board Certification who have immersed themselves in the first edition; these second-edition standards emerge as a living testament to what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. *Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards, Second Edition*, represents the best thinking by teachers and for teachers about advanced teaching practice in the field.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is deeply grateful to all those who contributed their time, wisdom, and professional vision to *Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards, Second Edition*. Any thank-you must begin with the pioneers in 1991, who spent five years debating, reflecting, and articulating the multiple facets of accomplished teaching so that they could advance the field and provide a rigorous and sound basis for the national certification of teachers. In particular, the National Board would like to show its appreciation to Chair Gerviece Brown and Vice Chair Jay Sugarman, who so skillfully led the effort to weave the National Board's Five Core Propositions into field-specific standards of teaching excellence.

Any field grows, shifts, and evolves over time. Standards, too, must remain dynamic and therefore are subject to revision. In January 2000, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards convened a second Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards Committee. This committee was charged with achieving both continuity and change, using the first edition of the standards as the foundation for its work, but modifying the standards to reflect best practice of the early twenty-first century. The Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards Committee exemplified the collegiality, expertise, and dedication to the improvement of student learning that are hallmarks of accomplished teachers. Special thanks go to Chair Jay Sugarman, Vice Chair Dorothy Strickland, and Facilitator Gloria Schwartz for their invaluable leadership in making the second edition a reality. We also are appreciative of International Reading Association Representative Joyce Hinman, who contributed to standards committee meetings.

The Standards and Professional Development Working Group of the board of directors is also an important collaborator in the creation of the second-edition standards. The working group consists of a diverse group of educators who reviewed *Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards, Second Edition*, at various points in its development, made suggestions about how it could be strengthened, and recommended to the full board the adoption of the standards. Representing the board of directors as a liaison to the Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards Committee was Rita DeBrito, NBCT, whose extensive knowledge of the field made her a treasured advisor.

Hundreds of individuals not directly associated with the National Board aided in the development of these standards. Middle childhood teachers and scholars, state and local officials, and representatives of disciplinary organizations—to name just a few—reviewed a draft of *Middle Childhood/Generalist Standards, Second Edition*, when the standards were disseminated nationwide during a public comment period.

Acknowledgments

Many staff members of the National Board also deserve thanks for helping make the publication of these standards possible. Chuck Cascio, former Vice President for Certification Standards and Teacher Development, shepherded the standards from their inception. In the early stages, Jacqueline Olkin, former Manager for Certification Standards and Teacher Development, was especially instrumental. Writing credits go to Jane Dreyfuss, consultant to the National Board; Angela Duperrouzel served as on-site coordinator for standards committee meetings; Holly Baker edited the document during production. I would like to give a special thanks to the dedicated staff I have worked with: Michael Knab, Manager for Certification Standards; Teachers-in-Residence Mary Lease, NBCT, and Maria Telesca, NBCT; Jane George, Specialist for Certification Standards Production; and Administrative Assistant Glowena Harrison. National Board staff collaborated in all aspects of standards development.

In presenting these standards for accomplished teaching, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards recognizes that this publication would not have been possible without the considerable contributions of individuals and institutions too numerous to mention. On behalf of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, I extend my thanks to all of them.

Katherine S. Woodward
Director, Certification Standards



The 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.*