

Q & A FOR 2008 NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION®

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND OTHER EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS





A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

National Board Certification is part of a growing movement in this country that is improving teaching, advancing student learning and making schools better.

Established and administered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards® (NBPTS®), National Board Certification is a voluntary assessment program designed to improve student learning by recognizing and rewarding highly accomplished teachers and improving overall teaching effectiveness. While state licensing systems set basic requirements to teach in each state, National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) successfully demonstrate advanced teaching knowledge, skills and practices.

Like board-certified doctors and accountants, teachers who achieve National Board Certification have met rigorous standards through intensive study, expert evaluation, self-assessment and peer review. Teachers who have successfully achieved National Board Certification have demonstrated subject expertise as well as the ability to develop lesson plans and deliver instruction that meets the needs of students at different levels and with differing abilities.

Research shows that National Board Certified Teachers help raise the quality of teaching and learning, particularly for minority children. Research also indicates that National Board Certified Teachers intend to remain in teaching longer than the general teacher population and are frequently involved in their schools as mentors and coaches to new and struggling teachers, in curricular decisions, and in organizing professional development opportunities.

We invite you to support and/or join the ranks of 64,000 National Board Certified Teachers nationwide who help students develop the skills necessary to thrive in school, in the workplace and in the 21st century global economy. We hope that you will encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Make the commitment to National Board Certification in 2008.

Joseph A. Aguerrebere, Ed.D.
President and CEO

MAKE THE COMMITMENT TO ACCOMPLISHED TEACHING

Q: WHAT IS THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS?

A: NBPTS is an independent, nonprofit and nonpartisan organization founded in 1987 to create a system of advanced certification for teachers based on high and rigorous standards. NBPTS developed the National Board Certification process and certifies teachers who successfully complete related assessments.

The National Board's mission is to advance the quality of teaching and learning by

- Maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do,
- Providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards, and
- Advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers.

"The National Board process revolutionizes a teacher's instructional methods to make the teacher a more vital, effective and committed educator. It is due to this belief that I will continue in the role of mentor and recruiter for National Board Certification."

— **Andrea Peterson, NBCT
2007 National Teacher
of the Year, Washington**

Q: WHAT IS NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION?

A: National Board Certification is achieved upon successful completion of a voluntary assessment program designed to recognize effective and accomplished teachers who meet high and rigorous standards based on what teachers should know and be able to do. National Board Certification is available nationwide for most preK–12 teachers.

National Board Certification is an advanced teaching credential. It complements, but does not replace, a state's teacher license. It is valid for up to 10 years, and renewal candidates must begin the renewal process during their eighth or ninth years as NBCTs.

As part of the certification process, candidates complete 10 assessments that are reviewed by trained teachers in their certificate areas. The assessments include four portfolio entries that feature teaching practice and six constructed response exercises that assess content knowledge.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

To pursue National Board Certification, candidates must have

- A baccalaureate degree,
- Three years of teaching experience in early childhood, elementary, middle or secondary schools prior to submitting an application, and
- A valid state teaching license, where required, for each of those three years.

Check the NBPTS Web site for complete eligibility requirements.

Q: WHY BECOME A NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHER® (NBCT®)?

A: In addition to being among the most accomplished teachers in the nation, National Board Certified Teachers benefit students, schools and communities by

- Strengthening teaching practice — Research shows candidates demonstrate significant improvement in their teaching practice;
- Improving student learning — Research demonstrates that National Board Certified Teachers have a greater impact on students' academic performance;
- Advancing careers — National Board Certification provides routes for NBCTs to advance as master teachers, school leaders and mentors without leaving the classroom;
- Increasing financial opportunities — Most states and hundreds of local districts offer salary incentives for teachers who certify;
- Providing a portable teaching license — Many states recognize National Board Certification as sufficient proof for state licensure, allowing movement from state to state; and
- Contributing to Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and re-certification requirements — Many higher-education institutions give graduate credits to NBCTs who complete the certification process.

Q: HOW DOES NBPTS SUPPORT NBCTs THROUGHOUT THEIR CAREERS?

A: NBPTS recognizes that NBCTs are powerful teacher leaders who have an influential voice in education. To ensure NBCTs have ongoing support throughout their careers, NBPTS provides resources, information and opportunities via

- **NBCTLink** — the online community that connects NBCTs who want to share classroom experiences; exchange information about best teaching practices,

THE FIVE CORE PROPOSITIONS

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.

technology and methods to improve student learning; and discuss opinions about education-related topics. www.nbctlink.org

- **AdvocacyLink** — the NBPTS legislative action center that provides up-to-date news about education issues in Congress and state governments, and gives to constituents the opportunity to volunteer to contact policymakers and media positively impact education policy. www.capwiz.com/nbpts/home
- **NewsLink** — the NBPTS online newsletter that provides the latest information about events and issues surrounding the organization and, most importantly, National Board Certified Teachers. www.nbpts.org/about_us/newslink

Additionally:

- NBPTS provides direct opportunities for NBCTs to participate as National Board assessors, candidate support providers, outreach and recruitment liaisons, and advisors.
- NBPTS shares with NBCTs opportunities from other professional organizations that wish to use National Board Certified Teachers' knowledge and skills to further other teaching-related initiatives and projects.

Q: WHY STANDARDS FOR ACCOMPLISHED TEACHING?

A: Every child deserves an accomplished teacher — one who is qualified to equip students with the skills to succeed in the 21st century global community. NBPTS Standards and National Board Certification give teachers and schools the tools to define and measure teaching excellence.

NBPTS Standards are based on the Five Core Propositions that form the foundation for what all accomplished teachers should know and be able to do and provide a reference that helps educators link teaching standards to teaching practice.

STANDARDS & CERTIFICATES

NBPTS offers 25 certificates in specific subject areas and student age categories.

SUBJECT

CERTIFICATE

Art

- Early and Middle Childhood/Art
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Art

Career and Technical Education

- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Career and Technical Education

English as a New Language

- Early and Middle Childhood/English as a New Language
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/English as a New Language

English Language Arts

- Early Adolescence/English Language Arts
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood/English Language Arts

Exceptional Needs Specialist

- Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/Exceptional Needs Specialist

Generalist

- Early Childhood/Generalist
- Middle Childhood/Generalist

Health Education

- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Health Education

Library Media

- Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/Library Media

Developmental Age Categories: Early Childhood = Ages 3-8; Middle Childhood = Ages 7-Adulthood = Ages 3-18+; Early Adolescence = Ages 11-15; Adolescence and Young Adulthood

SUBJECT	CERTIFICATE
Literacy: Reading-Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading-Language Arts
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Adolescence/Mathematics • Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Mathematics
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early and Middle Childhood/Music • Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Music
Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early and Middle Childhood/Physical Education • Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Physical Education
School Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/School Counseling
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Adolescence/Science • Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Science
Social Studies-History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Adolescence/Social Studies-History • Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Social Studies-History
World Languages Other than English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/World Languages Other than English (<i>Target Language Specialty Areas Available: French and Spanish</i>)

12; Early and Middle Childhood = Ages 3-12; Early Childhood through Young = Ages 14-18+; Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood = Ages 11-18+

Q: WHY DO ALL 50 STATES, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND MORE THAN 700 SCHOOL DISTRICTS SUPPORT NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION?

A: District and state officials know NBCTs make a positive difference in student learning. They also know NBCTs are powerful teacher leaders who help advance agendas for school improvement.

Q: WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATE AREAS?

A: Building upon the Five Core Propositions, NBPTS developed standards of accomplishment in 16 different subject areas with students at various developmental levels. These standards were developed and validated by representative councils comprised of master teachers, disciplinary organizations and other education experts. Many school systems use the standards as the basis for ongoing teacher and school counselor professional development, and many colleges and universities incorporate them into their undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs.

Based on these standards, NBPTS offers 25 certificates that cover a variety of subjects and student developmental levels and are applicable to most teachers in American schools. For more information, see the chart on the previous page or visit www.nbpts.org.

CANDIDACY CALENDAR



Q: WHAT IS REQUIRED OF CANDIDATES?

A: The rigor of NBPTS Standards leads candidates to spend approximately 200-400 hours preparing for and completing the certification process, which can take from one to three years.

Throughout this period, candidates become familiar with the standards for their certificate areas, review their content knowledge to prepare for assessment questions, evaluate their teaching practices and prepare their portfolio entries. Specifically, candidates submit the following components for scoring:

- Analysis of and reflection on small and large group work that is supported by video recordings of their classroom teaching (two portfolio entries)
- Analysis of and reflection on student work with samples (one portfolio entry)
- Documented accomplishments of work outside the classroom and evidence of how that work impacts student learning (one portfolio entry)
- Online assessment exercises that demonstrate subject-matter expertise (six 30-minute constructed response questions scheduled at a local assessment center)

June 2009	July 2009	August 2009	September 2009	October 2009	November 2009	December 2009
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(Check your state page www.nbpts.org as some states close candidacy as early as June.)

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2009

State assessment center exercises — July 1, 2008 - June 15, 2009

Receive scores no later than December 31, 2009

A: HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Q: The 2008 assessment fee is \$2,500, including a non-refundable fee of \$500. In addition, there is a non-refundable \$65 processing charge due at the time of application.

A: WHAT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE FOR CANDIDATES?

Q: Although many teachers and school counselors invest in National Board Certification as their career development choice, full or partial financial support is often available to help many candidates pay the assessment fee. Below are examples of financial support options that may be available to candidates.

“National Board Certification is really important in terms of tipping the culture of a school and district. While it's great to have a National Board Certified Teacher in every school, I think that sets a very low benchmark. Instead, we want *teams* of National Board Certified Teachers in every school.”

— **John E. Deasy, Superintendent
Prince George's County Public
Schools, Maryland**

- **CANDIDATE SUBSIDY PROGRAM**

Partial financial support is available in every state through the Candidate Subsidy Program. Made possible through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the program provides funds to a number of candidates in each state to help offset assessment fees. To qualify for this fee support, candidates must contact their state subsidy administrators to ensure compliance with state registration requirements. Information about the Candidate Subsidy Program is available at www.nbpts.org.

- **STATE AND LOCAL INCENTIVES**

Most states and many districts offer support for candidates and/or salary incentives for those who achieve certification. Information about state and local support incentives is available at www.nbpts.org or from state program administrators.

- **NATIONAL BOARD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (NBSP)**

NBPTS offers a limited number of scholarships to teachers seeking National Board Certification through the National Board Scholarship Program.

Scholarships are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis only to teachers who have submitted their candidate applications, have paid the non-refundable \$500 initial fee, and do not have access to financial support from their states or local school districts. Information about the National Board Scholarship Program is available at www.nbpts.org and 1-888-908-FEES (3337).

- **EXTENDED PAYMENT OPTIONS BY E-CHECK**

NBPTS offers a flexible payment plan that allows first-time candidates to pay assessment fees by electronic check. Candidates using this option will have an extended payment deadline of March 14, 2008. Candidates will be allowed to decide on the due date of each monthly installment, and NBPTS will send a monthly e-mail reminder regarding payment.

- **LOW-INTEREST LOANS FROM TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS**

National Education Association (NEA) members can apply for low-interest loans to pay their initial and retake candidate fees. For more information, call 1-800-545-4094 or visit the NEA Member Benefits Web site at www.neamb.com/loans/loanbc.jsp. American Federation of Teachers (AFT) members can apply for low-interest loans to pay their initial and retake candidate fees. For more information, call 1-888-238-5646.

- **LOCAL PROGRAMS**

Many local businesses and foundations support candidates for National Board Certification. Candidates should check with their local chambers of commerce or school districts.

"[National Board Certification] is the single professional development that will make a difference in your classroom. You will come out a better teacher whether you certify or not."

— **Linda Voelzel, NBCT
Texas**

Q: HOW ARE CANDIDATES ASSESSED?

A: NBPTS uses proven protocols to train experienced classroom teachers and school counselors as NBPTS assessors. The assessors teach subjects and development levels that relate to the certificate areas they are assessing. Assessors who successfully complete the training score the candidates' submissions (portfolio entries and online assessments) to determine whether their responses meet the applicable standards. Each assessor scores only a portion of a candidate's submission, and a certain percentage of entries are scored independently by two different assessors. This ensures that at least 17 different assessors have reviewed a component of each candidate's work.



Q: WHAT HELP IS AVAILABLE TO CANDIDATES?

A: NBPTS works to ensure that candidates are never alone as they go through the certification process. The NBPTS Web site is a gateway to extensive resources, including portfolio guidelines, assessment center instructions, tutorials and scoring guides. In addition, NBPTS provides access to a network of Candidate Support Providers — NBCTs, higher education institutions and others who provide support programs for National Board candidates. NBPTS also offers *Take One!*[®], which can be used as an initial step in becoming a candidate for National Board Certification. More information is available on the back cover of this booklet and at www.nbpts.org.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF CANDIDATES DON'T ACHIEVE IN YEAR ONE?

A: National Board Certification is a rigorous process, and candidates often do not achieve certification on their first attempt, which is why they have up to three years to certify. Candidates who do not achieve in year one continue with the process by retaking selected portions of their original entries through the NBPTS score banking and retake process. This process allows candidates to save their original scores, take up to two more years to complete selected entries (at \$350 each) and submit them for scoring. Many candidates who follow this path are able to achieve National Board Certification within this extended time period.

**ARE YOU READY TO MAKE THE
COMMITMENT TO ACCOMPLISHED TEACHING?**

To apply, or for more information:
Visit us at www.nbpts.org or call **1-800-22TEACH**



SEVEN STEPS TO CANDIDACY

1. **Determine your eligibility.** Teachers and school counselors can become candidates if they meet the following eligibility requirements:

- A baccalaureate degree
- Three years of teaching experience in early childhood, elementary, middle or secondary schools prior to submitting an application
- A valid state teaching license, where required, for each of those three years

Check the NBPTS Web site for complete eligibility requirements.

2. **Choose your certificate.** Review the certificate requirements at www.nbpts.org and choose the certificate area that is appropriate for you.
3. **Review the standards.** Go to www.nbpts.org and review the Five Core Propositions and the standards for the certificate area that best reflects your practice.
4. **Make the commitment.** Decide if National Board Certification is for you and if you are ready to pursue certification this year.
5. **Familiarize yourself with your state and local application requirements.** The National Board Certification application deadline is December 31, 2008; however, state and local application and financial aid incentive deadlines vary and are typically much earlier. Candidates who seek funding from their states need to check state requirements and confirm with their state program administrators before submitting applications to NBPTS. A list of state deadlines is available at www.nbpts.org.
6. **Identify financial resources.** Information about subsidy programs, state and local incentives, and the National Board Scholarship Program is available at www.nbpts.org. NEA and AFT members can also apply for low-interest loans to pay their assessment fees.
7. **Complete the application.** The application is available at www.nbpts.org.



WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT NBPTS AND NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

“Those who seek National Board Certification aspire to the highest credential in the teaching profession. In doing so, they demonstrate their commitment to teaching excellence by participating in the most rewarding — and most demanding — professional development experience of their careers.”

— Reg Weaver, President
National Education Association (NEA)

“Good teachers are critical to higher student achievement, and National Board Certification is a proven avenue to accomplished teaching. Through this program, we are creating a corps of expert teachers who are leading the charge to raise student achievement in our nation's schools.”

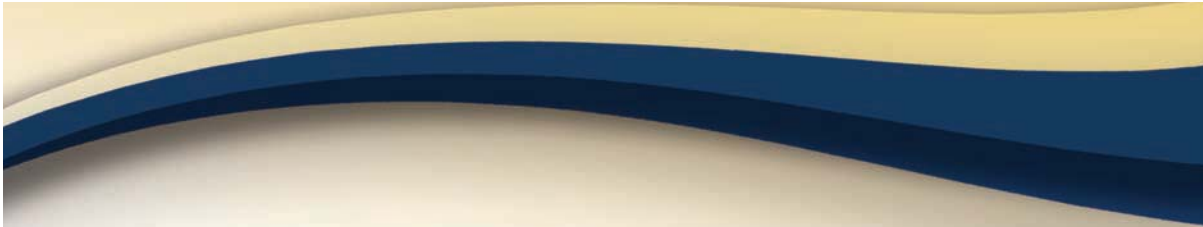
— Edward J. McElroy, President
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

“National Board Certification is the mark of teaching excellence. Increasing the number of such highly qualified educators who work in Latino communities is essential if we are to close the education achievement gap.”

— Arturo Vargas, Executive Director
National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO)

“Over the next decade, the foundations of our factory-era schools will be shattered, clearing the way for 21st century learning centers. In order for our students to compete in the 21st century global economy, they must have access to a quality education, which begins with quality teachers. We know that National Board Certified Teachers have proven that they know their subject matter, can successfully teach it and offer students the skills necessary to thrive in school and in the workplace.”

— Thomas G. Carroll, President
National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF)



“A school board's role is to ask, what is the best use of teacher talent in a school system? If we are going to employ teachers, we need to use them as resources to bring about the standardization of teaching excellence. What we have found is that teachers who go through the National Board Certification process become the school district's best change agents to raise the level of classroom instruction, which results in greater student achievement.”

— Anne L. Bryant, Executive Director
National School Boards Association (NSBA)

“As increasing numbers of teachers achieve National Board Certification, more students will experience how a highly qualified teacher can influence their learning and impact the quality of education across this country.”

— Edward B. Rust Jr., Chairman and CEO
State Farm Insurance Companies®

“Teacher leadership and teacher quality impact student excellence. Research demonstrates that National Board Certified Teachers help students learn more, most notably under-achieving students. National Board Certification is a smart investment for our schools.”

— Deborah Hunter-Harvill, President
National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE)

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This project is funded in part with grants from the U.S. Department of Education and the National Science Foundation. Through September 2007, NBPTS has been appropriated federal funds of \$167.7 million, of which \$151.9 million was expended. Such amount represents approximately 32 percent of the National Board Certification project. Approximately \$325.6 million (68 percent) of the project's cost was financed by non-federal sources.

The contents of this publication were developed in part under a grant from the Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal government.

Q: WHAT IS *TAKE ONE!* AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION?

A: *Take One!* is a program that can be used by licensed teachers as an initial step in becoming a candidate for National Board Certification or as stand-alone professional development by any educator. A teacher can prepare and submit one pre-selected video portfolio entry from any of the 25 certificate areas of National Board Certification and later transfer the score if he or she pursues National Board Certification. *Take One!* is available to all teachers as well as induction or pre-service teachers, principals, administrators, college professors and those who support National Board Certification candidates.

Q: WHY *TAKE ONE!*?

A: *Take One!*:

- Provides teachers with the opportunity to reflect on their classroom instructional practices within the context of national teaching standards;
- Helps teachers plan and achieve specific learning outcomes and adapt their teaching practices to the needs of individual students; and
- Offers teachers and other educators the opportunity to form professional learning communities with a common language for — and commitment to — student improvement and achievement.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION,
CALL **1-800-22TEACH** (1-800-228-3224)
OR VISIT **www.nbpts.org**



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ISBN-13: 978-1-878520-03-6
ISBN-10: 1-878520-03-2