



---

# Recruiting and Retaining National Board Certified Teachers for Hard-to-Staff, Low-Performing Schools

## *Silver Bullets or Smart Solutions*

**Barnett Berry and Tammy King**

Southeast Center for Teaching Quality

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

[www.teachingquality.org](http://www.teachingquality.org)

[www.teacherleaders.org](http://www.teacherleaders.org)

---

THE SOUTHEAST CENTER FOR  
**TEACHING  
QUALITY** SECTQ  
[www.teachingquality.org](http://www.teachingquality.org)

---

The Southeast Center for Teaching Quality improves student learning by shaping policies through developing teacher leadership, building coalitions, and conducting practical research. To accomplish this mission, SECTQ strives to shape policies that ensure:

- **Students**, no matter what their background or where they go to school, are ready to learn; with
- **Teachers** who are caring, qualified, and competent with vast content knowledge and the ability, through quality preparation and ongoing development and support, to ensure that all children can learn; in
- **Classrooms** that have adequate resources and provide environments conducive to student learning; in
- **Schools** that are designed to provide teachers with sufficient time to learn and work together in collaboration with a principal who respects and understands teaching; in
- **Districts** that have policies and programs that support the recruitment, retention and development of high quality teachers in every school; in
- **States** that have well-funded systems that include rigorous preparation and licensing with evaluation tools that ensure performance based standards are met; in a
- **Region** that works collaboratively, using common teaching quality definitions, sharing data, and working across state lines to recruit, retain and support high quality teachers; in a
- **Nation** that views teaching as a true profession and values teachers as one of its most important resources.

SECTQ is a regional organization with a national agenda to ensure that all students have access to high quality teaching. SECTQ was established in 1999 and is located in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. To learn more about SECTQ's work, please visit our web site at [www.teachingquality.org](http://www.teachingquality.org) or phone (919) 951-0200.

#### *About the Authors*

Barnett Berry is the President of, and Tammy King is a policy associate at, the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality. SECTQ supports the Teacher Leaders Network, whose mission is to elevate the voices of accomplished teachers in ongoing efforts to improve the public schools and enhance student learning.

#### **Acknowledgments**

The authors would like to acknowledge support for this paper from the Chicago Public Education Fund and the Joyce Foundation. The Fund and the foundation commissioned a more comprehensive assessment of the issues affecting recruiting and retaining NBCTs for low performing schools in the four school communities of Charlotte, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami-Dade. The views reported herein are those of the authors, and not of the Fund or the foundation.

# RECRUITING AND RETAINING NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS FOR HARD-TO-STAFF, LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

## Silver Bullets or Smart Solutions

I have taught in two hard-to-staff high schools—one for the last 16 years. From my own experience and from what I am hearing now from colleagues, sending accomplished teachers in isolation into hard-to-staff schools with no connections and no authority, even with combat pay, would be just as effective in raising student achievement as having the accomplished teachers dance naked in local churches.

— Alexis, a National Board Certified Teacher and member of the Teacher Leaders Network.\*

Over the last 15 years, research has consistently identified the inextricable links between the quality of teachers and teaching, and the achievement of students.<sup>1</sup> However, scholars have struggled to come to a consensus on how to identify accomplished teachers—until recently.

Over the last year, three separate research studies have shown that National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) actually do produce greater student achievement gains than their counterparts, and do so especially for lower achieving students.<sup>2</sup> These studies support what most teachers who seek Board Certification have claimed—the process offers the most rigorous professional development experiences they have ever had. NBCTs have to pass both a portfolio assessment, which requires them to diagnose student learning difficulties, and a rigorous day-long, timed standardized test that measures their knowledge of content and how to teach it. Less than 50 percent of first-time takers who sit for National Board Certification ultimately achieve it. This is the *good news*.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has developed and made available sophisticated teaching assessments in nearly two dozen fields. Most states and many school districts have chosen to make investments in teacher who undertake the rigorous performance-based assessment—a process akin to doctors seeking board certification in their specialty areas.<sup>3</sup> The Progressive Policy Institute, in a recent report, estimated that states and districts are spending over \$100 million per year on assessment fees (\$2,300 per teacher) and salary supplements for teachers who earn the certificate. In some states, NBCTs can earn substantially more pay (e.g., a 12% salary supplement in North Carolina, and a \$7500 increase in South Carolina).

*Three separate research studies have shown that National Board Certified Teachers actually do produce greater student achievement gains than their counterparts, and do so especially for lower achieving students.*

\*The names of TLN members have been changed. Find out more about the Teacher Leaders Network at [www.teacherleaders.org](http://www.teacherleaders.org)

*Policymakers have every right to be concerned about where NBCTs are teaching... (but) for every complex social problem there is a simple solution ... that is wrong.*

The *bad news* is that NBCTs are more likely *not* to be teaching in low-performing schools (as well as schools serving poor and minority students). A national study, funded by Atlantic Philanthropies, is uncovering important data and surfacing critical policy issues related to the impact of NBCTs in low-performing schools.<sup>4</sup> Drawing on data from this comprehensive investigation, Dan Humphrey, Julia Koppich, and Heather Hough have shown that only 19 percent of NBCTs teach in a school in the bottom third of performance for its state and only 12 percent of them are in schools with more than 75 percent of their students receiving free or reduced-price lunch.<sup>5</sup> Andy Rotherham, in drawing on their paper in an *Education Week* Commentary (March 30, 2005), argued that the vast majority of NBCT incentives, while important in encouraging and recognizing accomplished teachers, “are generally divorced from efforts to make the distribution of top-flight teachers more equitable.” Policymakers have every right to be concerned about where NBCTs are teaching, and should be considering new policies to ensure that our nation’s most challenging schools are staffed with caring, qualified, well-supported, and effective teachers.

A number of states and districts are now considering policies that would encourage or require NBCTs to accept assignments in low-performing schools and classrooms. For example, in Georgia, legislators recently passed a bill that eliminates the previous 10 percent salary incentives for all new NBCTs. The bill requires that in the future, any teacher who earns or renews National Board Certification status will receive a 10 percent salary increase *only* if they work in a school that has been on the state’s roster of low-performing schools for two or more consecutive years. (Teachers who achieve certification or become an official candidate by March 1, 2005, are grandfathered in to continue receiving the bonus.) A similar proposal from the Governor’s office is on the table in South Carolina.

While the efforts of policymakers to link NBCT incentives and school reform agendas are understandable, as H.L. Mencken once wrote, “For every complex social problem there is a simple solution ... that is wrong.” Policies that address the staffing problems of low-performing schools solely through salary incentives or forced assignments are “simple solutions” that ignore the complex conditions that have made it so difficult to recruit and retain expert teachers in the past. Research studies and the insights of accomplished teachers who have helped turn around struggling schools confirm that *any effort to recruit and retain NBCTs or other accomplished teachers for hard-to-staff schools must be part of a comprehensive plan—not a separate or stand-alone strategy.*

In this paper we draw on an array of research evidence, and recent data gathering in four urban communities with large representations of NBCTs (Charlotte, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami). Perhaps, more importantly, in our analysis we utilize the voices of accomplished teachers from the Teacher Leaders Network, most of whom are NBCTs—with a number of them working in or considering to work in hard-to-staff, low performing schools.

We describe three major issues policymakers and practitioners must face in solving the problem of the maldistribution of accomplished and expert teachers.

1. *Salary and other financial incentives are necessary, but not sufficient, to recruit and retain accomplished teachers for hard-to-staff schools.*
2. *Importing accomplished teachers into low-performing schools is not nearly enough to solve teaching quality problems found in such schools.*

3. *The National Board assessment process can be a powerful professional development tool, but states and districts must create specific strategies if NBCTs are going to help improve low-performing schools.*

### **The Limits of Salary Incentives**

It is fairly well accepted among policymakers, practitioners, and the public that teachers' salaries remain too low to attract and retain enough talented and well-prepared people to fill our nation's most challenging classrooms. Cindy Prince, in one of the best initial analyses of salary incentives for hard-to-staff schools, concluded that the dollar amount has to be sizable enough to make a difference and that offering the bonus money over time with a balloon payment in the later years, will increase the likelihood of teacher retention.<sup>6</sup> And, in one of the few empirical studies conducted, researchers concluded that teachers would need to be paid at least 50 percent more to teach in hard-to-staff schools.<sup>7</sup>

Two examples shed considerable light on the insufficiency of salary increases alone to get accomplished teachers to teach in hard-to-staff schools. In South Carolina, \$18,000 salary bonuses could only attract 20 percent of the "teacher specialists" needed to fill positions in its lowest performing schools.<sup>8</sup> In Massachusetts, a mid-career alternative certification program offering a \$20,000 signing bonus attracted only a fraction of the teachers needed, and most recruits either avoided or fled the state's most challenging schools.<sup>9</sup>

These examples illuminate Richard Ingersoll's analysis of national teacher turnover survey data. Ingersoll found that teachers who leave because of job dissatisfaction do so not only because of low salaries but also as a result of poor support from school administrators, the lack of student motivation, the lack of teacher influence over decision-making, and student discipline problems.<sup>10</sup>

During a recent discussion among members of the Teacher Leaders Network virtual learning community, Bill, an NBCT with 12 years experience, described the conditions under which he would accept a position in a high-need school:

First of all, effective administrators are magnets for accomplished teachers ... and then my greatest fear is being assigned to a hard-to-staff school and not being given the time and the flexibility to make the changes that I believe are necessary to bring about student achievement. I constantly hear about the pre-packaged curriculums that are in place in many hard-to-staff schools and I cringe.

All teachers, especially accomplished ones, want to work in schools where they can be successful, and, as another TLN member noted, they also "want to work in schools where they have like-minded and skilled colleagues." Lori, an NBCT from Miami-Dade, made her decision very deliberately before deciding to move to one of her district's low-performing schools.

I took a half-day to visit the school and sit in on classes I would be teaching. I had time with the children. I also made sure I could spend a significant amount of time with the principal. She talked to me for nearly three hours as we, basically, interviewed each other. The fact that she spent that much time with me certainly told me a lot about how much she valued teachers. We also had a lengthy discussion about what I felt I needed to be successful in terms of resources, time, attitudes and academic freedom. She responded in a way that satisfied my desire to be able to do what I do best ... teach children science.

*The dollar amount (to entice teachers to hard-to-staff schools) has to be sizable enough to make a difference.*

*Teachers who leave because of job dissatisfaction do so not only because of low salaries but also as a result of poor support from school administrators, the lack of student motivation, the lack of teacher influence over decision-making, and student discipline problems.*

Linda, another TLN member, said she would be willing to work in the most challenging schools if she could be part of a school culture that assessed teaching and learning “in a systemic, strategic way, with the support and feedback of trusted colleagues.” Teachers call this a professional learning community—the heart and soul of the teaching working conditions “package” that must be in place to improve student achievement. Unfortunately, many policymakers and administrators have given little attention to the working conditions that allow qualified teachers to be effective. The Southeast Center for Teaching Quality’s own analyses of teacher survey data in North Carolina reveal that certain aspects of teachers’ working conditions, including principal leadership, teacher empowerment, and the quality of professional development, are highly predictive of both student achievement and teacher retention.<sup>11</sup>

*Unfortunately, many policymakers and administrators have given little attention to the working conditions that allow qualified teachers to be effective.*

Paying accomplished teachers more for teaching in low-performing schools is necessary—other professions routinely pay more for taking on tougher assignments. But just as a hospital would not expect to attract a top-notch doctor without the right mix of colleagues and nursing staff, equipment, and administrative support, policymakers should not expect to recruit NBCTs to low-performing schools without the presence of other accomplished teachers, resources, and effective principals.

### **Building Capacity From Within Schools**

A number of hard-to-staff, low-performing schools are staffed by teachers who have had little or any high-quality teacher preparation. Others may be well qualified teachers, but teach out-of-field. Still other teachers may have content knowledge, but little, if any, knowledge of how to teach or work effectively in the context of the school’s cultural community. Some teachers, exposed to very little high quality professional development over the course of their careers, have settled into complacency and have no idea they are using ineffective teaching practices. In addition, they often have little faith that disadvantaged students can learn more than they are already learning.

*“If any teacher goes into a hard-to-staff school (or any school) presenting themselves as the ‘silver bullet,’ they are condemned to failure right off the bat!”*

We have found examples in North Carolina and Los Angeles where innovative principals have grown NBCTs in their once low-performing schools, with good outcomes for student achievement. And, in Miami-Dade, Lori and her other NBCT colleagues who moved to one of the district’s low-performing schools, now have a number of veteran teachers interested in new teaching practices and becoming Board-Certified themselves.

Inviting accomplished teachers into schools like these makes sense. These schools need fresh ideas, new practices, and a new spirit. Outside catalysts—individuals who do have the knowledge, skill, and motivation to teach differently—are often necessary to spur change.

However, Linda, who works with several high-poverty schools to build professional learning communities, asserted:

If any teacher goes into a hard-to-staff school (or any school) presenting themselves as the “silver bullet,” they are condemned to failure right off the bat! And I don’t think that their role is “convincing” the resident teachers that they need to change, although change—for everyone involved—is certainly part of the work to be done.

Linda has found that a better approach is to:

(Begin with) an attitude on the part of all that the goal is to create a team of professionals, all valuable and necessary for what they bring to the table. Those who have been there have the institutional memory, and knowledge of the context. Newbies bring fresh energy and eyes—a new perspective on the context.

Lori, the NBCT who recently moved to one of her district's lowest performing schools, noted:

I was very clear with the principal that I wanted to be introduced as Lori, science teacher ... nothing more ... nothing less. It takes time to establish oneself at any school and I needed to learn from the veterans at this school about the children, their families and the community. But, as time has passed, my road has gotten easier and teachers have begun to come to me and the other new NBCTs here to talk and learn about professional development, lesson plans, and more.

Linda noted that accomplished teachers *deployed* to a low-performing school are “going to encounter mistrust and cynicism.” She continued:

You need to realize that there are teachers in the school who've been toiling there with little to show for their efforts, are doing all they know how to do. If they knew better ways to reach their students, most would do it.

And that puts everyone on very thin ice. Because the national norm of teaching for so long has been that teachers are supposed to know how to be all things to all kids. And many of these teachers love the heck out of their students, but the kids still don't achieve. So acknowledging that more knowledge is needed about content and pedagogy is a huge step.

*“I had no idea the stress involved in working under these conditions. I actually thought I had the answers needed to turn this school around. The afternoon of the first day, I began to understand how little I knew.”*

Betsy Rogers, a TLN member and NBCT, returned from her service as the 2003 National Teacher of the Year to go work in one of Alabama's most challenging elementary schools. Betsy keeps a weblog at the Education Week website. In it, she spoke of the challenges of an expert teacher moving into a school with a culture of failure:

I really owe the faculty and staff an apology. I had no idea the stress involved in working under these conditions. I actually thought I had the answers needed to turn this school around. The afternoon of the first day, I began to understand how little I knew.<sup>12</sup>

Physical working conditions are a challenge, but in Betsy's school so are years of professional development neglect, a past history of inadequate leadership, district-level neglect, the lack of appropriate materials, and the new challenge of rising numbers of children whose first language is not English. Betsy, who now conducts model lessons for her colleagues, does not have all the answers. Accomplished teachers like Betsy, imported from the *outside*, do have unique and important teaching skills, but they may not have all the *inside* knowledge to be effective. Accomplished teachers also need to have the kinds of adult leadership skills that make them effective in building momentum for change among their colleagues. *Very few of our best teachers have been fully trained to lead change and build collaborative teacher communities.* Policymakers need to assure that effective processes are in place to identify and train accomplished teachers as leaders. Without developing teacher leadership skills and creating opportunities for accom-

plished teachers to lead, NBCTs will not have the impact on school improvement that policymakers are seeking.

*Without developing teacher leadership skills and creating opportunities for accomplished teachers to lead, NBCTs will not have the impact on school improvement that policymakers are seeking.*

Dr. W. Edwards Deming, legendary in his role in reinvigorating Japanese industries after World War II, has drawn on a wide variety of private sector data in developing his “85-15 rule.” According to Deming, 85% of a worker’s performance is determined by the system in which they work, and the remaining 15% by their individual effort.<sup>13</sup> In other words, it is the system that needs most of our attention—this is particularly true when it comes to teachers, teaching, and learning. Most teachers, including those in our low-performing schools, can develop into accomplished teachers. As Nancy, another TLN member, noted:

I think we’re moving in a direction where education policymakers are approaching teachers the way we—unfortunately—sometimes approach students, a sort of “scarcity-tracking” model. In this model, we assume that there are only so many good teachers around and we have to get them in the “right” places, where they can do the most “good” (read: raise test scores the most). In fact, the truth is that every single willing teacher in this country could improve his or her teaching practice, through intense reflective study and effort.

### ***National Board Certification as Professional Development***

Case studies in California, Ohio, and North Carolina are being conducted as part of the Atlantic Philanthropies-funded study of NBCTs. The cases, which the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality is helping to develop, examine the impact of NBCTs in low-performing urban and rural classrooms. The study’s focus is on schools that have growing numbers of NBCTs and are showing signs of improvement. With some difficulty, the research team was able to identify nine very different schools with a history of low performance. For two years the team has been studying what role, if any, NBCTs play in school improvement.

Although this national study is not complete, several factors appear to be retarding the progress of NBCT involvement in school reform, including: 1) the lack of administrator support for and knowledge of the National Board standards and assessment process; 2) too little time for teachers to work with their colleagues, and 3) a critical need among NBCTs for professional development in the area of adult leadership.<sup>14</sup>

*In North Carolina, educators are learning how to cultivate NBCT leadership and apply the knowledge and skills of expert teachers to spur school improvement and increase student achievement.*

Our most promising case study involves a school (and school system) in North Carolina, where educators are learning how to cultivate NBCT leadership and apply the knowledge and skills of expert teachers to spur school improvement and increase student achievement. In this rural school (described more fully as “Adams Elementary” in the February 2005 issue of *Educational Leadership*), a principal and a growing cadre of NBCTs (now over 50 percent of the faculty) have created a rapidly improving community of learners, with 85 percent of students meeting grade level standards. Adams is now a North Carolina School of Distinction and has met 20 of 21 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets under No Child Left Behind.

At Adams Elementary, the National Board standards underpin the school’s teacher evaluation and professional development processes. The principal and assistant principal (who are also NBCTs) work hand-in-glove with teachers to create a professional learning community where teachers are expected to individualize instruction for students. Teaching is made public as teachers watch and review each other’s teaching. Teachers are expected (and well supported) to

become NBCTs. The superintendent, the school board, and community leaders have come to understand and embrace what it means for teachers to pass the National Board assessments. While Board Certification is valued and celebrated, NBCTs are not put on a pedestal, and all teachers are expected to improve and lead their colleagues. NBCTs are seen as “first among equals” but equals nevertheless.

The story of Adams Elementary demonstrates the power and potential of NBCT leadership in hard-to-staff schools. But the real lessons for policymakers are the following: First of all, the case of Adams reveals clearly how “growing your own” NBCTs may be the most effective strategy for recruiting and retaining accomplished teachers for hard-to-staff, low-performing schools. The success of Adams’ professional learning community is not the result of the presence of a few NBCTs or other accomplished teachers who have accepted a bounty to work in a chronically low-performing school. Adams is the result of a top-down and bottom-up commitment—rooted in NBPTS standards—to create the conditions that make it possible for teachers and students in high poverty schools to thrive.

In Los Angeles, with the help of state and district policies that pay more to NBCTs in low-performing schools,<sup>15</sup> forward-looking teacher union officials have helped a number of schools develop NBCTs from within. For example, Sun Valley Middle School is emerging as an urban model for utilizing the development of NBCTs to foster school improvement. In 2001, the school was one of the 10 “audit” (i.e., most struggling) schools in the state. Few teachers were transferred in. However, a new, risk-taking principal was assigned to the school and he, along with the union, structured new professional development opportunities, based on the NB standards that helped veteran teachers learn new teaching strategies. Teachers used to be haphazardly assigned to classrooms and now have been relocated so that teams are physically near each other and can better collaborate. The school has begun growing NBCTs; this year, 10 percent of the staff are sitting for the National Board assessments. In 2004, the school made AYP in English/Language Arts and just barely missed AYP on Math, and it has shown great improvement on its API—the state scale of student progress.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is working with Foshay Learning Center, a K-12 school in Central Los Angeles, in an effort to increase the number of teachers pursuing National Board Certification, improve overall teacher retention, and raise student achievement. The initiative draws on the Japanese practice of Lesson Study, where teams of teachers teach and re-teach lessons on the basis of their collective observations.

These findings suggest strongly that the National Board Certification process is a worthy investment, and that policies which promote NB Certification are likely to pay off. We agree with Rotherham’s assertion that states and districts should “make the maximum pay differentials and bonuses for nationally certified teachers more substantial than they are now.” Only eight states offer NBC bonuses of more than \$5,000. Humphrey and colleagues have recommended that states “target candidate support programs” for teachers who are willing to teach in low-performing schools and offer more in support for them. But we would go a step further.<sup>16</sup> New policies and additional incentives need to be enacted that push school communities to develop and utilize NBCTs, much like we have described at Adams, where teams of teachers use the National Board assessment process to collectively drive professional development and school improvement. In another “good practice” example, the Chicago Public Education Fund has provided a one-time bonus of \$3,000 to each new NBCT in the Chicago Public Schools, and has offered \$30,000 school-wide incentive grants to selected schools that grow teams of NBCTs.

*At Adams Elementary, while Board Certification is valued and celebrated, NBCTs are not put on a pedestal, and all teachers are expected to improve and lead their colleagues. NBCTs are seen as “first among equals” but equals nevertheless.*

*In Los Angeles, with the help of state and district policies that pay more to NBCTs in low-performing schools, forward-looking teacher union officials have helped a number of schools develop NBCTs from within.*

Without the impetus from the Fund, and its venture philanthropy, the district would not be figuring out how to systematically utilize its growing number of NBCTs for school improvement.

In North Carolina, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system has encouraged NBCTs to move to its high-need Equity-Plus schools, where they can take advantage of reduced student/teacher ratios, differentiated staffing, and additional instructional supplies and technology. More recently, administrators have put other critical supports into place, including common planning time for teacher teams and duty-free lunch periods. If NBCTs (and the NB assessment process) are going to drive high quality professional development, then new school structures and additional resources must be in place.

*In North Carolina, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system has encouraged NBCTs to move to its high-need Equity-Plus schools, where they can take advantage of reduced student/teacher ratios, differentiated staffing, and additional instructional supplies and technology.*

Drawing on a range of different research studies, Judith Warren Little has outlined a number of working conditions issues that can enhance or diminish teachers' motivation, as well as their opportunities to learn and be effective. These conditions include the extent to which teaching assignments are appropriate; adequate time to work with colleagues and students; professional development that focuses on the systemic, sustained, and collective study of student work; access to information, materials, and technology; and feedback on teaching that is helpful.<sup>17</sup> The National Board assessment process can drive high quality professional development, but the conditions must be in place in order for schools, teachers, and students to benefit.

## Conclusions

More data and evidence needs to be assembled on the vexing issue of recruiting and retaining NBCTs and other accomplished teachers to high need schools. However, we already know enough to conclude that in efforts to build teaching capacity in hard-to-staff, low-performing schools, policymakers and school leaders should keep these “top ten” facts in mind. The first five relate to what accomplished teachers require to move to a low-performing school, and the last five relate to what the system needs to provide in order for them to be effective and have a school-wide impact.

1. Accomplished teachers do *not* want to work for weak principals;
2. Accomplished teachers do *not* want to work in a school where they cannot use their teaching expertise (and are forced to use a highly scripted curriculum);
3. Accomplished teachers need the right resources (e.g., classroom libraries, science equipment, current technology) to teach the way they know how;
4. Accomplished teachers would more readily move to low-performing schools if they could do so with “kindred” spirits—i.e., similarly skilled and valued colleagues who have the *time* to learn from and support each other;
5. Accomplished teachers would expect, and labor market forces would require, salary incentives to teach in hard-to-staff schools.

In addition, to help turn around low-performing schools:

6. NBCTs need school and district administrators who know and embrace the National Board process and cultivate teacher leadership;

7. NBCTs need smaller “case” loads and classes so they can get to know students and their families well and have time to work with colleagues;
8. NBCTs will need additional leadership training to promote school change;
9. NBCTs and other teachers already teaching in the school will need professional development in collaboration, team building, and cultural competence; and,
10. NBCTs need opportunities to use the National Board process to drive new models of professional development and be more involved in the preparation of the next generation of teachers.

These facts are critical to keep in mind. If policymakers want to ensure that NBCTs are recruited and retained in hard-to-staff, low-performing schools then they must go beyond the “simple solutions” reflected in some recent legislation. Salary incentives alone will not suffice. Even if NBCTs can be enticed to teach in struggling schools, they alone cannot be the sole answer to the teaching quality problems found there. While the National Board assessment process has demonstrated professional development value, a number of intertwined policies and practices need to be in place so that the potential of NBCTs to improve struggling schools can be realized.

Several large-scale research studies have shown that NBCTs, compared to their counterparts, are more likely to produce greater student achievement gains, especially for lower achieving students. This finding alone is sufficient for policymakers to continue to invest in teachers who seek or achieve National Board Certification, no matter where they teach. But policymakers need to do more if they truly want to close the teaching quality gap.

Mark Warner, Governor of Virginia and 2005 chair of the National Governors Association, recently asserted:

I believe a nation that has planted its flag on the moon and sent robotic scouts to Mars can figure out how to get good teachers into the schools that need them the most.<sup>18</sup>

We agree with Governor Warner that our nation has the capacity to solve this problem. Going to the moon and Mars required the use of reliable data and evidence, sustainable plans, actions driven by professionals in the field, and a great deal of political will. Recruiting, developing, and retaining accomplished teachers for the schools that need them most will require no less.

While the solutions will not require rocket science, there is a science to putting the pieces of the teaching quality puzzle together. NBCTs have demonstrated their teaching prowess through a grueling assessment process. They know their students and the communities in which they teach. Policymakers and other educational decisionmakers would be wise to listen to these NBCTs as they search for better ways to close the teaching quality and achievement gaps that exist in all of our school communities.

*While the solutions will not require rocket science, there is a science to putting the pieces of the teaching quality puzzle together ... (and) policymakers and other educational decisionmakers would be wise to listen to these NBCTs as they search for better ways to close the teaching quality and achievement gaps.*

## Notes

1. Ferguson, R. F. (1991, Summer). "Paying for public education: New evidence on how and why money matters." *Harvard Journal on Legislation*, 28 (2), 465-498; Sanders, W.L., & Rivers, J.C. (1996). *Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Academic Achievement*. Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center; Greenwald, R., Hedges, L., & Laine, R.D. (1996). "The effect of school resources on student achievement." *Review of Educational Research* 66, 361-396.

2. Cavalluzzo, L. (2004). *Is National Board Certification an Effective Signal of Teacher Quality?* Alexandria, Va.: CNA Corporation; Goldhaber, D. & Anthony, E. (2004). *Can Teacher Quality be Effectively Assessed?* Seattle, Wash.: Center on Reinventing Public Education, University of Washington; Vandevort, L.G., Amrein-Beardsley, A., and Berliner, D. (2004). *National Board Certified Teachers and Their Students' Achievement*. Educational Policy Analysis Archives. Sept. 8, 2004, <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v12n46/>

3. Legislative and policy actions that create incentives and recognition for National Board Certification have been enacted in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and in about 550 local school districts.

4. SRI International, WestEd, Julia Koppich and Associates, and the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality are conducting this study—which draws on analyses of a large national survey of NBCTs and case studies NBCTs in low performing schools in California, Ohio, and North Carolina. The study will release its final report in late summer 2005.

5. Humphrey, D.C., Koppich, J., and Hough, H. (2005). "Sharing The Wealth: National Board Certified Teachers And The Schools That Need Them Most." *Educational Policy Analysis Archives* 13, No. 18. Retrieved on March 5, 2005.

6. Prince, C. (2002). *Higher Pay in Hard-to-Staff Schools: The Case for Financial Incentives*. Arlington, Va.: American Association of School Administrators.

7. Hanushek, E. A, Kain, J. F, & Rivkin, S. G. (2001). *Why Public Schools Lose Teachers*. Cambridge, Mass.: National Bureau of Economic Research.

8. SECTQ (2003). Southeast Center for Teaching Quality (2003). *Recruitment and Retention Strategies in a Regional and National Context*. Retrieved March 6, 2005, from <http://www.teachingquality.org/resources/SECTQpublications/Recruitment&RetentionStrategies.pdf>

9. Fowler, R. C. (2003). "The Massachusetts signing bonus program for new teachers: A model of teacher preparation worth copying?" *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 11(13). Retrieved May 16, 2003, from <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v11n13>

10. Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). "A different approach to solving the teacher shortage problem." *CTP Teaching Quality Policy Briefs*, 3.

11. See [www.teachingquality.org/TWC.htm](http://www.teachingquality.org/TWC.htm)

12. Rogers, Betsy. (2005, Feb. 17). "Bright Beginnings." *Education Week* weblog [online] Available: [http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/brogers/archives/2005/02/bright\\_beginnin.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/brogers/archives/2005/02/bright_beginnin.html). Retrieved on April 21, 2005.
13. Deming, W.E. (2000). *Out of Crisis*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
14. Berry, Johnson, and Montgomery (2005). "The Power of Teacher Leadership." *Educational Leadership*. February 2005, pp. 56-60.
15. In addition to state incentives that pays NBCTs \$20,000 over 4 years to teach in a low performing school, LAUSD offers a bonus of up to 15 percent to all NBCTs, regardless of where they teach. One-half of the district bonus is conditional on the NBCT providing 92 hours of service (e.g., mentoring outside of the school day).
16. Humphrey, Koppich, and Hough. Ibid.
17. Little, J. W. (1996). *Organizing Schools for Teacher Learning*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. New York. April.
18. National Partnership for Teaching in At-Risk Schools (2005). *Qualified Teachers for At-Risk Schools: A National Imperative*. Washington, D.C.: Author.