

GETTING STARTED

Comments from Trainers—Raw and Slight Edited:

- ☞ Candidates need to look at what they are already teaching and figure out how that would fit into an entry (or if it won't) in Ardmore.
- ☞ Focus on the lessons you already do and ensure that they are meeting the standards instead of trying new things. (This was critical for me. I stuck with literature I was very comfortable.)
- ☞ Study and internalize the standards before you begin the lesson planning. Once internalized, your lessons will become richer.
- ☞ First days of school are critical for "knowledge of student." Remember that to set goals, first you must understand who the kids are, where they are developmentally, and where they need to go. (Knowing the GOAL sure does make the writing about student impact much easier.)
- ☞ Candidates should start researching ideas for getting to know their students...surveys, learning styles measures....first-day activities. They could come to school day #1 with ideas to use.
- ☞ They could and should use the summer months to research any topics they're not comfortable with -- for us it's probably teaching reading and ELL...get files together before school starts.
- ☞ I think one of the most important "Getting Started" tidbits for our certification area is to begin ongoing formal and informal assessment of students from the very beginning. Tell them to make copies of all of their students writing samples and begin analyzing their work for what their students know and can do now and think about where they need to go from here in planning goals. Many candidates I have worked with concentrate too long on entry 4, fret another few months over inquiry, and save entry one (literacy) to the end only to realize they haven't gathered the necessary information to answer the questions about formative assessment.
- ☞ They also need to be told to read, watch, and learn all they can about inquiry science. A good source of information in videos is at <http://www.learner.org/> They need to click on Science 5-8, then Learning Science Through Inquiry. Even though it says 5-8, the first several videos concentrate on grades 1-3.
- ☞ I like all the suggestions that have been given by you and the others who have replied. The suggestions seem universal for all the areas as well as Library Media, the area which I represent. One suggestion specific for Library Media would be to go to the Oklahoma Schools Library Association site which has a National Board Candidate Resource List. This list is categorized according to the assessment areas but it is helpful to read from this list during the summer before starting the first

Portfolio entry. The reading is a very good professional review and idea expansion process.

- ☞ Download, read, re-read, and INTERNALIZE the standards for your area....all summer long...keep a copy in your car to read when you're waiting various places, doctors' waiting rooms, getting tires put on your car, etc.....some people read the standards onto a cassette tape and listen to them in the car. Read them in the bathtub...before you fall asleep at night...etc.
- ☞ Realize what your personal learning style is...as that will play a huge part in how you can best approach National Boards...it will determine what will work best for you.
- ☞ Also...take 3 highlighters....different colors....use one color to highlight things from the standards that you already do very well in your classroom....then go through the standards again, and use another color of highlighter to highlight the areas in which you are presently growing or improving...go through the standards a third time and highlight the areas that you REALLY need to work on improving in your teaching. I think that would make the standards "come alive" for candidates. It might also make the standards easier to remember when they actually begin working on entries.
- ☞ Read your directions...over and over. Couldn't hurt to repeat this step over and over in your presentation!.
- ☞ Get your Professional Development report from your school district and look at the PD you've attended and begin thinking about which ones might make strong accomplishments
- ☞ Make plans to 'beef up' your parent communication -- from the very first day!
- ☞ Figure out some creative ways to free up time...one night spouse gets dinner, treat yourself to a housecleaner, get kids to commit to chores
- ☞ Start Writing! If they will leave Ardmore, and start writing like Entry 4, I think they figure out sooner how difficult this really is and not wait until December to get started. It seems like the candidates I have that will go ahead and get some stuff written this summer, are much better off and further along than others.
- ☞ The other thing I really recommend is for them to plan, plan, plan this summer. Pick lessons they think they want to use for each entry and then get everything together NOW so that when it is time to do the lesson they are ready.
- ☞ Put meetings on your calendar and attend.

THE LAST ADVICE:

Find the one way that works for you. It is your portfolio to submit, if someone tells you that you HAVE to do it 'this way' ---- walk, no run away fast as you can. There is on 'one way', it's your way, your story.