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PRESERVATION

Memorandum

BDUC -
NBPTS

To: John Podesta
From: Andrew Rotherham and JB Buxton
Re: Briefing Paper on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
Date: September 14, 1999

On September 15, you will meet with representatives from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) at 12:15 in your office. NBPTS is a non-profit organization that has established a set of standards for teachers as a way of raising teacher professionalism and quality as well as respect for the profession. Governor Hunt is the founding chair of the program, the President is a strong supporter, and the Administration has worked closely with NBPTS.

The purpose of the meeting is two-fold. First, the leadership of NBPTS wants to get to know you. They had a relationship with Erksine Bowles and want to introduce themselves to you. Second, NBPTS needs two more years of federal funding to complete research and development of their standards and to establish all of their certificate programs for various kinds of teachers. They want to discuss the importance of this work with you.

They may also mention their concern that the Teacher Empowerment Act (HR 1995) passed by the House in July does not fund the NBPTS as an allowable "national activity." While the Department of Education believes it could continue to fund NBPTS activities from other sources, it would prefer to the separate authorization as the Administration included in our Elementary and Secondary Education Act proposal. A SAP was issued on July 20, 1999 objecting to a number of provisions in the Teacher Empowerment Act, including its failure to authorize funding for NBPTS. The President has publicly criticized the bill as well, but has focused his comments on the bill's failures to require class-size reduction in the early grades.

Our recommendation is that if the legislative issues come up in the meeting you reaffirm the Administration's commitment to the NBPTS and our support for authorizing it. However, because H.R. 1995 does not prohibit continued federal support outright, and because there are numerous issues in play with regard to the overall bill, we recommend that you avoid specific commitments as to our final position on the bill.

Attendees will be:

You
Andrew Rotherham, DPC
J.B. Buxton, DPC
James Kelly, President NBPTS
Elizabeth Bowe Castor, President-elect NBPTS
Barbara Kelly, Chair of the Board of Directors, NBPTS
Sara L. Mernissi, Vice President for Government Relations, NBPTS
W. Michael House, Hogan and Hartson
Nancy L. Granese, Hogan and Hartson

Background on the NBPTS: Mission and Activities

- The NBPTS establishes "high and rigorous standards" for what teachers should know and

be able to do, and it operates a system of national, voluntary certification. The Board was founded in 1987 as an independent, nonprofit, bipartisan organization based on the recommendations of a 1986 Carnegie Commission report.

- **The Board offers “national certification” in 30 fields and has certified 1,836 teachers to date.** The Board develops standards and assessments and conducts a national assessment system. To become certified, candidates must submit portfolios and participate in an assessment process. The board plans to increase the number of certified teachers to 100,000 by 2006.
- **The NBPTS is helping to drive the teacher quality agenda in states.** National certification is designed to provide teachers with clear and objective standards to guide their practice, to “professionalize” the job of teaching and to help drive professional development and standards-based reform of teaching in the states.
- **States are beginning to offer incentives for teachers to participate.** Eight states offer fee subsidies for participation in the application process, eight recognize certification for license renewal, and six states provide bonuses to teachers who achieve certification.

Legislation involving NBPTS and the Administration’s Position

- **The Administration has articulated continuing support for NBPTS, most recently in its FY2000 budget and ESEA reauthorization proposal.** In his 1997 State of the Union address, President Clinton advocated using federal funds to support the goal of having 105,000 National Board-certified teachers across the country—one for every school. The Administration’s FY2000 and ESEA reauthorization proposals include supporting the NBPTS. And, in his May 16, 1999 speech at Graceland College, the Vice President advocated paying bonuses to National Board-certified teachers.
- **Although the Teacher Empowerment Act (H.R. 1995) does not bar the use of federal funds to support the National Board’s activities, it would force the Secretary to fund the NBPTS out of other areas, such as the Fund for the Improvement of Education (FIE).** The absence of authorizing language in the Teacher Empowerment Act for the NBPTS and the limited list of allowable “national activities” preclude the Secretary from using TEA funds for the NBPTS.