

# NBPTS **Early Adolescence** **Generalist** **STANDARDS**

Second Edition



for teachers of students ages 11-15

*The National Board would like to express appreciation to the U.S. Department of Education for its support in the cost of developing and publishing this standards document.*

*This 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.

## Early Adolescence/Generalist STANDARDS

(for teachers of students ages 11–15)

*Second Edition*

<b>Preface</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Overview</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>The Standards</b> .....	<b>7</b>
I. Knowledge of Young Adolescents .....	7
II. Knowledge of Subject Matter .....	11
III. Instructional Resources .....	25
IV. Learning Environment .....	29
V. Meaningful Learning .....	33
VI. Respect for Diversity .....	37
VII. Multiple Paths to Knowledge .....	41
VIII. Social Development .....	45
IX. Assessment .....	49
X. Reflective Practice .....	53
XI. Family Partnerships .....	57
XII. Collaboration with Colleagues .....	61
<b>Epilogue</b> .....	<b>65</b>
<b>Standards Committees</b> .....	<b>67</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	<b>71</b>



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 Early Adolescence/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 Early Adolescence/Generalist teachers care about and demonstrate genuine interest in and appreciation for young adolescents; they also possess a rich understanding of their physical, intellectual, social, artistic, emotional, and ethical development. Moreover, these teachers enjoy and are challenged by the diversity, energy, and earnestness of 11 to 15 year olds. They are intrigued by the rapid changes in perceptions, peer and adult relationships, and levels of accomplishment that characterize young adolescents. They serve as advocates, adult role models, and advisors to all their students. They pay particular attention to students whose command of English is limited and to students with exceptional needs, such as those with physical or emotional disabilities. In all cases they base instructional decisions on students' developmental characteristics to promote growth and learning.

Accomplished teachers in this field are also devoted to a distinctive mission: to help students see the human enterprise as a whole. They regularly use excellent cross-disciplinary teaching to achieve this objective. They do so, in part, because people seldom face compartmentalized tasks requiring knowledge of only one discipline. For instance, concerns such as protecting 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, science, computer science, technology, writing, speaking, and management. In addition, blending disciplines often yields special insights and understandings that otherwise go uncovered. For example, joining the visual arts with the teaching of language or mathematics can promote imaginative thinking; develop an appreciation for aesthetic values; provide a unique vehicle for creative expression; and establish another avenue for learning about a country's history and culture. For these and other reasons, accomplished generalists emphasize integrated learning.

The emphasis on cross-disciplinary studies at this age level also emerges from a realization that too often schooling is either fragmented into isolated subjects taught during set blocks of time or limited to narrowly prescribed content. Such approaches make it difficult for students to see important connections among ideas that emerge from different disciplines or to find relevance and meaning in their assignments. Moreover, the complexities of the real world seldom surrender to the wisdom of a single discipline but regularly require a multifaceted approach to thinking and acting.

Not all curricula labeled interdisciplinary meet the criteria implied by these standards. Too often such instruction involves little genuine inquiry or links disciplines in an artificial or frivolous manner that falls short of illuminating the topic under investigation. Because accomplished teachers know the difference between shallow and substantive learning, they have myriad ways of engaging students in meaningful learning.

Such teachers may teach all subjects in self-contained classrooms, one or more subjects on interdisciplinary teams, or a single subject they infuse with ideas from other subjects in the curriculum. They distinguish themselves not by the subjects they are assigned to teach but by their disposition toward their students, their commitment to the integration of knowledge, and the pedagogy they employ to enhance students' learning and development. At times, they help students delve deeply into topics within a single discipline. At other times, they help students explore topics that require them to draw on perspectives, skills, concepts, and knowledge from several disciplines. They also lead and enable students to integrate knowledge within and across the content areas typically taught in the middle grades.

Accomplished generalist teachers relate their teaching to the lives of young adolescents, assisting them to make sense of themselves and their world. They provide their students with ample opportunities to direct their own learning (while ensuring that key curricular goals are

met), to see themselves and their peers as powerful thinkers and doers, and to demonstrate their competence so that they can enjoy and take pride in their accomplishments. Therefore, these teachers are unique not just by virtue of what they teach but also of how they teach.

To teach in an integrated manner, accomplished generalists must be broadly knowledgeable in the subjects taught in the middle grades and have the disposition and skills to see the underlying structures and connections among various branches of knowledge. Their role requires that they possess a breadth and depth of knowledge in the core subject areas that serve as a foundation for practice and that provide them with the flexibility to vary their approach, depending on immediate teaching goals and on students' needs.

Because they are generalists, they have a broad base of understanding in English language arts, history and social studies, mathematics, and science. They also have an understanding of the arts, for their intrinsic value and for their usefulness as alternative forms of expression. Additionally, they are knowledgeable about health issues relevant to young adolescents' lives. Accomplished generalists can distinguish between powerful ideas and topics and those of lesser importance; set ambitious but reasonable expectations for student learning; sequence learning activities in ways that make sense conceptually; coordinate strategies and ideas as part of a cross-curricular team; judge the quality and appropriateness of various curricular materials and resources; select, create, adapt, and use a wide range of materials and resources to meet students' learning needs; and develop themes that interest students and invite them to apply knowledge, skills, and understanding across subjects.

At the same time, the in-depth command of these various disciplinary fields that characterizes the practice of specialists cannot be expected of generalists. Given the explosion of knowledge and materials in each discipline, any such expectation is unrealistic. Nevertheless, generalists, like other teachers, display a capacity to extend their knowledge and continue to learn and expand their repertoire over time as circumstances dictate. Although they may not be expert in some facets of a given core discipline, they have both a solid grounding in each field and a disposition to learn that allows them to explore new territory with their students. Moreover, they work with colleagues to extend their own knowledge base of the various content areas. Such scope and capacity make accomplished generalists extraordinarily effective teachers for young adolescents.

Accomplished teachers use 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 emphasize instructional strategies that actively engage students of all ability levels, promote collaboration, provide for various levels of concrete and abstract thought, and foster student inquiry. They are alert to their students' individual differences and cultural backgrounds and recognize that all students come to school with a mix of competencies to build on. They view diversity within the class as an asset. They tailor their instruction and evaluation procedures to deal effectively with these factors while creating a classroom climate of high expectations, common goals, and mutual support.

Accomplished generalists keep abreast of the professional literature about adolescent development and about the subjects they teach. Regular reflection on the quality of their practice further enhances their effectiveness. They are also skilled at working harmoniously and productively with colleagues, parents, and the larger educational community.

Early Adolescence/Generalists function, however, in scenarios that pose constant challenges to the high level of effectiveness achieved by accomplished practitioners: where inclusion of

students with exceptionalities is the norm; where teachers fulfill for their students multiple roles once solely the province of families and community organizations; where state-mandated tests delimit curricular and instructional decisions; and where rapid changes in technology constantly alter expectations for living in the twenty-first century. The unique and ever-demanding responsibilities of accomplished practice require that time for such professional responsibilities as planning and conferences, collaboration and discussions with colleagues, reflection, and communication with parents must be embedded within the daily schedules of Early Adolescence/Generalists.

In sum, the teachers described in the pages that follow are dedicated to their students and their craft. They exemplify a high level of professionalism, constantly seeking to improve their practice; exercising sound, disciplined, and principled judgment; and acting in the best interests of their students.

## Developing High and Rigorous Standards for Accomplished Practice

In 1990, a committee of Early Adolescence/Generalist teachers and other educators with expertise in this field began the process of developing advanced professional standards for teachers of students ages 11 to 15. The Early Adolescence/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 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 *Early Adolescence/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 Early Adolescence/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, *Early Adolescence/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 12 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 12 standards:

- I. **Standard Statement**—This is a succinct statement of one vital aspect of the practice of the accomplished Early Adolescence/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.



# Early Adolescence/Generalist STANDARDS

(for teachers of students ages 11–15)

## *Second Edition*

## OVERVIEW

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has organized the standards for accomplished Early Adolescence/Generalist teachers into the following 12 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 Young Adolescents (p. 7)**

Accomplished generalists draw on their knowledge of early adolescent development and their relationships with students to understand and foster their students' knowledge, skills, interests, aspirations, and values.

### **II. Knowledge of Subject Matter (p. 11)**

Accomplished generalists draw on their knowledge of subject matter to establish goals and to facilitate student learning within and across the disciplines of the middle-grades curriculum.

### **III. Instructional Resources (p. 25)**

Accomplished generalists select, adapt, create, and use rich and varied resources.

### **IV. Learning Environment (p. 29)**

Accomplished generalists establish a caring, stimulating, inclusive, and safe community for learning where students take intellectual risks and work independently and collaboratively.

### **V. Meaningful Learning (p. 33)**

Accomplished generalists require students to confront, explore, and understand important and challenging concepts, topics, and issues and to improve skills in purposeful ways.

### **VI. Respect for Diversity (p. 37)**

Accomplished generalists model and promote behavior appropriate in a diverse society by showing respect for and valuing all members of their learning communities and by expecting students to treat one another fairly and with dignity.

### **VII. Multiple Paths to Knowledge (p. 41)**

Accomplished generalists use a variety of approaches to help students build knowledge and strengthen understanding.

### **VIII. Social Development (p. 45)**

Accomplished generalists foster students' self-awareness, character, civic responsibility, and respect for diverse individuals and groups.

### **IX. Assessment (p. 49)**

Accomplished generalists employ a variety of assessment methods to obtain useful information about student learning and development, to inform instructional strategies, and to assist students in reflecting on their own progress.

### **X. Reflective Practice (p. 53)**

Accomplished generalists regularly analyze, evaluate, and strengthen the effectiveness and quality of their practice.

**XI. Family Partnerships (p. 57)**

Accomplished generalists work with families to achieve common goals for the education of their children.

**XII. Collaboration with Colleagues (p. 61)**

Accomplished generalists 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 Young Adolescents

Accomplished generalists draw on their knowledge of early adolescent development and their relationships with students to understand and foster their students' knowledge, skills, interests, aspirations, and values.

To chart an educationally sound course, teachers<sup>1</sup> must know their students. Whether the curricular objective is understanding the role of civil liberties in a democratic society, the connection between human biology and student health, or the application of probability theory to everyday life, the decisions that teachers make about time, tasks, and materials begin with their judgment about where their students are with respect to the skills and concepts under consideration and how they are likely to respond to the variety of challenges that might be placed before them.

## Understanding and Appreciating the Diversity of Young Adolescents

Accomplished teachers learn as much as possible about the backgrounds of their students and use this information to shape instructional decisions. Although class size and teaching load affect the depth of knowledge that teachers can acquire about students, accomplished teachers do their best to understand their students as individuals. The relationships that teachers develop with their students not only support student learning and development but also provide teachers with perspectives by which to view aspects of students' character, values, interests, talents, and goals. Practically everything about the learner is relevant information in instruction,

including the student's cultural, racial, linguistic, and ethnic heritage; religious affiliation; exceptional learning needs; sexual orientation; family setting; socioeconomic status; prior learning experiences; and personal interests, needs, and goals. Accomplished generalists are particularly sensitive to such cultural, family, and personal distinctions and promote respect for others by modeling respect for the differences among students. They make respect for others the basis for all interactions in the class.

Accomplished generalists hold high expectations for all students; at the same time, they are keenly aware that not all young adolescents learn in the same way. Some are more comfortable than others working in teams. Some express themselves more easily in writing than in group discussions. Others thrive when conducting fieldwork or using abundant visual cues. Students mature at their own rates, with wide differences in the pace and timing of developmental and life experiences.

Teachers are appropriately responsive to students' physical and mental health needs and act as their advocates. Teachers know that many of today's young adolescents face a harsh path to adulthood. They are aware that large numbers of children are raised in poverty and that drugs, violent crime, homelessness, and hunger touch some students personally every day. Knowledge of such factors affecting their students informs teachers as they design curricula, teaching strategies, assignments, and assessments.

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

Recognizing that specialists and support personnel have valuable insights into early adolescents' development and abilities and ways to facilitate learning, teachers willingly collaborate with them to strive to meet the needs of all students and to promote their chances for success.

Despite the uncertainty and stress that sometimes confront young adolescents, this age offers unique opportunities for growth in many directions—opportunities that accomplished teachers recognize and pursue. They see student diversity as an asset that can enrich their instruction as they pursue academic, social, and civic aims. Although they find inspiration in student differences, they also recognize and take advantage of the similarities that serve as common bonds for young adolescents. (See Standard VI—*Respect for Diversity*.)

## **Forming Constructive Relationships with Students**

Because teachers know that as students move from childhood to adulthood they undergo significant physical, emotional, and cognitive changes, teachers make themselves available to counsel and advise students on a wide range of issues, from academic progress to peer relationships to extracurricular opportunities. Teachers actively work to reduce student isolation, and they monitor the school climate to ensure the safety of everyone in the learning community. (See Standard IV—*Learning Environment*.) Working with students in this manner not only supports their learning and their development as responsible members of society but also provides teachers with a window to see more sharply the aspects of their students' character, values, interests, and talents that might otherwise be overlooked.

Teachers' insights into their students are shaped by their knowledge of the growth and development that characterize the early adolescence years. These students often display an engaging sense of wonder and creativity, dramatic leaps of learning, and new sensitivities to the world around them and the people in it. At the same time, they may find their lives confusing, leading them to experiment with various and sometimes conflicting roles and behaviors. Young adolescents' relationships with their parents, teachers, and peers are in transition. The judgments of their peers are often influential and sometimes cause conflict among young adolescents' alternating needs for conformity and autonomy. They may distance themselves from adult authority within the family and at the same time form close relationships with concerned adults from outside the family—a role that teachers often fill.

## **Observing Students Insightfully**

Teachers know that young adolescents typically mature in their ability to think abstractly, to consider perspectives other than their own, and to recognize that what they learn can contribute to satisfying personal goals. They know that students have numerous concerns about their family, school, peers, and themselves that influence their behavior and affect their success in school. They understand that young adolescents search for meaning and identity in their own lives as their perspective on the world evolves. They recognize the impact that technology and media have, both positive and negative, on adolescents' developing views and self-concept.

To gauge their students' strengths, needs, and interests, these teachers develop a keen

capacity for reinforcing their insights and understanding about students. They willingly and actively listen to and observe students in whatever modes or settings students express themselves, whether formal classroom activities, individual conferences, or informal gatherings. Their understanding of their students is also enhanced by discussions with parents or other caregivers (see Standard XI—*Family Partnerships*) and colleagues and

by their interactions with the larger student body. These insights, together with their ability to identify students with exceptional abilities, needs, or talents, enable teachers to frame their practice equitably to meet the common and unique needs of each of their students.



### ***Reflections on Standard I:***

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# Standard II: Knowledge of Subject Matter

Accomplished generalists draw on their knowledge of subject matter to establish goals and to facilitate student learning within and across the disciplines of the middle-grades curriculum.

Accomplished teachers are clear about their purposes and possess the professional judgment to sort through the many, often conflicting, demands and requests placed before them. They make sound and principled judgments about the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values they seek to develop in their students in a manner that deliberately attempts to stretch all students and holds them to high expectations.

## Having a Sound Foundation in the Subject Matter of the Middle- Grades Curriculum

As they design and work with curriculum, these teachers draw on their broad understanding of the major facets of the subjects and skills typically found in the middle-grades curriculum, their particular strengths in certain disciplinary areas, their understanding of the need for technology integration, and their knowledge of lively issues that can be found at the intersection of various disciplines. Their knowledge of subject matter includes the key concepts that young adolescents should understand; the specialized ways of reasoning, thinking, talking, and writing about them; the technology that affects the way knowledge changes within that discipline; the difficulties in each area that students are likely to encounter; and study strategies that support learning. This understanding allows teachers to anticipate

common confusions and misconceptions that students typically hold and to develop strategies to address them. Such knowledge is vital to collaborating effectively with colleagues in cross-curricular ventures and to avoiding interdisciplinary instruction that results in little genuine inquiry or is characterized by superficial or forced linkages. It is also essential to helping students make connections among the disciplines. To supplement their understanding and expertise, these teachers may collaborate with subject specialists, university professors, and others who can provide additional insight and information.

Teachers understand that meaningful learning arises from concepts drawn from a range of disciplines. To deepen students' conceptual understanding, teachers build on prescribed curriculum, but are not constrained by it. As students' needs dictate, they incorporate related topics, issues, and technology that stretch students' perceptions, extend their knowledge and understanding of the world, and thereby enrich their education. (See Standard V—*Meaningful Learning*.)

## Using Subject-Matter Knowledge to Make Sound Curricular Decisions

Teachers provide students with a solid grasp of the subjects they study so that they can address complex 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 understand ideas that fit within disciplinary boundaries but also explore and connect important subjects and topics that cut across disciplinary lines.

Teachers understand that organization skills, time management, and general and content-specific study strategies are essential to student success. They model and integrate instruction of these skills throughout all curricular areas, providing opportunities for practice and application. (See Standard V—*Meaningful Learning*.)

Having a sound foundation in the middle-grades curriculum (English language arts, history and social studies, mathematics, science, the arts, health, and the technology that facilitates learning) is essential not only for this standard but for all that follow. If teachers are to select and create powerful tasks for students to explore; if they are to choose topics and materials that use students' time wisely; and if they are to recognize when a shift in focus might help develop opportunities that emerge during instruction, they must possess a solid base of subject-matter knowledge. Such knowledge helps teachers articulate and animate these subjects and engage students in their central concepts and ideas, building knowledge and understanding as they proceed.

Knowledge in and across these subject areas is fundamental to the educational, personal, and social development of young adolescents. As students go through this transitional phase of their lives, their thoughts about and involvement with subject matter should mature with them. Students whose curiosity is stimulated and whose understanding is deepened are likely to continue growing as learners. Consequently, teachers strive to make subject matter personally and socially relevant, as well as educationally captivating, for their students. In all facets of their approach to subject

matter, teachers understand how to relate it to the unique characteristics and needs of young adolescents.

## **Integrating Subject Matter**

Accomplished generalists understand that ideas worth learning are not unique to a single discipline. Early adolescents are particularly sensitive to the fact that the real world comprises issues, topics, problems, and situations—not disciplines or courses. To keep students engaged and actively involved in learning, accomplished generalists guide students' interests across disciplinary lines. Teachers construct curricula that transcend subject-specific isolated facts, while developing a variety of instructional and assessment strategies that emphasize organization, inquiry, concept building, and problem solving. Such cross-disciplinary approaches open multiple perspectives on learning and accessing information and allow teachers to enhance students' higher-order thinking skills and creativity.

The ability to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and apply information, and then to communicate an understanding of that information, depends on making connections and relationships among a range of disciplinary approaches. Systematic, purposeful curriculum integration enhances achievement and heightens a student's ability to make effective use of the power of multiple perspectives.

## **Using Subject Matter to Empower Students through Inquiry**

Accomplished generalists know that young adolescents are approaching a critical juncture in their educational journey. For one



reason or another, many students at this young age mentally, emotionally, and socially “drop out” of the educational process. Accomplished generalists welcome their responsibility to help students experience the rewards of learning. Toward that end, they enlist their students’ meaningful and purposeful participation.

Accomplished generalists realize that the most powerful learning comes from questions generated by students themselves. They structure their classrooms so that students actively pose questions and seek to answer these questions. Teachers work to help students to acquire the mental operations, habits of mind, and attitudes that characterize the process of inquiry.

Teachers recognize that students learn best by doing. Accomplished teachers provide numerous opportunities to stimulate students’ questions that serve as the basis for active inquiry in the classroom. They organize their classrooms around frequent open-ended investigations in which students assume active roles as investigators in the pursuit of knowledge.

Accomplished teachers understand that the inquiry process itself is not a uniform series of predetermined steps, and that people vary widely in how they seek knowledge. Nevertheless, certain patterns in the methods of successful inquiry are evident. For example, in students’ capacity to recognize problems, they ask relevant questions, formulate working hypotheses, observe phenomena, record data accurately, reach tentative conclusions consistent with data, and express themselves clearly about the significance of their findings.

In designing or choosing activities, teachers keep a number of important criteria in mind. They look for activities that are age and developmentally appropriate; likely to raise interesting, worthwhile questions; relevant to the lives of their students; and flexible, allowing active participation and student

control over the manipulation of variables and the posing of questions. For instance, knowing that adolescents frequently have an awakening concern for social issues, teachers may focus instruction on relevant topics in daily life that students care about and perceive as important to themselves and society at large. In making the connection between learning and the experiences of young adolescents, accomplished generalists do not simply present topics; they engage students in exploring, thinking critically about, and analyzing multiple aspects of important issues. In short, learning is presented not as a list of terms at the back of a chapter to be memorized, but as a way of knowing how and why things happen that significantly matches students’ interests.

In pursuing inquiry-based curricula, accomplished teachers are risk takers. They willingly live with the sometimes unpredictable consequences of student-inspired activities and student-centered pedagogy.

### Subject-Matter Domains

What follows are the descriptions of the six subject-matter domains that accomplished generalists are expected to know and explanations of how they might use this knowledge. Although teachers may have more extensive knowledge in one or more areas, these domains illustrate the major ideas, themes, topics, and applications that Early Adolescence/Generalists should be able to teach their students. In some instances, they will be assigned all these subjects, in others, only one or two. They may also be members of an interdisciplinary team or work closely with one or more specialists. Without regard to their assignment, they practice as generalists, skillfully uncovering for their students the multidisciplinary world in which they live.

### ***English Language Arts***

Accomplished generalists have a solid grounding in the important ideas, concepts, and strategies central to developing expertise in English language arts—reading, writing, listening, media and visual literacy, and oral discourse. They understand how students learn language, how they use language, and how they interact with text. They know how to support the written and oral language development of their students, and in their teaching they foster and support the natural process of language acquisition. Teachers help students for whom English is a new language transfer communication skills into English, while understanding the benefits of students’ maintaining fluency and skill in their home languages.

Teachers know that skill in reading develops over a lifetime when people continually extend their reading experiences. They recognize that effective writing develops as a process and know how to use and explain grammatical conventions. Teachers are also comfortable in the art and skill of oral discourse, which they emphasize in language arts instruction but also carry into other subject areas. They use their expertise in the English language arts to help students develop a rich appreciation of and facility with reading, writing, viewing, speaking, and listening, including the application of these skills to other curricular areas and to the real world.

Wherever students are in their reading development, teachers know how to move them forward. This progress may be accomplished through directed instruction, classroom modifications, the selection of appropriate instructional materials, and collaboration with specialists and support personnel. Teachers help all students improve their reading skills—such as summarizing main ideas, making inferences,

comprehending vocabulary in context, and analyzing text—by providing strategies that meet their needs.

Teachers use reading to expand students’ ability to interpret texts in ways that uncover and explore human values and to see reading as a bridge to dilemmas, traditions, cultures, experiences, and themes they might not otherwise experience. To meet these ends, teachers provide students with a wide range of contemporary and classical reading material from many genres that captures their interests, stretches them, and motivates them to explore a variety of texts on their own. They teach strategies for reading and understanding informational texts such as biographies, newspapers, periodicals, textbooks, technical writing, and primary sources. This commitment to strengthen students’ ability to interpret text extends beyond traditional literary forms to other media, such as film, television, and music.

Teachers understand the virtues of a comprehensive, literature-based program that encourages students to read works that address universal themes. They have a thorough knowledge of young adult literature, and they make sound judgments about the literary merit of available texts. Teachers draw on their repertoire of literature that includes works from many cultures, texts written by authors of both genders, and stories that focus on adolescent life.

Teachers know that the analytical skills developed through reading should be integrated with the process of writing to deepen students’ understanding as they develop as writers. They also recognize that through communication, students develop their facility for individual expression as they become adept at identifying purpose and audience. Consequently, teachers lead students to develop useful and comfortable approaches to writing. They understand the full range of values inherent in writing—

from the development of thinking skills to its facility for personal expression and exploration of different voices.

They provide students with varied writing experiences—keeping journals; recording history; reviewing books, plays, concerts, and movies; creating stories, poems, and plays; composing letters to the editor; describing school events in newspaper style; and engaging in numerous other activities that make writing a meaningful activity—and encourage experimentation. Teachers provide opportunities for students to write in all disciplines. They also have students write in different settings—on their own, in groups, and with direct teacher input—to provide them with responses from a variety of sources and to allow them to share and explore their thinking and writing with different audiences. In this way, students become confident in their understanding of writing as a process, and they discover techniques that suit their personal approach to writing.

As students mature and become comfortable as writers, teachers emphasize the importance of revision and develop students' editing skills. As students write, revise, and edit, teachers help them apply the conventions of writing contextually by incorporating grammar, spelling, and syntax into their work.

Accomplished teachers are themselves capable writers. They help students appreciate the systematic nature of composing text by modeling for students their own writing strategies and by sharing their frustrations and insights related to writing. By modeling good writing for their students, teachers provide a powerful guide and stimulus to effective student performance in this domain.

Teachers also recognize that the English language arts provide a vehicle for young adolescents to understand themselves and their relationship to others and to develop an awareness of the cultural lenses through which communication occurs. Thus, at times,

they will design assignments around such issues as personal identity, independence, friendship, or authority. Similarly, they promote the exploration of values through analyses of character and motivation and encourage self-reflection through journals and group discussion.

Teachers recognize that comprehensive study within the English language arts will develop students' speaking and listening skills. They know that effective speaking is a lifelong skill. Consequently, classrooms of these teachers emphasize the exchange of ideas, opinions, and perspectives on a wide range of topics and activities, from classical literature to newspaper editorials. They foster formal oral activities—such as debates, speeches, and acting—to emphasize such skills as awareness of audience, research, organization, and presentation. They also enhance students' use of communication skills in interpersonal relationships as appropriate ways to express emotions, clearly explain ideas, and effectively manage conflicts. They reinforce these skills in other areas of their teaching, both in the English language arts and across curricular lines. Teachers are deliberate and purposeful in their teaching of listening skills, and they emphasize the importance of critical listening so that students understand that listening well contributes to effective communication and thorough understanding.

Teachers also know that accomplished practitioners capitalize on informal discussion and that good literature can often provide the spark to ignite a stimulating debate. They recognize that active, impromptu, student-to-student discussions contribute significantly to students' ability to think on their feet, to make incisive comments, and to receive immediate feedback from their peers. These teachers, who are themselves fluent and adept speakers, facilitate student discussions and intervene only to revive a lagging discussion or to move thinking to a deeper level. They involve all

students in discussion, enacting strategies that help students become active, analytical listeners while others talk. To facilitate communication in all spheres of public life, they reinforce the benefits inherent in the nation's shared common language. Although they model and teach the conventions of Standard English, they appreciate the rich expression offered by nonstandard dialects and respect the integrity and value of a student's home language.

Accomplished generalists incorporate the skills their students develop through the English language arts into other areas of the curriculum. They understand that reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills cross curricular boundaries, and they emphasize the usefulness of these skills in other subject areas as well as in nonschool settings. Consequently, they provide opportunities for students to apply English language arts skills consciously in social, personal, and business settings.

Accomplished teachers help students understand the visual aspects of communication. They realize that students need familiarity with such visual cues as a speaker's gestures and facial expressions, printed signs and symbols, graphs, the use of formatting in printed texts, and the setting of a television scene. Helping students interpret the visual cues of a communication event prepares them to become more competent and sophisticated consumers of media and of public and interpersonal communication. As teachers design assignments, they are cognizant to provide students with opportunities to apply viewing skills in a variety of formats, such as student-generated video clips, posters, interactive computer presentations, reports, or personal presentations.

Accomplished teachers are aware that the mass media surround students' lives. Thus they help students understand the way people use media in their public and private lives and how political, cultural, and commercial forces influence its content. Teachers work to develop students' ability to

interpret, critique, and evaluate print and nonprint texts. They may, for example, help students explore the relationship between the same story told in different media or between two stories told in different media with similar themes. In addition, they give students opportunities to be involved in the creation and use of nonprint texts to develop ideas and opinions and communicate with others. For example, as part of a mock election, teachers may require students to create and present a television campaign ad that clearly appeals to a particular audience and that demonstrates credible, effective, and persuasive communication. Students would then establish evaluation criteria to determine the effectiveness of each ad.

### ***History and Social Studies***

Accomplished generalists have a foundation of knowledge in history and the social sciences including geography, political science, and economics. They know world and United States history and geography; the major systems of governments that exist throughout the world and how they operate; the different economic systems and the principles of thought underlying them; the key demographic concepts and their implications; the varied cultures and communities in the nation and the world; the important domestic and international political concerns; the fundamental tensions that surround contemporary global issues; and the varying belief structures of different cultures and religions. These teachers stay informed of current social, political, and economic questions and understand how they fit into the context of history. They know how these questions interconnect, and they help their students appreciate these relationships so that they learn how to make informed and reasoned decisions as they participate in a democratic society. They focus student work on major historical

themes, issues, people, and events. They complement these efforts by developing their students' awareness of key geographical issues, such as regional characteristics, interaction of people with their environment over time, and the relationship of physical and political boundaries.

Teachers use their knowledge of history and social studies to develop their students' civic competence and their understanding of societies. Their students learn how history is written and the principles and events that have shaped the nation's character because these teachers nurture democratic values and a commitment to civic responsibility. Teachers develop their students' understanding of their place in the framework of history, heighten their awareness of the multicultural nature of the nation and world, and teach them to apply the major ideas and principles of social studies to the enduring issues that contemporary societies must confront. At the same time, they recognize that familiar concepts such as culture, society, and government are complex abstractions that are not readily grasped by most young adolescents.

Teachers help their students develop well-reasoned arguments based on facts rather than on unsupported opinions. They make students aware that the reasoned discussion that emerges in social studies has value in other curricular areas as well as in settings outside the classroom.

Teachers motivate their students to explore history through personal research, community investigations, group activities, traditional research sources, various media, and other means. Teachers know how to use reading strategies that enhance student learning of content. By teaching students how to delve into the social sciences in several different ways, these teachers create a stimulating environment that raises students' awareness of the presence of these disciplines in their lives. This approach also teaches students how to acquire and evaluate

knowledge, to think logically about the applicability of the social sciences to their lives, and to develop personal insights into a variety of cultures other than their own.

Teachers introduce students to tools for communicating about and investigating history and the social sciences, including time lines, surveys, and debates. Students conduct independent investigations and work as members of teams addressing social issues. For example, students might gain firsthand knowledge of an important social policy question by going into the community to conduct interviews and gather historical data. At other times they might explore the ways in which laws, customs, or technical advances in various cultures affected their youth, turning to primary sources when possible. Ultimately, these teachers use the study of history and the social sciences to establish a learning environment that models democratic values; contributes to students' appreciation and respect for the diversity of viewpoints, backgrounds, and opinions they will encounter as adults; promotes the evaluation of different viewpoints and the recognition that all views are not of equal merit; and encourages the growth of leadership abilities.

### ***Mathematics***

Accomplished generalists understand significant connections among mathematical ideas and the applications of those ideas in mathematics, in other disciplines, and in the world outside their schools. They have a knowledge of mathematical concepts, principles, techniques, and reasoning that they use to set curricular goals and shape their teaching. These teachers have a deep and broad understanding of mathematics beyond the level at which they teach. Their knowledge base makes them well aware of where their students are headed, individually and as a group, and how to move them to continually



2. Portions of this section have been adapted from National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* (Reston, Va.: Author, 2000), 211–213.

deepening levels of mathematical understanding. In their classroom practice, accomplished teachers know that young adolescents benefit from regularly engaging in thoughtful activities tied to their emerging capabilities of finding and imposing structure, conjecturing and verifying, thinking hypothetically, understanding cause and effect, and abstracting and generalizing.<sup>2</sup>

Accomplished generalists know the concepts and principles of important mathematical domains, including algebra and functions, geometry, and statistics and data analysis. They know the fundamental processes of mathematical thinking—exploration, representation, modeling, conjecture, inference, interpretation, and analysis. Teachers know that a facility in algebraic and geometric thinking is essential to success in the later study of mathematics and also in many situations that arise outside the mathematics classroom. They teach mathematical domains as interconnected with one another and with other areas of the curriculum. For example, they present visual models of algebraic identities and algebraic representations of geometric ideas. They use mathematics to enhance cross-disciplinary concept building, such as constructing graphic representations of the results of data collected in research. They ensure that students have opportunities to see and understand the connections among related ideas, emphasizing thoughtful engagement and meaningful learning. Teachers know how to use reading strategies that enhance student learning of content. Accomplished generalists implement a focused and integrated curriculum that promotes a deep understanding of mathematics on which students can continue to build.

Teachers encourage students to see mathematics as an exciting, useful, and creative field of study, and they know that students are drawn to mathematics as they find both challenge and support in the mathematics classroom. Teachers know that young adolescents acquire an appreciation for and develop

an understanding of mathematical ideas when they frequently encounter interesting, challenging problems and are given frequent opportunities to apply their mathematical skills directly to events and situations that are important to them. Students working with such teachers use technology, hands-on activities, and manipulatives to support and facilitate the appropriate development of numerical skills, and they can solve a variety of problems by using mental processes, pencil and paper, calculators, and computer software. To broaden the applicability of mathematics, teachers expose students to problems and investigations that allow students to use multiple strategies and approaches to arrive at acceptable solutions. Their classes are student centered to enhance the scope of student involvement and the degree of student inquisitiveness. Whenever possible, teachers construct their work in mathematics around the needs and interests of the young adolescents they teach. Therefore, they adjust the pace and form of instruction, smoothly shifting among independent study, cooperative learning groups, and direct teacher instruction to provide students with a variety of instructional settings in which to explore mathematical issues, discourse, and reasoning. These teachers recognize that central to a comprehensive understanding of mathematics is the ability to reason about mathematics, communicate through it, and make connections between and among mathematical concepts and other subject areas.

Teachers foster in their students comfort and confidence with mathematics so that they can use it in a variety of ways. Their students learn to investigate the reasoning behind mathematical claims and to solve a wide range of problems. Students know how to apply their mathematical knowledge in a variety of situations beyond computation, and they can explain their thinking to others orally and in writing. Students learn how to incorporate mathematics into discussions that may seem

outside the realm of mathematics, using mathematics as a way of representing, thinking, agreeing, and disagreeing.

Teachers possess a sound fundamental knowledge about the connections among mathematical concepts and procedures. They can demonstrate how mathematics, as a way of thinking and reasoning, applies across disciplines and outside the classroom. They stimulate robust discourse centered on what students know about mathematics and how it affects their lives. In this way, teachers use their knowledge of mathematics to contribute to their students' understanding of the role of mathematics in various fields of study and in culture and society.

Their knowledge of mathematics enables teachers to select or create resources that contribute to their students' understanding of major mathematical concepts and ideas. They use a variety of resources, such as textbooks, newspapers, calculators (including graphing calculators where appropriate and available), computer software, puzzles, and manipulative materials, to facilitate their teaching of mathematical skills and thinking and to contribute to a rich classroom discourse about mathematics. Teachers use their knowledge and resources to develop in students the realization that mathematics is evolving and that mathematics builds on and extends prior knowledge. Teachers design instructional tasks that contribute to the development of these larger ideas so that students do not view mathematics in isolation. Rather, teachers form meaningful connections among current topics, those that came before, and those that will follow.

Teachers recognize that students will emulate their enthusiasm for mathematics, so their own behavior encourages students to pursue its study comprehensively and with vigor and persistence. They encourage all students to pursue mathematics fully and are particularly attentive to the progress of groups whose mathematical development is sometimes discouraged in adolescence.

Teachers believe that all students can succeed in mathematics, and they stimulate, engage, and challenge all their students in order to make this success happen. As they develop individual lessons and long-term goals, they provide explanations and clarifications, incorporate multiple examples, and encourage collaboration among students where appropriate.

Having command of the fundamental concepts and procedures of mathematics, accomplished teachers provide students with opportunities to think critically and to explore, invent, and discover mathematical problems and relationships so that they may perceive the value, importance, and beauty of mathematics.

### **Science**

Accomplished generalists are knowledgeable about the biological, physical, earth, and space sciences and their relationships to one another and to other disciplines. Within these fields, they can apply important scientific concepts, such as change and conservation, cause and effect, energy and matter, models and theories, structure and function, and systems and interaction. These teachers also demonstrate facility with such essential scientific skills as classifying data, designing experiments, hypothesizing, interpreting, predicting, and using space/time relationships. Teachers use their knowledge of science and scientific concepts and skills to examine and understand changes occurring in today's world and to help their students do the same. Their knowledge, when shared with and deepened by interaction with students, leads them to teach science in ways that engage students.

Teachers approach science as an integrated field. They frame instruction to encourage students to study, question, and explore key ideas, topics, and concepts. They ask

questions that require students to prove important issues and to think through a range of responses. They also capitalize on young adolescents' curiosity about the physical world and their fascination and concern with the human body and with their own growth and development. Because they are well informed, teachers are a resource for students, especially when students work collaboratively and explore multiple approaches to scientific problems or phenomena. These teachers engage their students in considering the relationships among science, technology, and society and how these relationships change their lives and shape their values both positively and negatively. For example, they encourage exploring such topics as the impact of the computer chip on a changing world and the effect of human genome technology on daily life. Similarly, they draw on young adolescents' idealism and care for living things in exploring environmental issues and questions about the individual's responsibility to the community.

Such teachers create opportunities for students to think, act, and communicate as scientists. They know how to use reading strategies that enhance student learning of content. They teach about and engage students in the techniques of gathering, organizing, and evaluating scientific information, providing them with concrete experiences to participate in the scientific process. Their students build their knowledge of the natural and engineered worlds when they are confronted with problems that challenge students' creativity and imagination and when students have the opportunity to offer their own ideas and listen to the hypotheses of others. Their students plan experiments, ask questions, make observations, interpret data, and draw conclusions, and they do so in a safe manner. Through these experiences, students learn to extend the methods and skills of scientific inquiry, such as observation, recording information, and reporting

findings to fields outside of science, while developing a scientist's appreciation, curiosity, and respect for empirical evidence.

These teachers are aware of and responsive to the way their students think about science. They recognize and address the misconceptions that many students have about scientific phenomena. They know when students are prepared to move to the next level of scientific study and inquiry, and they are adept at moving them to that level. As their students' thinking about science deepens, teachers model more sophisticated scientific thought and conversation. By steadily building on their students' scientific knowledge and skills, teachers develop students who incorporate science into their conversation and writing. Accomplished teachers combine their knowledge of the major scientific ideas, concepts, and skills with their students' developing scientific awareness to create an environment in which scientific information, techniques, and principles are regularly applied to a range of topics.

### ***The Arts***

Accomplished generalists know that the arts are valuable in and of themselves and are useful in providing creative insights into other disciplines. Dance, music, theatre, 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, generalists bring the performing and visual arts into their classrooms for their aesthetic and intellectual values and for the ways in which they can enhance students' ability to perceive the world. They see the teaching of the arts as purposeful—a way to help students develop a specific set of understandings and skills that can challenge, expand, and enrich their lives.



Teachers recognize, value, and may teach the arts as independent subjects, or they may integrate the arts with the teaching of other subjects to create more stimulating and engaging learning environments. They know and act on their belief that involving their students in the arts will expand students' thought processes, strengthen their understanding of other academic areas, and promote their understanding of the similarities and differences between and among cultures. The production, examination, and evaluation of the arts from the perspective of a variety of cultures can also be an effective tool in reducing student prejudices and stereotypes.

Teachers know that the arts reflect specific and distinct intelligences that, when stimulated, encourage unique perceptions, thoughts, and actions from their students. They understand that for some students, the arts provide a vehicle for expression that they cannot find in other disciplines. Therefore, teachers actively express and encourage their students to express universal concepts through the creation and study of artistic works and through discussion of artwork and ideas. Students might learn, for example, how relationships in nature may be shown through dance; how conflict may be expressed in theatre or in music; or how aspects of human interaction may be illustrated by the visual arts. Through the thinking promoted by such instruction, students learn the importance of the arts when experienced as independent subjects, as subjects integrated with others, and as part of life itself.

Teachers stimulate an awareness, an understanding, and an appreciation of the role of the arts in human development. They assist students in exploring the historical and cultural background of the arts and introduce them to diverse forms, styles, and periods from prehistoric to contemporary. Teachers also introduce students to the impact that new technologies have on the development

and dissemination of various art forms. Students therefore gain insight into differences in aesthetic values and the social uses of the arts during different historical eras. Such teachers help students blend their knowledge of the arts with other subject areas, fostering student creativity, expressiveness, and critical thinking, in addition to developing an appreciation of their artistic heritage. Teachers also know how to use reading strategies that enhance student learning of content. Immersing students in the arts sharpens their ability to observe the natural and constructed world in which they live as the arts provide them with fundamentally different ways of seeing, knowing, and representing the world.

Accomplished teachers help their students use their developing knowledge of the arts to inform their other studies by drawing attention to similarities among major ideas and themes. Teachers know that the arts can be verbal, mathematical, and logical. Therefore, they guide students in making connections, for example, between the process of writing and the process of painting that strengthen the understanding of each, or they might relate the historical relevance of the arts to other events from the same era to enrich students' understanding of history. Phenomena in mathematics and science, such as fractals and symmetrical organisms, might be applied to the development of works of art, or vice versa, to strengthen students' knowledge in these fields. The arts also provide a vehicle for young adolescents to express their unique accomplishment in a special arena, which promotes the development of distinctive skills and contributes to a healthy sense of self-worth. Teachers allow students to be imaginative, playful, or serious in safe and supportive settings.

## **Health**

Accomplished generalists understand that a sound health education program focuses on students' physical, mental, and social well-being. Consequently, they create opportunities for students to develop knowledge and practice skills that contribute to their own physical, mental, and emotional health in each of these domains. They are alert to young adolescents' concerns about their own health and to major health issues and their social implications (including attention to the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; pregnancy; sexually transmitted diseases; HIV/AIDS; eating habits; body image; stress; depression; and suicide). They address these issues in ways that help students recognize potentially dangerous situations, clarify misconceptions, and find reliable sources of information. 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.

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 and the dangers of disease, as well as activities that may contribute to each. Teachers help students develop an awareness of the unique challenges faced by people with health impairments. They communicate this knowledge in class discussions, reading assignments, and multimedia presentations.

Such teachers maintain an awareness of current health issues, behaviors, and trends that are often sources of special concern and confusion for young adolescents. This awareness helps teachers present good health practices as a vital part of a lifestyle that students are encouraged to adopt as they mature.

These teachers recognize the importance of students' adapting these practices into their personal lifestyle, and, when appropriate, their teaching provides opportunities to rehearse and discuss healthy behaviors. For example, teachers might have students role play ways to remove themselves from situations in which they are offered drugs or are victims of harassment and then engage students in an open discussion of the alternatives presented.

Accomplished generalists realize that violence is a critical issue for young adolescents, so they actively seek preventive measures to counter harassment. Often victims of harassment are students who feel isolated; teachers reach out to all students, but particularly to victims, letting them know an adult cares. Making such personal connections is essential for accomplished generalists.

Teachers know the myths and facts about various aspects of health and physical activity, especially those relating directly to young adolescents. To keep their knowledge current, they seek information from a variety of health resources within the school and the community. When imparting information, they are particularly alert to the sensitivities of young adolescents and their families, and they provide opportunities for students to share personal concerns with them.

Accomplished teachers understand that students who know how to achieve and maintain optimal health are more likely to do so and to encourage healthy decision making by others. Consequently, they focus health education on creating health-smart students who are aware of how to deal with and stay informed about the abundance of health-related issues, concerns, and questions facing young adolescents today.







# Standard III: Instructional Resources

Standard  
III

Accomplished generalists select, adapt, create, and use rich and varied resources.

Accomplished teachers view resources as tools to support their practice, and they understand that the lesson, textbook, teaching strategy, assignment, or assessment tool that works well with one class will not necessarily succeed with another. Therefore, they seek to broaden the array of resources and materials at hand to help them meet the instructional needs of all their students. In expanding their resource base, they look beyond the textbooks in their classrooms and consider how a variety of materials and people might be employed to deepen conceptual understanding. Their knowledge encompasses advances in technology and media that continue to change the very nature of teaching and learning and that offer students opportunities to explore important ideas, concepts, and theories. Teachers are competent users of communication and research technology, which they use to locate resources and develop teaching materials.

## Developing a Diverse Resource Base from Which to Make Judicious Selections

Teachers constantly seek opportunities to expand their base of instructional resources by drawing on theory, research, technology, accomplished practice, and nontraditional

sources. These resources challenge students and reveal to them the complexity and texture of the social, cultural, ethical, and physical worlds in which they live. Such efforts bring to students' attention a broad array of resources that will make them more capable and independent learners. At the same time, teachers design activities that enable students to evaluate the quality and reliability of information sources.

The resourcefulness and creativity of these teachers lead them to locate and construct alternative materials and activities as necessary. These alternatives include adapting materials for students with exceptionalities or those for whom English is a new language. They carefully judge a range of materials for quality and suitability, choosing those most appropriate to their students' needs. Their goal is to blend materials from several sources and assess their effectiveness in fulfilling broad curricular objectives.

Teachers are dedicated to expanding the diversity of their resources regularly to equip students for a rapidly changing world. As they see changes in their students, the community, the nation, and the world, teachers look for ways to make these changes meaningful to their students. They gather and create high-quality resources that are diverse in several respects, including form, style, theme, gender appeal and awareness, level of difficulty, culture, and intergenerational perspective. Their exploration of new resources, study of

professional literature, experimentation with new technology and media, and participation in advanced education programs make up a continual process of professional growth and self-renewal that broadens and deepens their repertoire. (See Standard X—*Reflective Practice*.)

### **Viewing Colleagues and the Community as Important Resources**

Teachers appreciate their colleagues' skills and talents and the circumstances in which these attributes can best complement their own. They elicit the knowledge and expertise of other faculty members to give students rewarding learning experiences. Colleagues may share resources, serve as special consultants in specific areas of expertise, or

work with fellow teachers in planning and conducting interdisciplinary studies.

These teachers see their local community as an extension of the school and classroom, and they recognize the importance of students' valuing and using community resources. They actively recruit and involve families and other community members, agencies, and businesses as partners in the school program and take advantage of local cultural, linguistic, economic, and natural resources (e.g., a public debate on a contentious social issue) to enrich the curriculum and enhance student learning and development. (See Standard V—*Meaningful Learning* and Standard VII—*Multiple Paths to Knowledge*.)



### **Reflections on Standard III:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---







# Standard IV: Learning Environment

Accomplished generalists establish a caring, stimulating, inclusive, and safe community for learning where students take intellectual risks and work independently and collaboratively.

Standard  
IV

The supportive, congenial, and purposeful learning environments characteristic of classrooms established by accomplished generalists contribute to active learning and expose students to a variety of intellectual challenges. These environments rest on the ability of teachers to create an atmosphere in which students feel welcomed, valued, and respected. In part, teachers do so when they demonstrate interest in students' ideas, activities, lives, and responses. In addition, these teachers create a physically and emotionally safe environment in which students feel empowered: students make decisions; know they belong; and know they are free to take risks, make mistakes, and explore alternatives. In so doing, teachers make students their partners in establishing and maintaining a community of learners.

## Placing a Premium on Equity, Fairness, and Student Effort

Although teachers recognize that equity and fairness are intertwined, subtle differences exist between them. Accomplished teachers advocate for the equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, and access. They understand that students come to the classroom with differing experiences and backgrounds, and they design activities that encourage students to enter a common discussion. They strive to increase underrepresented populations in advanced courses by personally

encouraging participation in and advocating for access to these classes. They advocate for classroom resources needed for quality learning, such as access to technology, supplemental educational materials, and teacher time. Accomplished teachers pay special attention to providing for the needs of their diverse population by such means as maintaining equitable wait time, offering relevant feedback to all students, recognizing different learning and classroom styles, and challenging all students to high expectations. (See Standard VI—*Respect for Diversity*.)

Accomplished teachers create caring, inclusive learning communities characterized by fairness, particularly when recognizing competence, effort, or performance; allowing students to choose among learning and performance options; allocating time, learning opportunities, or other resources; and grouping students. These teachers make it a point to recognize a wide variety of student accomplishments and positive behaviors.

Teachers know that there are productive and nonproductive ways to offer encouragement and constructive criticism. They instill in their students the idea that learning can be difficult; that experimentation is essential; that recognizing mistakes is as important as noticing successes; that people learn from dead ends and failures; and that grasping a subject fully requires developing multiple solutions and perspectives. These characteristics contribute to learning environments that engage students, recognize individual differences, encourage choice and expression, and foster inquiry. In these environments, students

are provided opportunities to acquire first-hand knowledge, gather and evaluate information, present findings or products, and enhance the learning experiences of their classmates.

## **Emphasizing Democratic Values in the Classroom**

Like adults, students need a healthy, stimulating, and supportive work environment that welcomes the open expression of ideas and encourages the search for greater understanding and knowledge. Nonetheless, young adolescents sometimes find themselves in settings in which abusive language, put-downs, and bigotry are common and prejudice and disrespect exist. From the outset of the school year, teachers actively counter these attitudes. They foster a sense of community by encouraging student interactions that show concern for others, by dealing constructively with socially inappropriate behavior, and by appreciating and using humor appropriately. They create for students a community that helps ensure their physical safety and is secure socially and intellectually as well. In addition, teachers understand how the selection of curriculum and resources affects students' perceptions of what is valued in their worlds. They strive to enlarge students' worlds by providing opportunities to examine the contributions to society throughout history of people from varying backgrounds, languages, cultures, and talents. In sum, teachers create instructional settings that promote learning for all students.

Teachers establish a productive, open, and enriching learning environment at the beginning of the school year and maintain it through a well-developed repertoire of strategies, skills, and procedures that allows their classrooms to function smoothly much of the time and that enables them to make effective

changes when it does not. Such teachers convey a sense of knowledge, preparation, care, and direction that combine to keep students engaged in a wide range of productive activities. They use democratic processes to create classroom rules, routines, and behaviors for effective learning and to handle the consequences for violating them. Thus, teachers establish a culture that promotes trust and confidence and allows them to direct their attention and effort to positive interactions and learning rather than deal with discord and disruption. It also allows them to establish classes where students, because of their sense of belonging, take responsibility for their behavior and accept the rules of the classroom community.

An instructional climate that upholds the dignity of students and is time-efficient requires skill, planning, flexibility, judgment, and discretion. Teachers have these qualities and use them in ways that demonstrate both self-confidence and respect for their students. They enlist help from students in setting clear expectations for classroom behavior, and they uphold these expectations consistently. They know that their respect for their students' thoughts and judgments fosters self-worth and individual dignity in students. Consequently, through their attention to and high regard for students' comments, concerns, and activities—both in and out of the classroom—these teachers instill in their students the idea that the work in which they are engaged is important and significant.

When a shift in emphasis or approach is needed, accomplished teachers adjust with such skill that the shift is barely noticed. Their lessons are marked by smoothness, flow, clarity, and coherence. Classroom management seems almost effortless; transitions flow easily; few disruptions mar the focus on learning; and students and teacher work together harmoniously. Teachers notice most classroom events, but they filter out the unimportant and focus on what is most

important. They monitor multiple aspects of classroom events simultaneously, quickly interpret their instructional or social importance, and move to prevent disruptions of student engagement to whatever degree possible.

## Addressing Disciplinary Problems Forthrightly

All teachers experience times when students act unproductively or counterproductively. Both in the classroom and in the school setting as a whole, accomplished teachers anticipate what situations may provoke crises or conflicts and know how to prevent them or mitigate their effects; they also manage and

resolve unanticipated crises and conflicts. Within their classrooms, they seek order not for its own sake but in the service of a safe environment in which spontaneous and varied activities can occur. They distinguish between misbehavior that destroys classroom civility and the exuberance and enthusiasm that characterize positive engagement and learning. When disciplinary action is necessary, teachers act promptly and equitably, correcting problems with minimal disruption in ways that allow students to retain their dignity. They consistently work to make all students part of a congenial and purposeful learning environment, which they know is essential for student learning and growth.



### *Reflections on Standard IV:*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# Standard V: Meaningful Learning

Accomplished generalists require students to confront, explore, and understand important and challenging concepts, topics, and issues and to improve skills in purposeful ways.

Standard  
V

Accomplished teachers involve students in activities designed to develop their capacity to think critically and analytically and to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. Teachers help students acquire the metacognitive skills to begin to guide their own learning and assume the role of lifelong learners. Such teachers craft tasks and problems that extend students' abilities and habits to think deeply, creatively, and incisively about the world and their place within it.

## Selecting Worthwhile Topics for Study

Teachers know that meaningful learning is built on concepts drawn from a range of disciplines. They understand that substantive learning rarely occurs when students are presented large amounts of seemingly unrelated information or when students memorize facts divorced from major themes, concepts, or principles. By structuring tasks that promote inquiry and require students to marshal evidence to support their findings, teachers build students' capacities to grasp complex ideas and materials. Often in collaboration with students, teachers select themes that have special resonance for young adolescents, such as friendship, justice, ethics, independence, responsibility, and sexuality. Consequently, they ground their students'

work in issues and questions that are important in their lives and that are confronted regularly by adults, who often approach them from different directions (e.g., how scientists and journalists examine local ecological issues from different perspectives). Through such learning, students come to understand that many important societal issues (e.g., health policy questions) are complex and multidimensional.

Teachers develop meaningful learning experiences in a variety of ways, such as designing activities that allow students to work as writers, scientists, historians, or artists, and they model some of the working habits of these professions. Teachers pose realistic and compelling dilemmas with which students can struggle, while helping students frame, pose, and explore their own questions. They also anticipate the misconceptions and confusions that students are likely to have about different topics and act to avoid them, clarify them when they occur, or take advantage of their potential to illuminate important concepts. Teachers know that such activities help students view the issues under examination from multiple perspectives, which fosters their ability to see the world in its entirety and appreciate its complexities.

Accomplished teachers know how to use, relate to, and build on prescribed curriculum, but are not constrained by it. Instead, as students' needs dictate, they incorporate related topics and issues that stretch students'

minds and horizons, extend their knowledge and understanding of the world, and ultimately enrich their education. (See Standard II—*Knowledge of Subject Matter*.)

## **Building Student Capacity to Apply Knowledge and Act Independently**

In making instructional decisions, teachers place a high value on meeting criteria for relevance and applicability. They recognize that today's complicated world requires a multifaceted approach to thinking and acting. Teachers help students develop critical thinking skills essential to their growth in order to promote students' understanding not only of course work and societal issues they are preparing to confront, but also of their own personal development. Concurrently, they introduce a variety of concepts, skills, and information in ways that often cut across traditional disciplinary lines, focusing on substantive topics important for young adolescents to grasp.

Given young adolescents' interest and enjoyment in exploring abstract ideas and teachers' interest in sparking creative thinking, generalists teach students how to combine ideas, themes, and knowledge from different subject areas to investigate important issues and solve problems. For example, they might have students extend their interpretation of literature from a particular period to bolster their understanding of a central theme in American history or employ science and art to build understanding of important mathematical concepts. When students observe how seemingly disparate ideas interrelate, they are more likely to develop their own connections between and among concepts and theories.

To build such understanding, teachers guide student learning in promising directions

without taking over the work, helping students use what they already know to pose, explore, and solve new problems. Encouraging such independence helps students gain confidence that they can solve problems they have never before encountered. Teachers develop students who challenge assumptions, initiate projects and activities, take risks, share insights, persist in their exploration of difficult material, and demonstrate a commitment to learn the topics under consideration. Teachers also understand that technology can be used to gain access to information from a variety of sources and to stimulate independent learning. Teachers recognize that easy access to information, especially through the Internet, may lead students to believe that all information is acceptable in all contexts. Accomplished generalists help students understand that although some resources are easily attained, they are not necessarily appropriate, acceptable, or reliable.

These teachers know the difference between shallow and substantive learning and have myriad ways to engage students in meaningful learning. In some instances they deliberately create tasks that allow them to work alongside their students and model how to proceed when encountering unfamiliar ground; they may join students in gathering, processing, synthesizing, and evaluating information.

## **Providing Students Opportunities to Define Which Issues Are Worth Exploring**

In designing instructional activities, accomplished teachers value student involvement. To encourage active student participation in curricular choices, they design activities and







# Standard VI: Respect for Diversity

Accomplished generalists model and promote behavior appropriate in a diverse society by showing respect for and valuing all members of their learning communities and by expecting students to treat one another fairly and with dignity.

Accomplished generalists know that the attitudes they manifest as they work with students, colleagues, families, and others who support the learning process provide powerful exemplars for early adolescents; therefore, they conscientiously model the kind of treatment of others they wish to foster in their students. Fairness and respect for individuals are key to their instructional practice; by valuing all members of the learning community, teachers model and promote their expectations that their students will treat one another equitably and with dignity.

## Establishing a Classroom Climate of Fairness and Respect

The manner in which accomplished generalists establish a climate of fairness and mutual respect among all learners is planned and purposeful. Accomplished generalists address issues of diversity proactively to promote equity and to ensure that their students—regardless of race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, exceptionalities, primary spoken language, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, body image, or gender—receive equal opportunities to participate in, enjoy, and benefit from instructional activities and resources. Teachers actively and positively

challenge students who make derogatory comments, express negative stereotypes, or impose inappropriate perspectives on others. (See Standard IV—*Learning Environment*.)

Accomplished generalists are sensitive to the complexities involved in treating each student equitably. They recognize and address relevant diversity issues affecting instruction, class management, and student participation. They show no difference in the welcoming manner in which they speak to, include, call on, or otherwise engage each of their students in learning situations in the classroom. The choice of whole-class, group, or individual activities and of texts for study and discussion attests to a commitment to engage all students in learning. In grouping students for cooperative assignments, for example, teachers may bring together individuals from varying backgrounds, or teachers might establish leadership roles to prevent gender or other stereotypes from restricting participation. They make sure that all pupils receive their fair share of attention and that their assessments of student progress are similarly balanced. They design assignments that give students multiple avenues for success. Teachers respect the dignity and worth of each student and include each one in the learning community as an important individual and active contributor.

Standard  
VI



### Valuing Cultural Diversity

More than creating learning environments in which high expectations and fairness for all students exist, promoting respect for others by modeling appreciation for the richness of cultural and ethnic groups confirms accomplished generalists' understanding of the behavior and development of young adolescents, who frequently emulate adults as they define their own identities. As an integral part of their instruction, accomplished generalists develop and use materials and lessons that reflect the diversity and multicultural aspects of their learners and provide appropriate cross-cultural activities. They celebrate the diversity of language forms and dialects in the United States, but they also understand that having a shared form of English facilitates communication across societal divisions. Teachers seek opportunities to provide forums where experiences can be shared and mutual understandings of similarities and differences can be deepened. They are particularly sensitive and responsive to family and cultural issues that affect students' attitudes toward learning. They are aware of the special attention that they must at times give students whose first language is not English. Teachers thus highlight the diversity as well as the commonalities among their learners and build on a source of strength and dynamism for the learning community. As a result, students acquire an understanding and appreciation of their own and other cultures and develop cultural sensitivity. (See Standard VII—*Multiple Paths to Knowledge*.)

### Upholding High Expectations for Students with Exceptionalities

Accomplished teachers believe solidly in the ability of all students to learn, and they design instruction appropriate to the multiple needs and experiences of special student populations. In their instructional decisions, teachers address the exceptional needs of students whose development falls outside the range typical for their age group or who—for a variety of reasons—learn in ways significantly different from other students.

Teachers create environments that help students learn about one another and understand that all individuals have unique capacities and limitations. Teachers plan, adapt, and implement classroom practices and activities that are individually appropriate, while ensuring that each student becomes an important and valued member of the class.

In addition to taking their own steps to accommodate students with exceptional needs, teachers seek appropriate help from students' families and specialists, and they advocate for essential support services to promote maximum success. They strive to meet the needs of such students without compromising their commitments to maintaining high standards and to providing meaningful classroom experiences for all learners.







# Standard VII: Multiple Paths to Knowledge

Accomplished generalists use a variety of approaches to help students build knowledge and strengthen understanding.

Accomplished generalists use their broad knowledge of the middle-grades curriculum to provide multiple ways for students to pursue a rich understanding of many important topics, to stretch their thinking, and to 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 and be successful, contribute to their enjoyment of school, raise their level of self-confidence, and deepen their understanding of topics and skills studied.

## Creating Instructional Tasks That Respond to Student Diversity

The individual student differences that mark all classrooms require teachers to have multiple means to engage students in grappling with important ideas. To provide varied entry points into the substance of the curriculum, teachers must be especially attuned to students' individual differences, including differences in their educational backgrounds, their home resources, their disposition toward different types of schoolwork, their abilities and exceptionalities, and their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The understanding that teachers have of these factors leads them to design avenues to approach key issues that serve 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 to students but also in the instructional practices that teachers adopt. At times they lead the class as a whole, and at other times they encourage small groups or individuals to explore on their own. For example, for some learners, access to technology-enhanced instruction might offer a promising approach to a topic. Concurrently, to provide opportunities for students with exceptional needs to participate fully in the life of the class, teachers adapt their practice and the routines of the classroom as needed and work collaboratively with specialists or other community resources. They further recognize that students whose home language is not English need to be challenged with intellectually demanding work appropriate to their language facility and may also require additional supports to succeed.

## Providing Students with Multiple Perspectives on Key Matters of Interest

Teachers know the advantages of giving students opportunities to approach the issues before them from a variety of angles and to act on this understanding. Teachers thus not only respond to the diversity of perspectives that exists within most classes but also recognize the growing ability of young

Standard  
VII

adolescents to explore multiple viewpoints and respect values consistent with a democratic community. In part, teachers allow students to explore issues by giving them open-ended opportunities and the technological resources—where available—to address significant problems. This approach often yields a variety of solutions and increases the odds that students will complete assignments successfully. At other times, they acquaint students with techniques that others have used to confront and solve important problems.

Teachers also achieve this objective by varying formats and implementing each effectively. For example, teachers may present contradictory events to spur students to consider new ways of thinking; they may use direct instruction to facilitate skill learning or use cooperative group work and discussions to foster creative thinking and open-mindedness; they may facilitate access to the Internet to develop students' global perspectives; and they also may draw on a variety of metaphors, analogies, illustrations, and problems to extend their students' thinking and develop their capacity to reason incisively. Whatever the approach, teachers have a wide repertoire of strategies, tasks, demonstrations, experiments, and cases to draw on, and they choose wisely from them.

make the best use of their own time and that of their students. They base their choices on their assessment of both the intellectual development of the individuals in their classrooms and larger curricular needs. These teachers also shift their focus when unforeseen difficulties occur 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 to change the focus of discussion in response to student performance. The facility to make timely adjustments to the events of the moment, when such changes in direction are desirable and necessary, marks accomplished practice.

Teachers consistently broaden opportunities for students to explore and discuss the central ideas in each discipline. 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 use to educate young adolescents help create a classroom climate of high expectations, common goals, and mutual support among students.

## **Using Time Efficiently and Adjusting Plans as Circumstances Dictate**



Teachers' knowledge of their students, subject matter, and resources helps them choose compelling topics and materials that







# Standard VIII: Social Development

Accomplished generalists foster students' self-awareness, character, civic responsibility, and respect for diverse individuals and groups.

Accomplished generalists base their instructional decisions on both their students' developmental characteristics and a broad set of goals and objectives for learning. Such decisions reflect genuine concern for young adolescents and a deep understanding of the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and ethical development of young people. Furthermore, accomplished generalists are aware of the pervasive impact of media and technology on a wide range of developmental factors for young adolescents. These teachers recognize the significance of this crucial, impressionable time in students' lives and, through personal example, consistently demonstrate what it means to think and act as a caring human being.

## Fostering Students' Social and Emotional Growth

Although the principal focus of many schools is cognitive growth, teachers know that nurturing the social and emotional growth of young adolescents is often the key to motivating them to learn and to enhancing their overall development. Recognizing that self-worth derives in part from meaningful achievement, they seek to develop their students' strengths in the classroom, out of the classroom, academically, and socially. They employ specific strategies that they extend to all students, especially those who may be perceived as different by their peers, to foster their inclusion into the classroom community.

These strategies take many forms, such as alerting their students to opportunities for personal growth and learning of which they might not be otherwise aware and serving as advisors and advocates when students have problems in their relationships with peers or adults. Teachers are concerned with their students' self-awareness and aspirations; with their development of character and civic responsibility; and with their respect for individual, cultural, religious, gender, ability, and ethnic differences.

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. Teachers use these observations to offer students encouragement and direction in how to state personal ideas and feelings forthrightly and in a manner that both commands respect for oneself and conveys respect for the opinions of others. Students learn from such teachers that it is possible to disagree without being disagreeable, and they understand the value in taking a stand on an issue even though it may not be popular.

Through frequent interaction with students, teachers learn about their students' concerns and aspirations and can determine whether and when students need their advice and guidance. Teachers help students understand the advantages, disadvantages, responsibilities, and appropriate use of all forms of communication, particularly those involving technology. They take special care to encourage students to critically evaluate information they

Standard  
VIII

see and read. They raise students' awareness that electronic contexts in which correspondents are frequently unseen invite risks; heighten vulnerability; and require special care for safety, civility, and tone.

### **Encouraging the Development of Sound Social and Ethical Values**

Teachers nurture the development of sound values in their students, including a concern for the rights of others. They regularly design activities and raise questions that help students recognize prejudice and stereotypes and think about ethical conflicts from a variety of perspectives. Accomplished teachers design assignments that allow students to apply their knowledge to diverse events, themes, topics, and situations and that lead them to confront academic and ethical dilemmas simultaneously. Teachers value and model respect for students' home cultures,

and they help students move from concern about themselves to an awareness of the needs, views, and rights of others. In addition, teachers enable students to understand the cause-and-effect relationships of actions to illustrate that what students do is as important as, or more important than, what they say.

Teachers foster civic and personal responsibility in their students by providing opportunities for joint decision making and rule making, along with student participation in the governance of the classroom. (See Standard IV—*Learning Environment*.) They capitalize on their students' diversity as they help them learn about equity, fairness, justice, and the characteristics of a pluralistic society. The connections these teachers make between schoolwork and the larger community help students understand and apply principles of justice, freedom, liberty, and responsibility.



### ***Reflections on Standard VIII:***

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





# Standard IX: Assessment

Accomplished generalists employ a variety of assessment methods to obtain useful information about student learning and development, to inform instructional strategies, and to assist students in reflecting on their own progress.

Gauging student understanding and progress lies at the heart of teaching that strives to be student centered. Accomplished teachers view assessment as an integral part of their instruction that benefits both the teacher and the student, not just as a process for determining grades. Every student assessment evolves from the goals and directions of the instructional program. Teachers know that well-constructed assessments provide meaningful learning opportunities for students. Consequently, assessment is an ongoing process fueling teachers' decisions for both the short term and the long term. In the classroom, accomplished generalists are constant assessors who distinguish themselves by their ability to read and interpret student work and behavior accurately and quickly. They are adept at assessing, through various evaluation methods, the status of individual students and their rate of progress, as well as the progress of the class as a whole. They use information about the progress of their students to evaluate the relative success of instructional practices, and they incorporate what they learn into their plans for the whole group.

## Employing a Variety of Assessment Methodologies

Teachers understand that the timing, focus, and purpose of an evaluation determine its form. They do not rely on a single method of assessing students, because behavior is influenced by the setting in which it occurs. They know that students have skills that will not emerge in certain settings or during the

course of a single assignment. In the practice of accomplished generalists, assessment and the flow of instruction are difficult to separate from each other; assessment takes place before, during, and after instruction and intertwines with it. Therefore, teachers track student progress with a variety of evaluation methods, each with its own set of purposes, strengths, and weaknesses. Teachers understand the importance of designing and selecting measurement tools that are appropriate, fair, and accurate. They choose well among alternative methods to achieve a good match among method, student, and instructional objective. Their knowledge extends to creating various means for evaluation, such as portfolios, videotapes, demonstrations, and exhibits.

Teachers ask incisive questions during group discussions to assess how well students understand the central ideas being considered, or they talk individually with students who are working independently. At other times they observe their students' behavior as students read to each other or work in a laboratory. Through astute observation and careful interpretation of evidence, teachers gain valuable perspectives on their students' growth and development.

Teachers may use technology to further assess classroom instruction and student learning. For example, through electronic simulation they can evaluate students' problem-solving skills as well as whether a lesson's goals are achieved. Technological assessments, where available, can offer rapid, comprehensive feedback enabling teachers to monitor and adjust instruction in a responsive manner.

Standard IX



Teachers use the results of informal and formal assessments to help students understand their strengths and weaknesses and to encourage their students' continual commitment to learning. They check understanding informally through questioning and observing, and they evaluate students more formally with written and oral performance checks. They may assess classroom climate through conversations or inventories, and they monitor the overall development of students and their progress in grasping large ideas and concepts. Their evaluations help them assess initial levels of student understanding and anticipate potential problems with individual students. In addition, they use techniques that take individual strengths and difficulties into account and focus on individual growth rather than on a student's absolute level of performance.

Teachers analyze assessment results and make adjustments to curriculum and instruction consistent with their findings. Every student assessment indicates when to reteach, when to refine, when to apply particular learning strategies, and when to move forward; this continuing modification of instruction enables teachers to maximize student learning.

### **Focusing Assessment on Students' Capacities for Critical Thinking and In-Depth Understanding**

Teachers do not limit their assessments to verifying that students can repeat facts; they probe for evidence of higher-order understanding, the ability to connect and process various forms of knowledge, and an awareness of the complexities of the world. These teachers gauge their students' abilities to ask good questions, challenge assumptions, take

risks, and initiate projects and activities. They also assess the depth of their students' interest in and engagement with materials, their ability to follow projects to completion, and their willingness and ability to share their insight.

Taking in all this information, teachers skillfully use student responses to guide their decisions about where to go next. They also examine the affective and expressive qualities of students' work and continually assess the social and emotional growth of their students, noting peer interactions and personal development.

### **Helping Students Become Adept at Self-Assessment**

Accomplished teachers clearly communicate their expectations for students' learning so that students can judge how well their work meets those expectations. Teachers develop students' abilities to think about both what they know and how they know it. Teachers recognize the long-term importance of young adolescents' developing a keen awareness of, and assuming responsibility for, their own learning. Therefore, they encourage students to set high goals for themselves and teach them how to evaluate their own progress toward these goals. Teachers provide multiple opportunities for students to assess and articulate the quality of their own work through projects, journals, demonstrations, portfolios, conferences, and other suitable means. They also engage their students in assessing the work of their peers, which can give them fresh perspectives on their own work.







# ***Standard X: Reflective Practice***

Accomplished generalists regularly analyze, evaluate, and strengthen the effectiveness and quality of their practice.

Accomplished teachers consider reflection on their practice central to their responsibilities as professionals to extend their knowledge, improve their teaching, and refine their evolving philosophy of education. They examine their strengths and weaknesses and employ that knowledge in their analysis and planning. They understand that the impact of specific lessons, textbooks, strategies, assignments, technological resources, or assessment tools may vary from class to class as the mix of students changes. They analyze their current students' needs in relation to both the circumstances of the moment and their long-term objectives. They are researchers in an informal, if not a formal, sense, as they analyze the relative merits of teaching practices and judge their appropriateness for their own particular circumstances. Consequently, such teachers distinguish themselves by their capacity for continual, dispassionate self-examination, their openness to innovation, and their willingness to change to strengthen their teaching.

Accomplished teachers stay abreast of new developments. Motivated both by the changes they see around them and by the desire to equip students for the future, these teachers regularly engage in the process of professional growth. Self-reflection and self-renewal are aided by interacting with other professionals, exploring new resources, studying professional literature, and participating in advanced education programs.

## **Evaluating Results and Seeking Input Systematically from a Variety of Sources**

For accomplished teachers, every class and every activity provide opportunities for reflection and improvement. When things go well, they think about why the class succeeded and how to adapt the lessons learned to other classes; when things go poorly, they reflect on how to avoid such mishaps in the future. When they review the work in progress and final products of their students, these teachers assess both themselves and their students. Their conversations with students about classroom climate and interactions provide them with insight and direction. They also carefully analyze input received from parent-student-teacher conferences, parent-teacher conferences, and informal conversations with parents. These teachers regularly seek knowledge and advice from colleagues through discussion, in-class observation of their own teaching, and personal observation of other teachers' practice. These observations and discussions shape their decisions about whether, when, and how their practice should change and create a predisposition to abandon less effective practices and replace them with more promising approaches.

**Standard  
X**

### **Being Open to New Ideas and Continually Refining Practice**

The introspection of these teachers takes many forms. Teachers may participate in seminars, workshops, and courses that challenge their current thinking and actions. They may conduct action research in their classrooms or collaborate with education researchers to examine their practice critically. They consider the role that their own cultural background, biases, values, and personal experiences play in their teaching. They are models of the educated individual as they sharpen their judgment, expand their repertoire of teaching methods, and strengthen their knowledge base. They keep abreast of significant developments and debates in the disciplines. Such efforts toward professional currency are constantly challenging but increasingly essential because the world in which teachers teach and students learn is one of rapid and dramatic change. Concurrently, the profession is continually rethinking, reinventing, and debating a broad range of pedagogical and content issues that have curricular implications.

These teachers consider the usefulness of the prevailing research findings about adolescence, learning, and intelligence while recognizing the limitations of such research. They stay current with the newest curricular materials and relevant technological advances. They select from theories, emerging practices, current debates, and promising research findings to improve their practice. In doing so, they explore topics in which they may have limited expertise and experiment with alternative materials, approaches, and instructional strategies. This personal study supports the instructional decisions they make and their ability to articulate cogently a rationale for their actions. It also contributes to their consistent ability to be aggressive in seeking solutions to issues and problems in their practice.

Accomplished teachers participate in a wide range of reflective practices that reinforce their creativity, stimulate their personal growth, and enhance their professionalism. They exemplify the highest ethical ideals and embrace professional standards in assessing their practice. Ultimately, self-reflection contributes to teachers' depth of knowledge and skill and adds dignity to their practice.



#### ***Reflections on Standard X:***

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





# Standard XI: Family Partnerships

Accomplished generalists work with families to achieve common goals for the education of their children.

Families can be teachers' strongest allies in the education of young adolescents. Accomplished teachers understand and value the distinctive role of parents and guardians, and they actively pursue opportunities to build strong partnerships. They welcome family participation in school activities and take the initiative in encouraging parents to become a part of the life of the school.

Teachers clearly signal through word and deed the importance of families as partners with the school in their children's education. As teachers work to create a sense of community between the school and students' homes, they make clear the mutual interest they share with parents<sup>2</sup> in seeing the young people in their charge succeed.

## Gaining Insight into Students through Partnerships with Families

Accomplished teachers recognize that families have experiences and insights that, once tapped, can enrich the quality of education for students. They elicit parents' ideas about their children's interests and about ways to motivate them. They respond thoughtfully and thoroughly to parents' concerns. In so doing, teachers interact as effectively as

possible with families; such partnerships cultivate interests that extend beyond the school setting.

Aware that the complexities of family structure frequently affect academic performance, teachers familiarize themselves with the family situations of their students as conditions warrant. Involvement with parents helps accomplished generalists learn about a family's background and culture, creating a window through which they can gain insight into parents' expectations and aspirations for their children. Teachers treat families with sensitivity, respect, and understanding, realizing that parents' prior experiences with school often frame their expectations and attitudes. Teachers welcome the keen observations and reports that parents often provide about their children. Such understanding of children's lives outside the school and of their access to home resources is often important in tailoring curriculum and instruction within the school.

Regular interaction with parents helps accomplished teachers establish invaluable rapport with families. It also holds the promise of stimulating family support and involvement with their children's education. However, these relationships may not be uniformly congenial or productive. When confronted with difficulties in relationships with families, accomplished teachers seek common ground and attempt to build understandings that will serve students' best interests.

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

## **Cultivating Families’ Interest in Supporting Their Children’s Education**

Accomplished generalists understand that active, involved, and informed families create a network that supports vital, effective instructional programs. They see collaboration with parents as an essential tool in providing students with the support, motivation, and understanding they desire and need. Teachers effectively communicate with families about their children’s accomplishments, successes, and needs for improvement, including means for attaining higher goals. They ensure that this communication extends to families whose primary language is not English.

Teachers search for ways to share the school’s objectives and expectations for its students, as well as the rationales for assignments. Teachers interpret and discuss students’ work as well as report cards and test scores in a manner that gives parents an accurate portrait of their children’s progress. They

can discuss course selection and consequences, including the importance of planning for high school and future education. They work constructively with parents to help their children develop good learning habits and study skills, complete homework, set goals, and improve performance. As necessary, they assist families in finding additional resources and services outside the school, such as health care, counseling, and child care.

Accomplished teachers actively seek ways to encourage parental involvement. Teachers therefore exemplify a range of communication strategies with families, the goal of which is to build relationships based on trust and mutual dedication to student achievement and progress. By establishing and frequently using avenues for communication, accomplished generalists provide opportunities for family input in the development of curriculum and school improvement plans, and, most important, in their children’s education.



### ***Reflections on Standard XI:***

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---







# ***Standard XII: Collaboration with Colleagues***

Accomplished generalists 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 field. They do so because they see themselves as members of a larger learning community with responsibilities that extend beyond their classroom, including a responsibility to shape a healthy professional culture in their school.

Consequently, accomplished generalists can be found serving as peer coaches or mentors to student teachers, new teachers, or experienced colleagues; working with colleagues to design, improve, or evaluate programs, staff development plans, and practices; or providing leadership and information to other teachers on ways to involve parents in their children's education. They might contribute to the review, revision, or design of local, district, and state curriculum frameworks; make presentations at professional meetings; contribute to professional magazines and journals; or serve on education policy committees or councils. They may also collaborate with educators from colleges, universities, or other institutions and agencies to participate in pilot programs, implement action research projects, or co-teach postsecondary courses. To facilitate cooperation, teachers often use electronic means that broaden the range and impact of collaboration.

## **Contributing to the School's Intellectual Life and Overall Quality of Instruction**

As a result of their interactions with colleagues and the profession, these teachers challenge 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 know how and when to question convention, tradition, and innovation in the search for practices that will help all children succeed. Even in settings where students' interests are not always the first priority, they serve as strong advocates for students. They also actively influence professional norms in the school, encouraging attitudes of experimentation and collaboration among their colleagues, as they work to establish and sustain a community of learners.

Accomplished teachers are adept at working with other teachers at different levels to ensure smooth and successful transitions for students to and from the middle grades. They cooperate with other teachers and administrators to understand and improve the scope and sequence of instruction from the primary to the middle grades and from the middle to the upper grades, so that students have the greatest possible chance for success as they

**Standard  
XII**



move from a familiar to an unfamiliar setting. Accomplished generalists also skillfully coordinate their work with support personnel, such as counselors, resource teachers, and curricular specialists, to ensure that students who need custom-tailored instruction are properly identified, curricula are well integrated, and special services fit students' needs. As necessary, they consult with experts in aspects of early adolescent development that affect instruction. In addition, they participate effectively on school committees and projects with other educators to improve school policies, organization, or procedures.

### **Contributing to the Advancement of the Profession**

Accomplished teachers collaborate with other school professionals, sometimes through mentoring or coaching, to increase student learning and development and enhance the quality of life in the school. Skilled at working harmoniously and effectively with professional colleagues, they initiate informal discussions with them, observe them at work, and, in turn, invite colleagues to observe them in class. Some go

beyond the boundaries of their schools to collaborate at the district, state, and national levels to improve the quality of programs and to contribute to the professional growth of the larger learning community.

### **Collaborating to Advance Integrated Learning**

Collaboration with colleagues to build meaningful connections across content disciplines marks the practice of accomplished generalists. Teachers recognize such collaboration as a means of strengthening instructional strategies and practices and designing and implementing programs for integrated understanding. Their involvement with peers is planned and purposeful; it improves their own effectiveness as teachers, expands their knowledge of young adolescents, strengthens their understanding of how their field connects to others, and contributes to the knowledge and skills of other teachers and education. (See Standard II—*Knowledge of Subject Matter* and Standard V—*Meaningful Learning*.)







The 12 standards in this document represent a professional consensus on the characteristics of accomplished practice and provide a profile of the accomplished Early Adolescence/Generalist teacher. 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 to 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 these 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, *Early Adolescence/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.



# Early Adolescence/Generalist Standards Committee

*Developers of First Edition*



**Judith C. McGovern**—Chair  
Social Studies/English Teacher  
Roosevelt Middle School  
San Francisco, California

**Yolanda M. Rodriguez**—Vice Chair  
Teacher, Open Program  
Martin Luther King, Jr., School  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

**Ross M. Burkhardt**  
English/Social Studies Teacher  
Shoreham–Wading River Middle School  
Shoreham, New York

**Regenia Earlywine**  
Mathematics and Science Teacher  
Meekins Middle School  
Stuttgart, Arkansas

**Jacquelynne Eccles**  
Professor of Psychology  
University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

**Joyce L. Epstein**  
Co-Director  
Center on Families, Communities,  
Schools, and Children's Learning  
The Johns Hopkins University  
Baltimore, Maryland

**Mary Ellen Finch**  
Dean  
School of Education  
Maryville University  
St. Louis, Missouri

**David D. Haynes**  
Sixth-Grade Teacher  
Saint Paul Public Schools  
Saint Paul, Minnesota

**Oliver Leon Hurley**  
Associate Dean  
College of Education  
Georgia State University  
Atlanta, Georgia

**C. Kenneth McEwin, Jr.**  
Chairperson  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
College of Education  
Appalachian State University  
Boone, North Carolina

**Laura M. Saint George**  
Fifth-Grade Teacher  
Forest Ridge School  
Bellevue, Washington

**Kathryn White-Lathrop**  
Language Arts Teacher  
Burleigh Manor Middle School  
Ellicott City, Maryland

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





# Early Adolescence/Generalist Standards Committee

## *Developers of Second Edition*

---



**Mary Ellen Finch—Chair**  
Dean and Professor Emerita  
Maryville University  
St. Louis, Missouri

**Jennifer J. Cole, NBCT—Vice Chair**  
Teacher  
Platteville Elementary School  
Platteville, Colorado

**Mary Bozik**  
Professor  
Department of Communication Studies  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, Iowa

**Kathleen C. Buzad**  
Induction Program Trainer (ER&D)  
John Adams School  
Scranton, Pennsylvania

**Lyn Le Countryman, NBCT**  
Associate Professor  
University of Northern Iowa  
Department of Teaching  
Malcolm Price Laboratory School  
Cedar Falls, Iowa

**Jim Gatling**  
Teacher  
Highland Avenue School  
Montgomery, Alabama

**Sally Hunter**  
Associate Professor  
University of St. Thomas  
School of Education  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

**Linda C. Iovacchini, NBCT**  
Performance-Based Licensure Consultant  
Western Region Education Service  
Alliance  
Canton, North Carolina

**Jeanneine P. Jones**  
Associate Professor of Middle Grades  
Education  
Department of Middle Grades,  
Secondary and K–12 Education  
University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
Charlotte, North Carolina

**Mary E. Kotz, NBCT**  
Instructional Specialist  
Milford School District  
Lincoln, Delaware

**Maryann O. Leonard, NBCT**  
Literacy Facilitator  
Guilford Middle School  
Greensboro, North Carolina

**Teresa Vasquez Mayhugh**  
Teacher  
Manassas City Schools  
Manassas, Virginia

**Earl Myers, Jr.**  
Teacher  
Greencastle Elementary School  
Silver Spring, Maryland

**D. Lynn Reed**  
Assistant Superintendent  
Metropolitan School District of  
Martinsville  
Martinsville, Indiana

**Yolanda M. Rodriguez**  
Mathematics Department Head,  
Grades 6–12  
Wellesley Public Schools  
Wellesley, Massachusetts

**Martha J. Stenersen**  
Reading 1 Language Arts Teacher  
Boonsboro Middle School  
Boonsboro, Maryland

**Jacqueline Thornhill**  
Teacher  
Pajaro Valley Unified School District  
Watsonville, California



The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' *Early Adolescence/Generalist Standards, Second Edition*, reflects more than a decade of dialogue about accomplished teaching in the early adolescence curriculum. These standards derive their power from an amazing degree of collaboration and consensus. Through the expertise and input of two standards committees, convened ten 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. *Early Adolescence/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 *Early Adolescence/Generalist Standards, Second Edition*. Any thank-you must begin with the pioneers in 1990, who spent six years debating, reflecting on, and articulating the multiple facets of accomplished teaching so that they could help advance the field and provide a rigorous and sound basis for national certification of teachers. In particular, the National Board would like to show its appreciation to Chair Judith McGovern and Vice Chair Yolanda Rodriguez, 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 Early Adolescence/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 Early Adolescence/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 Mary Ellen Finch; Vice Chair Jennifer Cole, NBCT; and Facilitator David Haynes for their invaluable leadership in making the second edition a reality. We are also 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 *Early Adolescence/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 Early Adolescence/Generalist Standards Committee was Caroline Bitterwolf, 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. Early adolescence teachers and scholars, state and local officials, and representatives of disciplinary organizations—to name just a few—reviewed a draft of *Early Adolescence/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 to 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 Kent Harris, 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.*