

# NATIONAL BOARD

*for Professional Teaching Standards®*

Luke

Hello, everyone. Welcome back to national board conversations. My name is Luke Correia-Damude. I am your host, and we're so excited to be back with episode two, a National Board Conversations is a podcast that brings National Board-certified teachers to your ears from coast to coast. To give you some tips and guidance, a little bit of insight into their journey and just talk about education and the National Board today's guest is Juliana Urtubey. She is a national board-certified teacher from Las Vegas, Nevada. She also has been named teacher of the year for her state. Juliana is a great example of someone who continually strives for higher levels within their career wants to expand their knowledge, learn more and continually develop more skills, more relationships and diverse communities. So without further ado here is Juliana with our conversation. Hi, Juliana, how are you?

Juliana

I'm doing well. How are you?

Luke

I'm great. Thanks so much for agreeing to speak with me today and joining us on National Board Conversations.

Juliana I'm so happy to be here. Thanks for having me.

Luke

Maybe we can start by just having you introduce yourself to the listeners?

Juliana

My name is Juliana Urtubey. I am a teacher in Las Vegas, Nevada. I certified, I have my national board certification in exceptional needs. I certified in 2018 and this year I'm, Nevada's state teacher of the year.

Luke

Congratulations. Wow. How does it feel to be the teacher of the year?

Juliana

It's a tremendous honor to be in Nevada as teacher of the year. It's wonderful to be able to represent teachers have so much love and admiration for teachers. I take it as a great honor, but also as a great responsibility to make sure that I am representing our teachers well. Also the students and the families we serve.

Luke Take a couple steps back and talk about what the road looked like to becoming teacher of the year. What was your motivation for become a teacher in the first place, and also maybe talk about your National Board certification and what motivated you to pursue that as well?

Juliana

So I wanted to become a teacher because it was really important to me growing up, being able to maintain my identities. So I'm a first-generation student. I was born in Columbia and at home, my family was really good about making sure that we all kept speaking Spanish and we were tied to our roots and at school it was almost like a different world. I acquired English, I acquired academic skills and so I wanted to be the kind of teacher that connected both of those worlds together. I serve a lot of students that have very similar stories that are similar to my story. It allows me to bridge both of their worlds together. So that's really why I wanted to get into teaching. I wanted to create spaces that were really engaging and welcoming to first-generation families and families of color.

Juliana

And as a teacher of color, I was able to do that. A friend had told me about National Board candidacy and I decided to look into it. I read one of the books that is provided by the National Board, it's called "What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do". As I read the 30 - 40 page document, I felt that it was teachers speaking directly to me. It was because teachers helped write that book. Within the first part of the book that talks about core proposition, one that teachers are committed to their students. The book talks about equity and how teachers aren't committed to enacting equity in our schools. I was immediately hooked. I knew that this was going to be the right sort of challenge for me because the whole process was written and designed by teachers for teachers. And it included a lot of reflection of our practice and that was what I really feel I needed to be able to take my professional skills to the next level.

Luke

Tell us about your personal experience with certification. What was your journey like?

Juliana

My journey really focused on my students. I told my students that we were going to go through the certification process together because they were going to be my teachers. And so my students were not only really excited, but they were so encouraging and supportive of me. I even had one of the moms. She would bring me coffee every once in a while because her daughter, my student, would tell her that I looked a little tired. So it was a really taxing experience, but it was worthwhile every step of the way. I was very, very lucky to have the support of a cohort. It really helped me build relationships with colleagues. They helped me so much. We pushed each other's thinking. Those are still some of my friends, some of my dearest friends, National Board is all about the reflection and all about the body of knowledge.

Juliana

I don't think all people who are exploring candidacy for national board understand or have access or have had someone tell them about the body of knowledge. So the body of knowledge are basically the tenants of the national board, the first part of the body of knowledge are the five core propositions. The second part is the architecture of accomplished teaching and the third part are the specific certificate standards. For me, being able to take a deep dive into those three resources, really helped challenge me and push me in terms of what I thought I was able to accomplish. I think that it's designed to be that I think it's designed to be almost a teacher in of itself. You're going through the process and it's teaching you a lot about your practice even before you've even submitted your components. The power of National Board is that throughout the whole entire process, you're looking at learning your students, their engagement, your environment, your assessments, everything in a whole new light, in a deeper light. So I really enjoyed that process. It helped reinvigorate my commitment to being an educator.

Luke

You did the National Board and then you became a certified teacher. Did it change your relationship to professional development or did it change the goals you had for yourself within the profession?

Juliana

Before I found out that I had certified, I felt tremendously accomplished. I would say that yes, definitely my confidence in what I thought that I was able to do grew, I felt ready to see myself as an expert in my field and really project that. In the sense of let's center students, let's support students. Let's figure out a way to help teachers and the way they need to help, no matter what I do. I always have that comma NBCT because to me it's really important, not just to show my accomplishment, but to show that this is a collective effort across the country that's happening. It elevates our profession. It's a good way to get the word out about national board. Once I had that NBCT after my name opportunities really came to me, I have tremendous mentors who make sure that I see those opportunities and take advantage of them, but also, people really want teachers who are experts in their field. I would argue to say that there's so many teachers that are experts in their field and they don't even know it. And so, going through the national board process helps teachers understand that they're the experts that they have been for a while. Of course, we still have so much room to grow. Everybody has room left to grow and things left to learn.

Luke

Did you find that your appetite for striving to higher accolades or higher achievements in the profession grew as a result of having your certification? Did your frame of mind change at all afterwards?

Juliana

For me, the why is always really important. If I can do something and be of service and support teachers or students and their families, then my answer is typically yes to that opportunity. When I see the need to have teachers of color leading, when I see the need to have linguistically diverse teachers leading and having our voices heard, I think that I'm called to rise up. Everybody has a little bit of a shy part or maybe a little bit of an imposter syndrome floating around, but national board definitely encourages me to push through that and be the teacher that other people really need at that time.

Luke

How did the teachings and findings from your own National Board certification process help you and empower you when you're going forward in your pursuits for success in your career and professional development?

Juliana

Being a national board-certified teacher, and going through that process of putting together your portfolios for each component definitely makes you a much better writer. It's some of the most difficult writing I've ever done, but it's definitely something that's helped me in applications since then. When you write for national board, you have to spend a quality amount of time analyzing the questions. When you analyze those questions, you get really good at knowing what the question is asking you. It seems like a simple task, but it's really challenging. So yes, being a national board-certified teacher did make me feel more confident in applying for teacher of the year for Nevada. It also helped me with my application. I did feel encouraged when I was looking at that application and for both the state and national teacher of the year, one of the boxes in the first part of the application is, "are you a national board-certified teacher?" So I felt very proud to be able to check yes.

Luke

What's one thing that you found to be an integral puzzle piece for your success in doing your certification?

Juliana

The advice is to do the work in really understanding the five core propositions, the architecture of accomplished teaching and your certification standards. Those three elements, if you understand them before you go into the nitty gritty of planning each component, the more you will understand the process. Because it was designed brilliantly, you know, the five core propositions merge with architecture of accomplished teaching. So each part of that plan, the accomplished teaching for those of you who haven't heard of, it is really a graphic organizer. That is the planning process of any educator. You start with what your students, what you know about your students and what they're able to do. And then you end off with what goal will be next. Now that you've accomplished this goal with your students. And so spending the time to really look at each step, you'll see how the five core propositions aligned with the architecture.

Juliana

Then as you read your certificate standards, you'll see again, the five core propositions and the architecture spiraling through your certificate standards. So give yourself the gift of really being able to read those and understand those before you get into the planning. Because once you get into the planning, it's very hard to see outside of what you've planned for your component. The struggle that I had in the beginning was that I didn't take the time to look at the body of knowledge deeply. Everyone told me to do it, but I just, I didn't do it because I didn't fully understand. It makes sense because now that I support candidates, I see them going through it too. You are so overwhelmed with the directions. The directions have to be followed very carefully so you have to make sure you understand them and then you are planning and you are organizing materials and lessons, who can come record you and all this other stuff that you get swept up in those logistics. During my journey, I actually had to stop about a quarter of the way into it because I kind of saw my wheel spinning and I decided to just spend the time I needed to go back and reread all that, all the resources of the body of knowledge and then moving forward, things started clicking for me.

Luke

Did you have what I've been calling an aha moment during your certification process?

Juliana

The aha moment in completing my components for national board certification was that the act of completing the components was the actual teacher. The fact that I had to record videos and watch them and decide on what's not working well. Or if I don't want to use that video to submit because I'm talking the entire time. You know, I realized that because I had to find the right video. So in looking at what didn't work, I reflected on my practice and I fixed things that I saw just weren't serving my students in the best way possible. My biggest aha moment was when I realized, Oh yeah, this is the point. This is what they expect and want us to do. They want us to fail a few times and reflect on why we're failing to really get down to the nitty gritty of what we do and why we do it. I feel like national board is this little portfolio that I'm going to keep tucked under my arm, every single place that I go in education.

Luke

What words of wisdom do you have for our listeners out there that are on the journey or thinking about jumping into this certification process?

Juliana

My biggest encouragement to teachers is to just trust in the process, know that it's designed to be uniquely you so that's going to make it more difficult. When you've experienced frustration in the process, ask yourself, what is National Board trying to teach me right now as a practitioner? What is it about my students' needs that I'm not seeing that I should be seeing so that I can help them learn better? I think that those things, when we center ourselves in our, "why" it really helps us grow and it helps push through those difficult moments. Know that you can do it. I know that a million times during my candidacy, I felt unsure if I was going to be able to complete it. Luckily, I was able to surround myself with people who really believed in me, who mentored me.

Juliana

That's also something encouraging, don't be afraid to ask for help. I've had perfect strangers support me. I even had a friend from high school reach out to me and she said, Hey, I'm a National Board-Certified Teacher. I'd be happy to read your components if you want my support. I hadn't talked to her in over 10 years or even more than that. It was wonderful to be able to rekindle our relationship and she supported me so much. So don't be afraid to ask for support, even if it's outside of your physical circle, there are people all over this country who would love to support you. So don't be afraid to ask for help.

Luke

Well, you know what, you've been a huge help by just coming on today and talking with me and letting our listeners gained some wisdom from you. Thanks for being episode two of National Board Conversations.

Juliana

It was my pleasure, Luke, thank you so much for helping promote this work. I think that national board really holds a lot of keys in terms of elevating and improving our profession. I think teachers are brilliant. They're wonderful people. So what a better way to highlight them than to be able to have the NBCT after their name?

Luke

Well, there you have it folks, that was Juliana Urtubey. I'm so happy that you joined us and I'm so happy. I got to speak with Juliana, what an amazing woman and an incredible teacher. We are going to come into our third episode in December so do keep your ears and eyes open for that. Thank you once again for joining us. My name is Luke Correia-Damude and I look forward to talking with you soon. Want to know more about national board certification, please visit [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org) for more information.