Getting Started on the National Board Assessment
Ideas generated at the November 1999 Stanford support meeting

# Read the standards. Re-read the standards. Re-read the standards.

# Identify specific evidence from your practice that demonstrates the standards. Think about the concrete evidence that will show an outside assessor your teaching practice: what you do, what you say to students, how you communicate with parents, how you contribute to your professional community, how you design lessons, how you create and manage a classroom environment, how and why you make decisions, etc.

# Read the portfolio requirements to see what you are responsible for documenting and writing about. Don’t get overwhelmed by the directions -- support providers and fellow candidates will clear up the procedural questions.

# Photocopy all of the forms in the portfolio so you have both a working copy and the original.

# Collect all of the permission slips from your students.

# Write the school context paragraph. The form is in the portfolio materials.

# Plan a calendar for completing the portfolio. Setting goals with others in your certification area can be a great motivator. Make a "to do" lists to keep you going.

# Plan which units of study you will use for each entry and select students. Most entries require artifacts from different units of study and your choice of different students. Select up to twice as many students as required, in case a selected student is absent for a long period of time, moves, or their participation doesn’t work out for other reasons.

# Save student work. Strategies include: saving all student work in folders in your classroom until you have selected students; asking students you have selected to return their original work to you; saving photocopies of student work from the students you have identified.

# Collect evidence of parent and community involvement and contributions to your professional community for the Documented Accomplishments, entries 5 and 6 in the portfolio. Log your communications with home, send out newsletters to parents, collect documentation of your participation in professional activities, save (or solicit!) notes from parents and colleagues, etc. This documentation can date back up to 5 years.

# Decide whom you want to authenticate verification forms for entries 5 and 6. You fill out a verification form for an accomplishment and someone must verify its accuracy.
Write entries 5 and 6. These entries do not require student work or video, so many people recommend beginning your writing with these entries. Humility, humbleness, and modesty are not recommended!!

Begin videotaping your class. Learn to use the equipment early and get your class used to being videotaped.

**Organization Strategies**

Set up a template for each portfolio entry in your word processing program. The template should include the requirements for the entry, the standards that the entry will be assessing, and the outline of questions that you are asked to respond to. Some past candidates have used this skeleton as a starting point for writing the entry and also as a collection of all necessary information, so they didn’t have to dig out the portfolio requirements repeatedly.

Set up a binder with a section for each of the portfolio entries. Photocopy the standards for each entry and place them at the beginning of each section. Write a summary of the requirements, the focus of the entry, and the organization of the entry (including the questions you have to respond to). Photocopy the section "how your entry will be scored" and include it in the section with the entry.

**Support Strategies**

Find out how your district might be willing to support you through the assessment. For example, some of the support that districts have provided include: application fees, release days, photocopying expenses or secretarial time to do the photocopying for you, videographer, use of a school computer at home, paying for videotapes, paying for materials that you might need for the assessment center.

Establish a regular schedule to meet with your local support network.

Read, edit, and critique other candidates’ work.