**Standard 9:** *Professional Learning and Ethical Practice*

***The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.***

**Name of Artifact:** Pamphlet: Preventing Gang Involvement

**Course/Source:** Baltimore County Public Schools Professional Development: Gang Awareness

**Rationale:**

The first artifact I chose to represent Standard Nine, Professional Learning and Ethical Practice, is a pamphlet I received from a professional development session I attended in March 2014. The Baltimore County Public Schools’ Department of Student Support Services, specifically the office of School Safety, led this professional development. During this three hour session, the manager of School Safety and a local Baltimore County police officer, specializing in Gang Intervention and Prevention, discussed with us the importance of being aware of the various gangs in the area, how to handle gang situations in our schools, and what we as teachers can do to prevent further gang issues from occurring. We learned about various gangs in the area, their origins, locations, signs, possible dialects, symbols, and colors, in addition to the characteristics they look for in new members so that we can be aware of our students that could already be members and potentially intervene before other students get involved.

This artifact is a ten-page document we were given so that we could take the information back to our respective schools to remind us of the information we learned and to share the information with our colleagues. The document contains basic information such as the definition of a gang, the reasons gangs are formed, and the reasons why children get involved. It also contains two pages of strategies for teachers and one page of strategies for parents that we can use to raise awareness about gangs and potentially prevent students from getting involved. In addition, there is a page of warning signs to look for and how to go about interviewing suspected gang members. The final three pages contain gang prevention resources including supporting organizations, police representatives, and youth centers that could assist with gang issues in our schools.

I chose to use this artifact to represent Standard Nine because it shows my ongoing process of being a life-long learner and my desire to be aware of the challenges my students face. I participated in this professional development to gain knowledge by collaborating with teachers and support staff within and outside of my school and expanding my understanding of issues affecting the safety of my schools, my students, and myself. Although this professional development is not related to the curriculum, in order to teach my students, we all must feel as though we are in a safe environment that is conducive to learning. It demonstrates my ability to meet the needs of all of my students, to ensure that they are aware of the challenges they may face, and that I am here to support and assist them in times of need.

This artifact represents a professional development session that contributed to my professional growth by teaching me about an area that I was otherwise completely unfamiliar with. I learned so much from the presentation and I now feel much more comfortable dealing with gang related issues if they were to arise at my school. I now understand the warning signs so that hopefully I will be able to intervene early enough so that my students know there are other places to turn instead of gangs. I am aware of the many resources available in my community that could assist my students, parents, or myself in gang prevention, awareness, and the event of gang involvement.