

Brian Culp and NBPTS committee Setting Standards for Excellence in Physical Education

Awesome. Fulfilling. A blast. These are the ways Brian Culp describes a recent opportunity he had to help update and revise the nation's standards for teaching physical education.

In March, Culp was named to the Physical Education Standards Committee of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Serving on the 13-member committee, he says, is a high point in his professional career. It validates his love for teaching and enables him to connect with other educators who share his passion.

Most important, the committee's work will have lasting impact on students, teachers and school systems, and even on national debate issues such as childhood obesity and funding for school programs.

Serving on the committee "is a great process and a great experience," says Culp, an assistant professor in PETM's physical education department. "It's about a commitment to excellence and helping teachers to be their best."

The committee's charge is reviewing and revising the standards that form the basis for NBPTS certification for physical education teachers in K-12 settings. "This certification—developed by teachers, for teachers—is a symbol of professional teaching excellence," says Lisa Stooksberry, chief standards and assessment officer for NBPTS. Awarded to teachers who successfully complete a performance-based assessment process lasting one to three years, certification aims to complement, not replace, state licensing.

"Our job is to analyze and clearly explain what accomplished physical education teachers should know, along with what they should be able to do for their students," Culp says, noting that the standards should be high but attainable.

An accomplished teacher, for example, should understand the benefits of incorporating other educational content within physical education such as math, in order to strengthen their students' cognitive learning. This blending of math and physical education can help students as they practice the act of free-throw shooting and simultaneously learn how to calculate probability and percentages.

Culp and his colleagues recently submitted draft recommendations to NBPTS officials for review. The revised standards will take effect in 2013 and will be reviewed again in seven to ten years.

Stooksberry complimented Culp's contributions to the committee, which included developing a bibliography for the revised standards. "Brian's focus on

using research and data to support [the standards] has been very valuable," she says, noting that Culp was chosen from a pool of more than 200 highly qualified applicants.

For his part, Culp says working with his committee peers has been one of the best parts of the project. Members include educators who've taught for up to 35 years, who come from urban and rural school systems, and who reflect experience in all levels of education. "What they have in common is that they get it," says Culp, adding that the committee's ultimate shared goal is a nation of accomplished physical education teachers who contribute to students' physical, social, and academic growth.

—Laurie Sochtleben

