A *ProEthica*® Program Case Study —
A Mentor's Perspective

ETS's professional ethics program sparks conversations about minimizing risk and protecting students

As a middle school art teacher, a new-teacher mentor and an athletic coach, one could assume that Kelly Lloyd is used to handling complex situations. But the teaching veteran was pleasantly surprised when a casual conversation between her mentee and another first-year teacher illustrated a teachable moment about professional ethics.

The two new teachers were discussing a *ProEthica*® program video they had watched about a student who didn't have a ride home after sports practice. As Lloyd joined their conversation, the new teachers thought they had made the "right" decision: They would have waited with the student until a ride arrived.

For the most part, Lloyd agreed with that plan. "Staying with that student until they get picked up is the main thing; not leaving them by themselves [is important]," she said. But, she interjected that there's value in teachers knowing their students and having additional information could help them in their decision making.

"That might be the hardest thing when you're starting out — building those relationships — because you're new and the kids don't know you and you don't know the kids as well yet," Lloyd said. If her student was stranded after a practice, having additional knowledge about the student's background and family situation would inform the steps she would take leading up to her ultimate decision.

First, Lloyd would use the school database to call emergency contacts for rides. If that didn't work, knowing her student might give her ideas about other people to call. If she exhausted all options and had to consider giving the student a ride, she might do it. "I would think OK, if it's a student that I coached and I know their parents really well, and I was able to call their parents and make sure it was OK" she would take the student home, Lloyd said. By contrast, if she didn't know the family, "that is something totally different," she continued. "I wouldn't be putting that student in my vehicle because so many things could happen, you know?"

Even as Lloyd discussed the possibilities with the novices, she found herself getting slowly mired in the grayness of professional ethics. "It kind of made me think: You know what? I need to think about some of that stuff, too," she said. "In my heart, I'd want to help the student, but when I really think about all the different situations that could [go wrong], it's really not in my best interest. That scenario … really stuck with me."

Before the training, "you think that you know the exact thing to do, but [the] *ProEthica* [program] gives new teachers that extra little bit of training that maybe they're not getting when they're able to meet with their mentors. When I first started teaching, I probably would never have thought about some of the scenarios they were given," Lloyd said. "Something like that might not happen this year, might not happen next year, but what if it happens 10 years from now? At least they have that background knowledge and can pull it out when they need to. They're not just drowning in the water, you know?"

Her own mentee folded the online course into her other requirements easily, Lloyd said. "It wasn't difficult for her to do [that]. And I think it's really going to help them in the long run in their classrooms and in their teaching. [The] *ProEthica* [program] is that extra boost that's really helping out all of the new mentees here. I kind of wish I had it when I started out."

Read more case studies or get information about the *ProEthica* program at **www.ets.org/proethica**.

District Snapshot
Laurel School District, Laurel, Delaware (2016–17 school year)

- 2,362 students in grades Pre-K–12

- Ethnically and economically diverse student body

- Low-income families: 46.4%

- English-language learners: 8.8%

- Students receiving special education services: 14.3%

- New teachers in mentoring program: 15

- Total teachers: 151

- Total instructional staff: 180

- Total staff: 262

- Accepts school-choice students

- Prior year per-pupil cost: $11,699

ETS®

Measuring the Power of Learning.®

www.ets.org