

THE LEARNING System

FOR A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY OF DISTRICT LEADERS ENSURING SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

ROAD MAP *for* LEADERSHIP

District's guidance system encourages teachers on the path to certification

BY JOAN RICHARDSON

A daunting \$2,300 fee almost prevented Carolyn Guthrie from seeking certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

"I knew about National Board Certification and I had it in my mind that I would do it some day. But I didn't have the funds. I had a daughter in college and a younger one at home and I was reluctant to even say anything about it to my husband," said Guthrie, then a high school math teacher in Miami.

But, in 1998, the state of Florida began offering to pay 90% of the certification fee for eligible applicants. In addition, teachers who achieve National Board Certification qualify to receive a salary bonus for the life of the certificate, and an additional mentoring bonus.

The incentives were enough to propel Guthrie into the program. And she wasn't alone. Florida now boasts the second largest collection of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in the nation and Miami-Dade County Public Schools has the fourth highest concentration of NBCTs of any school district in the country.

In Florida, the state has provided the financial package that makes it possible for such large numbers of teachers to seek certification. But, in Miami-Dade, it's the district that has provided the collegial support before and after certification that makes the process more palatable and the results more

beneficial for teachers and their students.

"We're pushing 1,000 NBCTs in this district. I definitely think it's a value-add for us.

Continued on p. 6



WHAT'S INSIDE

District Leadership

Take the first steps toward building a constituency for professional learning.

PAGE 2

Focus on NSDC's Standards

Redesign professional learning to include opportunities for public practice.

PAGE 3

NSDC Tool

What a district leader needs to know about developing teacher leadership within his or her district.

PAGES 4-5



National Staff
Development
Council
800-727-7288
www.nsdc.org

Our goal: All teachers in all schools will experience high-quality professional learning as part of their daily work.



Hayes Mizell
is NSDC's
Distinguished
Senior Fellow

**Educators must act
in order to have
their voices heard.**

Become advocates for professional learning

Does professional learning have a constituency? There are, of course, staff developers, coaches, and other educators paid by school systems to develop, coordinate, or provide professional learning. Other educators engage in learning experiences voluntarily or because their employers require it. Professional learning benefits the first group because it is responsible for their employment, and benefits the other, one hopes, because it enhances the effectiveness of school and classroom leaders.

These educators should be the natural constituency of professional learning. They not only benefit directly from the learning, but because of their intimate involvement, they understand how professional learning works, why it is important, and they experience its results. But except in the narrow sense of the term, does this make every educator a “constituent” of professional learning? Are citizens who never vote, never express an opinion about a public issue, and never attend a meeting of an interest group “constituents” of an elected official? Technically, the answer may be yes, but in reality it is no because there is no reason for the official to know about or consider the citizens’ interests.

Many educators are in a similar position. More than anyone, they know the value of professional development, or they wish the experiences could be better, but they seldom take action to support or demand high-quality professional learning. Educators have almost no impact on decisions about learning experiences in which they participate. In effect, they are no constituency at all. NSDC’s 12,000 members are a notable exception, but their numbers are small compared to the more than 3 million teachers in the nation’s public schools.

Other constituencies missing in action are public school families and taxpayers. They are more removed from professional learning than front line educators, but whether professional learning is effective makes a great difference in the education of the community’s children. Aside from a few vigilant school board members, there is almost no public understanding of professional learning or oversight of its results. Without a public constituency, professional development is left to drift, its direction and level of investment determined by only a handful of education officials and policy makers. As a consequence, there is little public support for sustaining highly effective professional development or for improving that which is less effective.

There are times when somnambulant constituencies awake to organize themselves and act in behalf of their perceived interests. This occurs occasionally in politics, infrequently in education, and almost never in professional learning. School systems, therefore, need to prepare constituencies to interpret to their communities why high-quality professional development is the best strategy for raising student performance.

Ironically, the No Child Left Behind Act provides the stimulus for school systems to act. A school system that wants NCLB funds for professional learning must describe how “teachers, paraprofessionals, principals, other relevant school personnel, and parents have collaborated in the planning of the activities ... and in the preparation of the application.” No one knows how conscientiously school systems are complying with this requirement. Probably, few are intentionally using it to develop broader, more active constituencies for professional learning. By using the NCLB requirement, school systems can take the first small step towards building a constituency for professional learning.



Pat Roy is co-author of *Moving NSDC's Staff Development Standards Into Practice: Innovation Configurations* (NSDC, 2003)

An uncomfortable reality

I love the look of shock on educators' faces when we explore the research on the impact of training on practice (Joyce & Showers, 1988). Most educators feel uncomfortable because this work confronts them with a reality of the impact of most training programs — namely, that even workshops that provide powerful new information do little to change anyone's daily practice. Yet, improving and changing daily classroom practice is the fundamental goal of professional development. Student learning can only improve when educators change what they do daily in their classrooms.

Learning:

Staff development that improves the learning of all students applies knowledge about human learning and change.

If you accept this premise, then you also need to accept that traditional staff development activities should change. Consider one of the desired outcomes for the Learning standard: Central office staff members **design district-based professional learning to develop participants' depth of understanding of new practices** (Roy & Hord, 2003). On the surface, this statement might seem to mean that you find someone who can teach staff more content knowledge. I believe this means that you redesign professional development so that educators acquire a *high degree of skill* related to **instruction, content knowledge, and assessment skills**.

Developing a high degree of skill, according to Joyce and Weil (1986), is the first step of implementation. Implementation or use of new strategies and practices cannot be expected if the desired skills are poorly developed in the first place. Some conditions that are necessary to attain a high degree of skill include:

- Adequate time to develop and practice new skills;
- Practice of skills under simulated conditions

that are close to classroom conditions;

- Working with peers so teachers profit from one another's ideas and skills;
- Practicing, in peer groups, with small groups of students in safe setting; and
- Effective feedback on the quality of implementation of new skills (Joyce & Weil).

There are additional implications for those who manage and plan to develop a high degree of skill. First, a clear description of the essential components of the new instructional practice, curriculum, or assessment should be developed. In addition, the practice of new skills requires a safe environment that is risk-free

and employs small, collegial teams of teachers who work together. An innovation configuration map, based on essential components, is required and used for providing descriptive feedback as well as information about next steps. Everyone in the collegial teams should know how to give effective and descriptive feedback. Finally, everyone has to publicly practice the new skills.

Shifting from knowing to doing is a huge leap. Redesigning staff development to include opportunities for public practice builds a bridge that helps change classroom practice.

REFERENCES

Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (1988). *Student achievement through staff development*. White Plains, NY: Longman Press.

Joyce, B. & Weil, B. (1986). *Models of teaching*. Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Roy, P. & Hord, S. (2003). *Moving NSDC's staff development standards into practice: Innovation configurations, Volume I*. Oxford, OH: NSDC.

Read more about NSDC's standards at www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm.

LEARNING ABOUT LEADERSHIP

“An empowered organization is one in which individuals have the knowledge, skill, desire, and opportunity to personally succeed in a way that leads to collective organizational success.”

— Stephen R. Covey

“The only real training for leadership is leadership.”

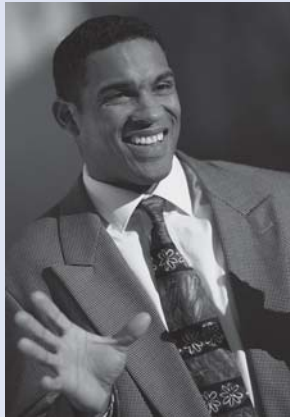
— Anthony Jay

“I start with the premise that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.”

— Ralph Nader

ROUND I:

What was your first leadership position?



ROUND II:

Who saw leadership skills in you?

Are leaders born or developed? What were your early leadership experiences? Who encouraged you? Why? How can you translate your own early leadership experiences into developing the leadership of others?

As system leaders consider the challenges of developing teacher leadership within their districts, they can learn much by reflecting on their own experiences.

Materials: Chart paper, notecards, markers, pens, and pencils,

Directions

ROUND I

Ask participants to stand and announce their first leadership position. This works even with a large group, you will be able to quickly scan the various leadership experiences of participants. *Time: 10 minutes*

ROUND II

Ask participants to reflect on the answers to the following questions and jot down some thoughts to share with a small group later. *Time: 3 minutes*

- What were you doing when you were identified as a leader (or a future leader)?
- Who saw leadership skills in you?
- Why do you think he or she identified you as a leader?
- What actions did that person take to share their expectations with you?

In small table groups of no more than six, each person shares their answers to these questions. *Time: 15 minutes*

ROUND III:

**What got
in your
way as a
leader?**



ROUND IV:

**What skill
helped
you most
as a
leader?**

**ROUND III**

Ask participants to reflect again privately on these questions. *Time: 3 minutes*

- At the beginning, what got in your way as a leader?
- How did you handle those challenges/obstacles?
- What would have helped you as a beginning leader?

Again, in the small table groups, each person shares their answers to these questions. *Time: 15 minutes*

ROUND IV

In a discussion in the small table groups, ask participants to share aloud their answers to this question:
What skill helped you the most as a leader?

Invite each group to make a list of the skills suggested by the individuals at the table. *Time: 2 minutes*

The facilitator collects suggestions from every table and writes them on chart paper that can be seen by all participants.

CONCLUDING QUESTION FOR THE ENTIRE GROUP

What can we do to enhance these skills among the potential leaders in our schools? What kinds of experiences should we provide in order to enhance these skills?

Source: Kay Cornell, *Galileo Institute for Teacher Leadership, Oakland University, Rochester, Mich.*

**“Management is
doing things right;
leadership is doing
the right things.”**

— Peter Drucker

**“Leadership and
learning are
indispensable to
each other.”**

— John F. Kennedy

**“One of the
hardest tasks of
leadership is
understanding
that you are not
what you are, but
what you’re
perceived to be by
others.”**

— Edward L. Flom

HOW CAN YOU CREATE SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION?

- **Partner with other** like-minded districts in order to work with your state legislature to develop appropriate financial incentives for NBCTs.

- **Make the incentive** a legislative priority for school districts so lawmakers will hear a single voice.

- **Educate lawmakers** about the value of having highly qualified teachers in the classrooms in your state.

- **Learn from the examples** of other states and districts that have invested in National Board Certification.

To learn more about the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, visit www.nbpts.org.

District guides teachers on the path to certification

Continued from p. 1

That gives me a critical mass of 1,000 teachers who are looking at their students, their student products, and their own instruction in a different way. That moves us into a higher quality professional development,” said Ava Byrne, deputy superintendent for professional development for Miami-Dade County schools.

But Byrne and Supt. Rudy Crew also have a bigger vision for how NBCTs can contribute to the vitality of the district. “We want to capture their energy. We’re grooming NBCTs how to lead among their peers. We’re giving them the leadership skills and the mentoring and peer coaching strategies. We think that, because of the nature of the NBCT process, mentoring and peer coaching work comes naturally for them,” Byrne said.

So far, the combination of the state incentives and the district’s vision seems to be working in Miami-Dade. Of 991 NBCTs in Miami-Dade, only 31 have moved into non-classroom positions.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was created in 1987 with the belief that it could raise the standard for quality teaching in the U.S. by developing standards for “accomplished teaching” and identifying teachers who met those standards.

Implicit in NBPTS’s belief was that NBCTs would return to their schools and share their knowledge about teaching with their colleagues. But few districts provided a pathway to leadership for NBCTs, often leaving the honored teachers on their own to navigate through uncharted waters.

The rigorous certification process is a deeply reflective professional development process that requires between 200 and 400 hours and takes up to three years to complete. Candidates must pass subject-matter assessments and submit a portfolio that includes videotapes of classroom instruction and samples of student work. Only four in 10 teachers achieve certification on their first try.

WHAT FLORIDA PROVIDES

Florida was one of the first states that provided support for teachers going through the National Board Certification process.

Through the Dale Hickam Excellent Teaching Program, Florida covers 90% of the certification fee — now \$2,500 — for first-time candidates and provides a salary supplement equal to 10% of the state average teacher salary. That amounts to more than \$4,000 a year for the life of the 10-year certificate. Florida teachers can also earn a second 10% bonus by mentoring other teachers — either NBCT candidates, struggling teachers, or novice teachers — for the equivalent of 12 work days a year.

In addition to the state’s incentives, Miami-Dade offers a one-time stipend of \$7,500 paid upon certification.

“The state support is great. If we didn’t have the state support, Miami-Dade would be looking for greater local incentives because of our strong commitment to that process,” Byrne said.

WHAT THE DISTRICT PROVIDES

Guthrie, who now manages Miami-Dade’s NBCT program, said the state’s financial incentives are very convincing for teachers. But Miami-Dade’s moral and logistical support to get through the process is equally important.

When Guthrie sought her certification, she was the only teacher in her school going through the process. She received occasional advice from a teacher friend who had certified the year before and she knew about a group of math teachers who studied together but their meetings were a two-hour round-trip drive from her home. Given her family and work responsibilities, she opted to go it alone.

“I squeezed it in here and there and everywhere,” she said.

She stuck with it and, in 2000, earned her certification for Adolescent Young Adulthood Mathematics.

After achieving certification, however, she

Continued on p. 7



The value of National Board certification process

“The process is so grueling that you don’t realize the impact it’s having on you until it’s over. But, by the time you’re finished, you’ve become accustomed to thinking in a different way. Going through the process, you’re forced to think about the decisions you make that are almost instantaneous and that you’ve never really reasoned through before. You start to ask why did you do that, why did you ask that question and not a different question, why did you ask it in that way. It really sticks with you.”

— Carolyn Guthrie

Consider the value of sending your teacher leaders to NSDC’s Summer Conference for Teacher Leaders and the Administrators Who Support Them.

To learn more, visit www.nsd.org/connect/summer-conference.cfm.

► See the May 2007 issue of *The Learning Principal* to learn what it’s like to lead a school filled with NBCTs.

Continued from p. 6

and several other NBCTs in Miami-Dade decided there had to be a better way. They formed a 501c3 organization, NBCTs of Miami-Dade, to support board candidates. They also created a five-year plan for mentoring new teachers. This year, the NBCT group held monthly meetings in six different locations throughout the district in order to provide candidate support.

The group also prepares NBCTs to act as advocates on policy issues related to teaching. “That’s the role I felt least prepared for,” Guthrie said.

With the arrival of Crew and Byrne, the district formed an alliance with the NBCTs of Miami-Dade and eventually assumed responsibility for the mentoring work that the independent organization had started. Last year, 505 NBCTs in Miami-Dade provided 45,000 hours of mentoring for other teachers. NBCTs also present sessions at a new teacher orientation in the fall. They continue to provide other formal learning opportunities throughout the school year as well as one-on-one mentoring for novice teachers.

In addition, Miami-Dade’s “Summer Heat” institute includes a teacher leadership strand that is focused on leading from the classroom. Sessions in that strand focus on adult learning theory, doing effective presentations, how to use technology to develop virtual learning communities, and mentoring new/early career teachers.

Byrne leads a series called Teacher Talks in which she discusses an education topic with a

small group of NBCTs and another cabinet-level staff person. These hour-long discussions are taped and aired on the district’s television channel.

“Hopefully, the higher the profile for the NBCTs, the greater the interest will be in aspiring to that,” Guthrie said.

This spring, Miami-Dade announced that it is creating yet another leadership opportunity for aspiring teacher leaders, including NBCTs, who are willing to serve as professional development liaisons in their schools. The district will prepare them for this work by introducing them to various protocols for working with adult learners, facilitator skills, NSDC’s Standards for Staff Development, and the mechanics that are specific to the Miami-Dade system.

“We’re looking for different pathways for NBCTs that will keep them in the classroom. We don’t want them to feel like the only leadership role they can select is one that gets them out of the classroom,” Byrne said.

Down the road, Byrne hopes to develop professional development demonstration schools in which NBCTs will play a major role.

Having a large collection of NBCTs among the teacher ranks is both a gift and a challenge, Byrne said. “These teachers are very discerning consumers of professional development. They have high standards and we have to attain them. They absolutely deserve high-quality professional development. But, if you have your finger on the pulse of their needs, you can craft a program that sustains them,” she said. ■

ISSN 0276-928X

The Learning System is published eight times a year by the National Staff Development Council, 5995 Fairfield Road, #4, Oxford, OH 45056, for \$49 of each membership. Periodicals postage paid at Wheelersburg, OH 45694.

© Copyright, National Staff Development Council, 2007. All rights reserved.

NSDC STAFF

Executive director
Dennis Sparks

Deputy executive director
Stephanie Hirsh

Director of business services
Leslie Miller

Director of learning
Cathy Owens

Director of publications
Joan Richardson

Director of special projects
Joellen Killion

Distinguished senior fellow
Hayes Mizell

Editor
Joan Richardson

Designer
Sue Chevalier

MAIN BUSINESS OFFICE

5995 Fairfield Road, #4
Oxford OH 45056

513-523-6029
800-727-7288

Fax: 513-523-0638
NSDCoffice@nsdc.org
www.nsdcof.org

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Sue McAdamis (2009)
President

Sydney Dickson (2008)
President-elect

Karen Dyer (2010)
President-elect

Maria Goodloe-Johnson
(2009)

Charles Mason (2007)

James Roussin (2009)

Sue Showers (2008)

William Sommers (2008)
Past president

COPYING/REPRINT POLICY

Please see www.nsdcof.org/library/publications/permpolicy.cfm for details and a form to submit a request.

BACK COPIES

Back copies of *The Learning System* are available for \$5 per copy. Member and bulk discounts apply. To order, contact NSDC's main business office.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the National Staff Development Council, 5995 Fairfield Road, #4, Oxford, OH 45056.

Sign up now for Denver this summer

"I am a site-based coach and funding is very tight for off-site PD. However, I will make every effort possible to attend future conferences. Without a doubt, it influences me and 'kicked me in my assumptions.' I am a different person as a result of what I learned at NSDC. I will be a different leader because of it and I will be able to positively influence others in those beliefs."



Don't be left out of the learning.

Registration is open now for NSDC's 3rd Annual Summer Conference. See www.nsdcof.org/connect/summerconference.cfm for details.

NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Member Services
5995 Fairfield Road, #4
Oxford, OH 45056
Membership info: 800-727-7288

Periodicals
Postage
PAID
at
Wheelersburg, OH
45694