

# VOICES OF INFLUENCE

*Advancing High-Quality Teaching  
through National Board Certification®*



An Update on National Board Certification and the  
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards®



## NBPTS<sup>®</sup>

### FIVE CORE PROPOSITIONS

**PROPOSITION 1:** Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

**PROPOSITION 2:** Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

**PROPOSITION 3:** Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

**PROPOSITION 4:** Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

**PROPOSITION 5:** Teachers are members of learning communities.

#### **COVER PHOTO CREDITS (TOP LEFT TO BOTTOM RIGHT):**

**Roy E. Barnes, Former Governor of Georgia,  
Chair, NBPTS Board of Directors**

**Daniel A. Domenech, Executive Director,  
American Association of  
School Administrators (as of July 2008)**

**Janet M. Knupp, Founding President,  
The Chicago Public Education Fund**

**Arthur E. Wise, President Emeritus,  
National Council for Accreditation  
of Teacher Education**

**Kimberly Oliver, NBCT,  
2006 National Teacher of the Year**

**Rebecca A. Palacios, NBCT,  
Vice Chair, NBPTS Board of Directors**

**Mary Hatwood Futrell, Dean,  
Graduate School of Education and Human Development,  
The George Washington University**

**Linda Darling-Hammond, Charles E. Ducommun  
Professor of Education, Stanford University**

**Lee S. Shulman, President,  
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**Roger Sampson, President,  
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**Anne L. Bryant, Executive Director,  
National School Boards Association**

**James A. Kelly, Founding President,  
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards**



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## PREFACE

The following report reflects presentations, discussions, and follow-up interviews involving participants in the conference, *20/20: Clarifying a Vision for Quality Teaching*, held October 22-24, 2007, at the Johnson Foundation Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin (see page 23 for a list of participants).

Also included in the report are references to the Congressionally-mandated report, *Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs*, by the National Research Council of the National Academies, and *Measuring What Matters: The Effects of National Board Certification on Advancing 21st Century Teaching and Learning*, by the *TeacherSolutions* NBCT Team, Center for Teaching Quality.



## THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT OF NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

**N**o single number can accurately capture the impact that the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has had since its founding more than 20 years ago. In this time, NBPTS has built and put in place the first set of national standards for accomplished teachers and created a system to certify educators who meet these rigorous standards in 25 teaching fields.

With National Board Standards and the certification process as the foundation of its work, NBPTS has also developed training programs, sponsored research, and established new professional communities of teachers across the country. These efforts have created a multiplier effect that continues to reshape and improve the teaching field, while bringing new benefits to schools and students.

The numbers below begin to show the many different ways that National Board Certification is reaching, changing, and enhancing the nation's teacher force and the institutions that prepare teachers.

### **National Board Certified Teachers: By the Numbers**

- As of June 2008, there are 63,879 National Board Certified Teachers working in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- The National Board certified 8,551 new teachers in the past year ..the largest one-year total to date, up 9 percent from the previous year.
- Nearly half the states (24) and the District of Columbia each saw growth of at least 20 percent in 2007 over the previous year, while 19 states saw growth of 30 percent in 2006.

### **National Board Certified Teachers Are Among the Nation's Best**

- A Congressionally-mandated report (based on a 30-month study) by the National Research Council of the National Academies affirms that National Board Certification has a positive impact on student achievement, teacher retention, and professional development.
- National Board Certified Teachers were named National Teacher of the Year in 2007, 2006, 2003, 2001, and 1997.\*
- Nearly one-third of the recipients of the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching are NBCTs.\*
- Forty percent of USA Today's 2007 All-USA Teacher Team awardees are NBCTs.\*

- Nearly one-quarter of the 2008 State Teachers of the Year are NBCTs.\*

### **National Board Standards Are Reshaping Teacher Preparation**

- Of respondents to a 2007 survey of the nation's education preparation programs, 49 percent align master's degree programs "to a great extent" with National Board Standards; 41 percent align post-baccalaureate programs "to a great extent" with National Board Standards; and 38 percent align undergraduate teacher preparation "to a great extent" with National Board Standards.
- The National Board, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium are aligned in their work.

### **NBPTS is Building Professional Communities of Teachers**

- Nearly 3,000 NBCTs participated in NBPTS-sponsored summits from 2005 to 2007.
- NBCTs routinely achieve National Board Certification by working with their colleagues as part of a national support network.
- More than 2,500 teachers nationwide review National Board assessments each year.

*\*As of March 2008*

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As this document was being prepared, a group of prominent scholars deliberating under the auspices of the National Research Council of the National Academies released a 30-month, Congressionally-mandated study of the effectiveness and impact of National Board Certification.

The group's report was a validation of 20 years of work to create the first-ever national standards for accomplished teaching and an assessment and certification program for teachers based on the standards. The report encouraged an expansion of our mission and further validated our own plans for the future.

The National Research Council study concluded that teachers who are National Board certified improve student achievement. According to the report, "evidence is clear that National Board Certification distinguishes more effective teachers from less effective teachers with respect to student achievement."

The report affirmed previous research findings that National Board Certification improves teacher retention and is considered a positive professional development experience. It encourages state and school district leaders as well as higher-education officials to help expand National Board Certification. According to the report, "...NBPTS should continue to invest in its larger mission of influencing the teaching field in broad, comprehensive ways."

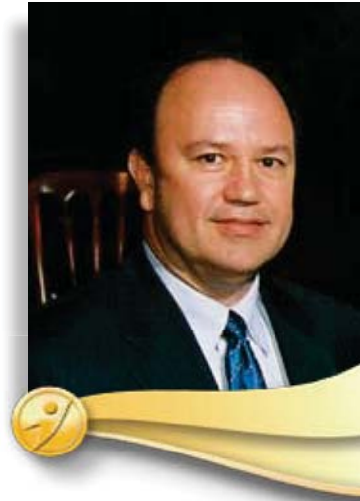
The report also urged some changes in the National Board's practices and procedures. For example, the National Research Council urged that the National Board closely evaluate its standards and assessments and pursue a research agenda more closely aligned with its goals. As an organization committed to self-reflection and external evaluation, we welcome these recommendations.

The National Board Certification movement, which in recent years has experienced record growth, has continued to take steps to strengthen the program for our next 20 years and to study its effectiveness with the help of critical friends and impartial evaluators.

Last fall, NBPTS and the Johnson Foundation hosted a conference in Racine, Wisconsin, where we took a serious look at the progress and future of National Board Certification. The meeting — which brought together experts on teaching, evaluation and assessment, research, state policy, and National Board Certified Teachers — suggested several new directions for the National Board, most notably expanding outreach to bolster recruitment among urban schools and encouraging greater use of NBCTs as agents of positive change in schools, districts, and in public policy.

The National Board has continued to expand its commitment to working closely with state leaders, business organizations, and nonprofits to bring more highly accomplished teachers to the schools and classrooms that need them the most.

The National Board also commissioned Barnett Berry, president and CEO of the Center for Teaching Quality, and National Board Certified Teachers from the center's *TeacherSolutions* team, to provide input regarding the promise and potential of National Board Certification. Their report, which calls for expanding the influence of NBCTs,



will help guide our steps to ensure that NBCTs assume more prominent roles in policy discussions. The report challenges NBCTs to exert their leadership skills in school reform and professional development sectors and to build stronger partnerships with higher education.

The National Board's continued success depends on our constant monitoring of best practices in teaching and learning. A critical aspect of the National Board Standards and assessments is recognition of the impact that good teaching has on student learning. Having standards and assessments in 25 certification areas provides access and opportunity to 95 percent of the teaching force, yet presents challenges. This broad range of content makes it challenging to identify standard measures of student learning and ways to measure how teachers contribute to that learning. NBPTS this year launched a task force to inform the national discussion about effective measures of student learning. The effort will identify various measures of student progress that can be applied uniformly across the many disciplines.

The National Board is also working with national school leadership organizations to create standards and advanced certification for principals and teacher leaders. This certification will help meet the need for additional training and recognition — qualities that are being sought by principals and other school leaders. The certification program also will help ensure that leaders better understand the value of National Board Certification for teachers.

The National Research Council has recognized the value of National Board Certification in raising test scores and retaining teachers. The National Board is now seeking new ways to quantify the cost-effectiveness of the program. To that end, NBPTS has established a partnership with school-finance experts to develop a model for enabling states and districts to determine the costs and benefits of providing incentives to encourage more teachers to pursue and achieve certification.

In the words of the National Research Council report: “The National Board has offered a thoughtful approach to serious problems with the way the U.S. education system selects and prepares its teachers and the conditions in which our teachers do their work.”



**Joseph A. Aguerrebere, Ed.D.**  
**President and CEO**  
**National Board for Professional Teaching Standards**  
**July 2008**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Board Certification movement is growing in size and influence, while helping to improve the performance of more students, teachers, and schools. These are not simply words, but conclusions that can be drawn from the steady growth of National Board Certification, according to discussions by prominent policymakers and scholars at a Wingspread conference last fall; a recent report by the National Research Council of the National Academies; and a newly released study by the Center for Teaching Quality in collaboration with a team of National Board Certified Teachers.

The 2007 class of National Board Certified Teachers was the largest ever, bringing the total to nearly 64,000 nationwide. Not only was this nearly a 9 percent increase over the previous year, but 24 states and the District of Columbia saw growth of at least 20 percent. Additionally, the National Board Standards, assessments, and student-centered strategies are reshaping how teachers are redefining the ongoing professional development they receive.

This work received important validation in June 2008, when the National Research Council's long-awaited report concluded that NBCTs are identified for their ability to raise student achievement. It also affirmed research findings that National Board Certification helps retain teachers and is a positive professional development experience.

To have an even greater impact, the movement should build on its legacy of success to seek more systemic ways for NBCTs to become leaders in schools, reach more high-need schools, and forge closer relationships with administrators, thus strengthening their role as agents of positive change. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and NBCTs also must expand efforts to share their expertise and to be a part of debates about teaching, teacher quality, and measuring student learning.

Many of these observations were shared by education leaders, scholars, policymakers, and NBCTs at the conference, *20/20: Clarifying a Vision for Quality Teaching*, held October 22-24, 2007, at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin. The Johnson Foundation hosted the meeting in conjunction with the 20th anniversary of NBPTS. The Wingspread discussion parallels findings by the National Research Council and other research, including a new report compiled by Barnett Berry, president and CEO of the Center for Teaching Quality, and the Center's *TeacherSolutions* NBCT Team.

While this report draws primarily from the presentations, group discussions, and post-conference interviews from the Wingspread meeting, it includes excerpts and highlights from the National Research Council report and the CTQ report. It is one of the most comprehensive sets of reflections to date on the progress of National Board Certification, its positive impact on education, and suggestions for growth and priorities in coming years.

"Beyond setting the standard for highly accomplished teaching, the National Board can help raise the performance of all teachers and move the field away from minimal standards," said former Georgia Governor Roy E. Barnes, chair of the NBPTS Board of Directors.

**...the National Research Council's long-awaited report concluded that NBCTs are identified for their ability to raise student achievement. It also affirmed research findings that National Board Certification helps retain teachers and is a positive professional development experience.**



***“Beyond setting the standard for highly accomplished teaching, the National Board can help raise the performance of all teachers and move the field away from minimal standards.”***

**—Gov. Roy E. Barnes,  
chair, NBPTS  
Board of Directors**

“Education is where medicine was in 1910 — on the verge of creating a profession of teaching,” said Linda Darling-Hammond, Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education, Stanford University. “The National Board’s work has been critical in developing standards and embedding them in the practice of teaching. We have quite a lot to do in the next 10 or 20 years.”

The observations that came out of the Wingspread conference closely aligned with many of the recommendations that were later put forth by the National Research Council and the *TeacherSolutions* NBCT Team. Participants at the Wingspread conference suggested several areas where National Board Certification appears to have the greatest long-term potential, as well as strategies to help realize that potential. Among them are:

**Continue to increase the number and impact of National Board Certified Teachers nationally and particularly in high-need schools.** While nearly 42 percent of NBCTs work in Title I schools, there remains a great need to get more of these highly accomplished teachers into struggling schools, including more focused recruitment of NBCTs, as well as heightened encouragement of teachers already in such schools to become candidates for National Board Certification. In addition to offering financial and other incentives, recruiting efforts should promote curricular support, improved working conditions, and strong school-based leadership. To foster collaboration and raise the number of NBCTs in high-need schools and nationwide, NBPTS should stimulate more grassroots, district-focused partnerships and continue to recruit more minority teachers to become NBCTs.

**Use National Board Certification to broaden the dialogue about what constitutes student learning and achievement — and how best to assess it — and to bring the perspectives of highly accomplished teachers directly into education and policy debates.** NBPTS needs to help the field better understand high-quality teaching and how it relates to student learning and measuring student achievement. NBPTS should advance the understanding of effective practice and student achievement. The National Board can show how NBCTs affect learning and test outcomes — and that the two are not necessarily in conflict. This area is one of several in which, experts say, the National Board should develop systemic ways for NBPTS, NBCTs, and supporters to enrich policy debates and share their collective knowledge. The National Board and NBCTs must promote their expertise and experience to help develop policies conducive to effective teaching and to raise awareness of the need to provide adequate funding for education. NBPTS should continue partnering with education schools, public education foundations, graduate schools, K–12 and higher education associations, and others to increase the use of NBCTs as change agents.

**Help principals better understand teaching and how to use NBCTs to change school culture.** School and district administrators are critical to using NBCTs to create and support learning in all schools — especially high-need schools. NBCTs, in collaboration with teacher leaders and administrators, can improve support for new and struggling teachers and change school cultures. NBPTS seeks to inform principals about National Board Certification as a vehicle for school improvement; develop a certification process for school leadership; and use school-based teams of teachers to improve practice and open the doors of the classroom.

**Embed National Board Standards and assessments in the initial and continuing preparation of teachers.** The National Board should encourage the expansion of its core propositions for effective teaching and standards in pre-service preparation and induction. It also should seek ways to embed National Board Standards, reflection and reflective writing, and portfolio concepts throughout the teaching continuum for all teachers. Post-baccalaureate programs can benefit from better and more systemic integration of the National Board Standards and assessment process. To increase the number of minority NBCTs, the National Board should collaborate early in the teacher-education process with colleges, universities, and institutions that serve large minority populations.

## Conclusion

The Wingspread participants as well as the other reports repeatedly stressed that NBPTS is helping to improve teaching, teacher preparation, and the understanding of how highly accomplished teaching affects student learning. They agreed that NBPTS, working with NBCTs and supporters across the nation, can do more to share its knowledge, influence policy, and raise the movement's profile.

Achieving these goals will require new NBPTS strategies, a higher public profile, and greater presence in policy discussions. The field is waiting for NBPTS to contribute to the major issues of the day and will listen to what NBPTS has to say. This report expands on these themes and helps establish a roadmap for the National Board in coming years.



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**—Linda Darling-Hammond,  
Stanford University**

## FULFILLING A VISION

When the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was formed more than 20 years ago, there were no advanced teaching standards or assessments for teachers that were based on how they performed in their classrooms. This was unheard of in other professions. Doctors, lawyers, accountants, and architects had to demonstrate competency within sets of agreed-upon standards to be licensed and certified as professionals in their fields.

Lacking such standards, education evaluated teachers based on what they thought about teaching and how they explained their strategies. By and large, teachers were not judged on what they actually were doing in the classroom. NBPTS accepted the charge to remedy this shortcoming by developing a nationally accepted professional credentialing system built around standards and assessments rooted in what teachers should know and be able to do in the classroom.

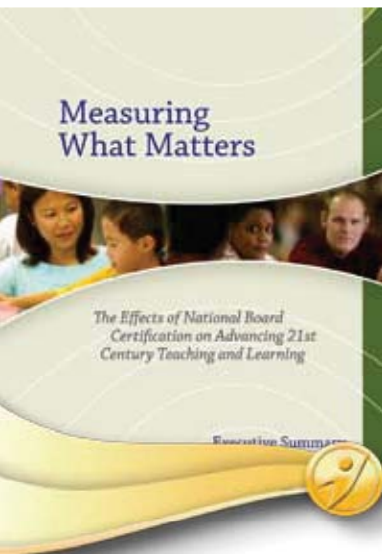
In its first years, NBPTS built a broad-based coalition of education leaders, policymakers, and business leaders to support its improvement. Over the past two decades, the National Board has created performance-based teaching standards in 25 instructional areas, influenced the design of education programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and awarded National Board Certification to nearly 64,000 teachers.

The NBCT class of 2007 was the largest in the National Board's history. The class of 8,551 brought the total number of NBCTs to 63,879 nationwide for a nearly 9 percent increase over the number of teachers who earned certification in 2006. In 24 states and the District of Columbia, the number of new NBCTs in 2007 was at least 20 percent larger than the number of new NBCTs in 2006. In addition, the 23,935 NBCTs in 2002 nearly tripled to 63,879 in 2007.

"You have critical masses of NBCTs in multiple schools, and they're improving teaching and learning," Barbara Kelley, former chair of NBPTS, said. "Even real estate ads trumpet the NBCTs. The culture of these schools is different. I would say the more, the better."

Many experts view National Board Certification as the most ambitious effort by any country to establish a professional standards-driven certification process for teachers. As other nations place more importance on policies designed to attract, develop, and retain effective teachers, there is growing interest in the same kind of self-reflection and extensive research that has underpinned the National Board's certification process and guided its implementation.

"We are proud of what we have done, but there continues to be too much variation in teacher quality in this nation," said Joseph A. Aguerrebere, president and CEO of NBPTS. "We want to see National Board Standards, assessments, and training used more widely at all stages of a teacher's career. We think this is one of the most effective ways to continue improving teaching on an even greater scale."



***"We all agree that the NBPTS process has triggered an ongoing national conversation about good teaching and opened the door to richer dialogue about specific aspects and outcomes of proficient practice."***

**—Barnett Berry,  
president and CEO,  
Center for  
Teaching Quality**

***“The National Board process helped re-energize my teaching, It helped me articulate what I knew about good teaching. I didn’t have to go further than my classroom to find my graduate program.”***  
—Margarita Mendez, NBCT

**The Community of Professional Teachers Is Expanding.** The National Board’s most important accomplishment has been to enhance the perception of teaching as a profession and a career. NBPTS seized on the notion that teachers should be considered by themselves and others as professionals with measurable standards for performance. To realize and promote this vision, NBPTS created, when nothing of its kind in the field had existed, a national professional certification process widely recognized as the benchmark for teaching excellence.

Such standards and certification form a singularly important tool for strengthening teaching as a profession, promoting ongoing development, and recognizing those who are among the best in their field. As a result, teacher preparation programs and professional development in the United States focus more than ever on how teachers teach. This is a major step forward from the past, when teacher training focused heavily on what teachers could say about teaching or on what they needed to do to move out of the classroom and into administration. Much of this shift can be traced to NBPTS and its push to build a profession around a new vision of performance.

According to the National Research Council report, “At its outset, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was innovative.” It noted three areas in which the National Board’s contributions have been “particularly noteworthy.” Those areas are its vision and plans for professionalizing the teaching field, the nature of the assessment it developed, and the development of standards and assessments for 25 certificates.

One of the biggest milestones for National Board Certification is its recognition in all 50 states and the District of Columbia — many of which provide incentives for teachers to earn National Board Certification. This endorsement reflects the value policymakers place on knowing that NBCTs have met the same high standards, regardless of where they live and work.

The CTQ report, *Measuring What Matters: The Effects of National Board Certification on Advancing 21st Century Teaching and Learning*, said: “We all agree that the NBPTS process has triggered an ongoing national conversation about good teaching and opened the door to richer dialogue about specific aspects and outcomes of proficient practice.”

**NBPTS Practices Are Helping to Re-Shape Teacher Preparation.** National Board Standards are raising the bar for training new and veteran teachers for 21st century classrooms. In early 2007, NBPTS conducted a survey of higher-education institutions. Of those who responded, 49 percent align their master’s degree programs and 38 percent align their undergraduate teacher preparation programs “to a great extent” with National Board Standards. The standards help encourage teachers to think constantly about the learning process and what they are doing to promote it. Teachers must understand learners and embed that understanding in how they teach.

Experts call the National Board “the mother of standards for teaching.” Almost every state has teaching licensing requirements whose genealogy can be traced back to the National Board. As part of this shift, more teacher-education programs are focusing on how students learn and link that knowledge to content-specific pedagogical practices. For example, teachers are learning research-based practices for how to teach reading and math that previously were not part of most preparation programs.

Other pieces of the National Board Certification process — such as portfolios of student work, reflection on classroom instruction, and video recording of instruction — have helped change the way the field looks at teacher preparation and evaluation. Thanks in large part to the National Board's lead, it is hard to find a teacher-education program of any size that does not include a portfolio system as a way to help students document their work, reflect on their performance, and encourage them to collaborate. In California, the portfolio-development process has grown to be highly elaborate and, like portfolio scoring, has become common across institutions.

“The National Board process helped re-energize my teaching,” said California NBCT Margarita Mendez in *Measuring What Matters*. “It helped me articulate what I knew about good teaching. I didn't have to go further than my classroom to find my graduate program.”

## **NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION**

### ***New Report Affirms National Board on Student Achievement***

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has had a positive impact on student achievement, teacher retention, and professional development, according to the most rigorous and comprehensive study to date of National Board Certification. The long-awaited report, released by the highly respected National Research Council of the National Academies, affirms many of the positive findings by other research into National Board Certification.

In a news release issued by the National Academies, Milton Hakel, Ohio Board of Regents' Eminent Scholar in Industrial and Organizational Psychology at Bowling Green State University, and chair of the committee that wrote the report said, “Earning NBPTS certification is a useful ‘signal’ that a teacher is effective in the classroom.”

According to the report, NBPTS Standards and National Board Certification have taken the culture of teaching to a higher level by creating national standards for the profession. The report recognizes the potential of National Board Certification to bring benefits to more schools and observes that the National Board's work needs strong support and coordination by states, districts, and schools as well as higher education and other non-governmental groups.

The report, *Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs*, was produced by the National Research Council following a request by Congress to develop a framework for evaluating programs that offer advanced-level certification to teachers. The National Research Council began work on the report in 2005 and spent the next 30 months gathering and evaluating information for the final document.

The committee found that students taught by NBCTs make higher gains on achievement tests than those taught by teachers who have not applied and those who did not achieve certification. The findings are based on an analysis of the studies that the National Research Council says meet standards of sound scientific research, including new analyses commissioned by the group. According to the report, “evidence is clear that National Board Certification distinguishes more effective teachers from less effective teachers with respect to student achievement.” The National Research Council acknowledged research showing that National Board Certification has a positive impact on teacher retention and, based on its analyses, noted that NBCTs are likely to stay in teaching longer than other teachers.

**For more information about the National**

**A Student-Centered Vision Leads to Better Instruction.** National Board Certified Teachers are at the center of a new discussion about teaching, one that focuses on self-reflection and collaboration, with improved student outcomes as the goal. These teachers ask themselves, “What am I doing? How well is it working? How do I *know* how well it is working? What kinds of changes do I need to make to be more effective?”

This student-centered vision promotes the skills and willingness to adjust lesson plans that are not working or that fail to bring about understanding by students. It leads to teachers who reach out to their colleagues for ideas and input to help struggling students grasp new concepts. Teachers who go through the National Board Certification process — regardless of whether they certify — report in surveys and to researchers that they think about teaching differently and behave differently.

## **IDENTIFIES STRONG TEACHERS:** ***Certification’s Positive Impact and Learning***

Additionally, the report found the National Board Certification process is an effective professional development experience that positively affects teaching practices. This finding is based on self-reported data from teachers and needs to be further corroborated with independent research. The National Research Council also noted the difficulty of computing the cost-effectiveness of National Board Certification and other teacher quality interventions. However, the committee observed that the costs of National Board Certification are likely lower than, and compare favorably, to master’s degree programs.

In its thorough and systematic report, the National Research Council offers guidance on where and how the National Board can strengthen its work in crucial areas, including providing more thorough documentation of its test-development and standards-setting processes and incorporating a broader array of evidence to measure student achievement. The National Research Council also called on the National Board to continue to bolster its outreach to certify more teachers, particularly in low-performing schools and to ensure that NBCTs are used more broadly as mentors and leaders of change.

For its part, the National Board is increasing outreach to urban schools and is launching a committee of national experts to study alternative measures of student learning and how it is emphasized in the advanced certification process. NBPTS is also working to ensure that school leaders are better informed about National Board Certification and have opportunities to earn voluntary advanced certification themselves.

The National Research Council recognizes that the National Board cannot make these changes alone. The success of the movement will require strong incentives, support, and coordination by states, districts, and schools as well as higher education and other non-governmental institutions, the report says. “NBPTS should continue to invest in its larger mission of influencing the teaching field in broad, comprehensive ways,” the report adds.

Realizing the full potential of National Board Certification will not happen overnight, the National Research Council notes, “Revolutionary changes of the kind the board’s founders envisioned would be expected to develop over decades, not years.”

**Research Council report, visit [www.nas.edu](http://www.nas.edu)**



***“One of the things that happens is that National Board Certification doesn’t only affect the practices of those who are going through or complete the process, but the practices of their peers.”***

**–Kimberly Oliver, NBCT,  
2006 National  
Teacher of the Year**

National Board Certification has launched a reconceptualization of the teaching process by advancing an ethic of sharing into what were previously isolated classrooms. That has created a new way of thinking about practice, one in which responding to student needs and adjusting to new circumstances are essential.

Increasingly, it is clear that National Board Certified Teachers are helping to raise student achievement. Studies of NBCTs’ effects on students’ performance on standardized tests have shown markedly positive effects.

The National Research Council report found that students of NBCTs score higher on standardized tests than students who are not taught by NBCTs. The “evidence is clear that National Board Certification distinguishes more effective teachers from less effective teachers with respect to student achievement.”

Similarly, a 2004 study (Vandevoort, Beardsley, & Berliner) found that students of NBCTs make learning gains equivalent on average to an extra month in school. Other research has shown mixed effects, although the variations in results often depend on methodology, including the tests used to define student performance in some of these studies.

NBPTS recognizes that new research into the effectiveness of NBCTs is vital and will continue to support it. In particular, NBPTS has taken steps to address the recommendation that there be more research on the effects of NBCTs on student outcomes beyond standardized tests, “such as student motivation, breadth of achievement, attendance rates, and promotion rates.”



In a 2007 nationwide survey of NBCTs, 90 percent of respondents reported that attaining certification had improved their teaching and helped them to think systematically about their instructional practices. 80 percent said that the experience had taught them to focus more on getting to know and understand students and their learning styles, while three-quarters said that the process had improved their ability to manage student learning effectively and had deepened their grasp of the subjects they teach.

Just as important, the benefits of National Board Certification multiply when a school has a large number of NBCTs. These spillover effects include the spread of knowledge to other teachers that occurs when NBCTs mentor colleagues, lead staff development efforts, or take on other leadership roles. While more needs to be done to ensure that schools reap the benefits of having staff members who are National Board certified, 80 percent of NBCTs in the 2007 survey said that other teachers and educators at their schools look to them for leadership, and 93 percent said they would be willing to serve as mentors to their colleagues.

Kimberly Oliver, an NBCT and the 2006 National Teacher of the Year, has seen it happen in her school in Montgomery County, Maryland, and elsewhere. “One of the things that happens is that National Board Certification doesn’t only affect the practices of those who are going through or complete the process but the practices of their peers.”

Arthur E. Wise, president emeritus, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, noted, “Teachers are now observing each other’s classrooms, even teachers who are not board certified. This practice was rare before National Board Certification was launched and planted the seed.”



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## EDUCATORS CALL FOR ADVANCED CERTIFICATION FOR PRINCIPALS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

In spring 2008, the Board of Directors of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards approved a resolution enabling the National Board to proceed with the establishment of advanced certification for administrators and teacher leaders, either individually or together.

The action followed calls for advanced certification by the nation's major principal and administrator organizations. In a commentary that appeared in *Education Week* last December, the leaders of two of the nation's premiere education leadership organizations joined NBPTS in making a case for a nationwide advanced certification system for principals.

They argued that as Congress works to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act, it could take a big step toward improving the quality of school leadership by setting in motion a process to create this much-needed advanced professional credential.

The commentary was written by Joseph A. Aguerrebere, president and chief executive officer of NBPTS; Paul D. Houston, executive director of the American Association of School Administrators (retired); and Gerald N. Tirozzi, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

"We need a nationwide advanced certification system for principals if we are going to meet national student-learning goals," they wrote. "Such a system would clarify the skills, knowledge, and achievements that set highly qualified principals apart from peers with minimal credentials." They added that principals themselves say they want more instructional leadership training to help strengthen relationships with teachers and mobilize school resources for learning.

The three leaders argued that incentives are needed to attract and keep principals, especially in high-need schools. Ideally, an advanced-certification system would help do this, they contend, by conveying new prestige and financial rewards to principals and expanding career opportunities.

The commentary called on Congress to fund the research, development, and initial implementations of a program of standards, assessment, and certification.

## A NEW VOICE FOR TEACHING

As the national spotlight continues to focus on teaching quality and teachers' roles in improving student achievement, the expertise and insight of NBPTS and National Board Certified Teachers are needed more than ever. The National Board and NBCTs have the potential to be even greater and more positive change agents than they have been in the past. To achieve these goals, more teachers must earn National Board Certification, and the National Board and NBCTs should have a greater presence in policy discussions. "The professional vision of accomplished teaching is only half the agenda," said James A. Kelly, the founding president of NBPTS. "Now, NBPTS must increasingly become more directly and powerfully engaged in reforms of schooling itself, so that accomplished teaching can be found in ever-larger numbers of classrooms and the impact of accomplished teaching felt more fully and equitably in the lives of students."

**Teachers Shape Policies to Improve Education.** The National Board and the nation's nearly 64,000 NBCTs possess a wellspring of collective knowledge about teaching, teacher preparation, and classroom practice.

One of the most powerful ways that NBCTs spread their knowledge and influence is through summits, such as those NBPTS, the National Education Association, and individual states have sponsored in Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Washington, Wisconsin, and Arkansas. State summits have involved nearly 3,000 NBCTs and education leaders.

The summits have addressed such important issues as closing academic achievement gaps by bringing high-quality teachers to schools that need them most. These events have generated policy agendas shared locally and at the state level.

In August 2007, for example, 200 Mississippi NBCTs joined education leaders for a first-ever state education policy summit dedicated to finding ways to attract and retain high-quality teachers in struggling schools. "There is no better example of the best professional development for teachers than National Board Certification," Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour said to policymakers and educators at the state's NBCT Policy Summit. "We are grateful to our state's National Board Certified Teachers for their effort and results."

To reach more and broader audiences, NBPTS will continue to create and encourage opportunities for NBCTs to take leadership roles in their schools and districts, share in local and state policy discussions, and convene to share ideas, talk about important issues, and forge strategies and agendas for public policy. As former Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes said at the Wingspread conference: "The National Board has to become the center for excellence and reform."



***"Human capital is the biggest lever we can pull to positively impact students, and National Board Certified Teachers are proving their value in classrooms every day."***

**—Janet Knupp,  
founding president,  
The Chicago Public  
Education Fund**



### **Partnerships Raise the Profile of National Board Certification.**

NBPTS has found that one of the most effective strategies for raising the profile of National Board Certification and broadening its impact is the forging of partnerships involving NBCTs, non-NBCTs, administrators, school boards, policymakers, businesses, parents, and community members.

In Chicago, for example, the education, government, policy, and business communities have identified National Board Certification as a primary tool for improving schools. As a result, in 2007 the Chicago Public Schools welcomed 208 new NBCTs (more than all but one other district in the nation that year), bringing its total to 787.

Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley wants 10 percent of Chicago Public School teachers National Board certified by 2011. The Chicago Public Education Fund, a venture philanthropy focused on improving the quality of Chicago’s principals and teachers, has lined up business and government support for National Board Certification. “Talented teachers are transforming the learning environments in our schools,” said Janet M. Knupp, founding president of The Fund. “Human capital is the biggest lever we can pull to positively impact students, and National Board Certified Teachers are proving their value in classrooms every day.”

To promote collaboration and raise the number of NBCTs nationally, NBPTS is encouraging more grassroots, district-focused partnerships comprising foundations, superintendents, school boards, and other groups. “We’ve learned that if teachers go through the National Board process, they can be not only the best teachers but the best change agents,” said Anne L. Bryant, executive director of the National School Boards Association. “The big question for school boards is, ‘How do we use the National Board process to encourage standardization of teaching excellence so that all teachers are brought to the level where we can change the student achievement in our districts?’”

***“We’ve learned that if teachers go through the National Board process, they can be not only the best teachers, but the best change agents.”***

**–Anne L. Bryant,  
executive director,  
National School  
Boards Association**



## NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION: A TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Many people have little idea what applying for National Board Certification entails. Those who go through the process talk about its richness, authenticity, and rigor.

Diana Russell, an English teacher at Yorktown High School in Arlington County, Virginia, decided in 2000 that the best way to learn just how much she was helping students was to go through the process to become National Board certified. Most importantly, Russell chose to spend her year of self-evaluation focusing on how she influenced the motivation and work of students who routinely got Cs and Ds in her classes.

She says it was the most difficult year in her 30 years of teaching. The process itself totaled about 300 hours. She also "took a licking" from the self-evaluation: "I realized that while I did many things well, there was room for improvement. If I taught something that 50 percent of students didn't get, I needed to ask, 'What went wrong?'"

Russell learned she had to be willing to toss out plans and try new ways to draw in students. Her professional mantra became, "I must give 100 percent of my tools to 100 percent of my students, or I am not doing my job."

When she finished the process in 2001, Russell became Yorktown's first National Board Certified Teacher. Today, 13 of Yorktown's 150 teachers are National Board certified, as are 76 of Arlington County's 2,000 teachers.

As a teacher, it is Russell's job to meet the needs of all students. More than ever, she says, this means taking risks and creating plans that are more engaging. She would not be able to do this as well were it not for her experience preparing for and achieving National Board Certification.



## A CALL TO

### Excerpts from an Open Letter to

*In the fall of 2007, the Center for Teaching Quality and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards commissioned a diverse group of ten National Board Certified Teachers to consider the impact of National Board Certification on students, practice, and the teaching profession.*

*The resulting report, *Measuring What Matters: The Effects of National Board Certification on Advancing 21st Century Teaching and Learning*, directs recommendations primarily to researchers, policymakers, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Yet, the 10 NBCTs also offer a call to action for their accomplished teacher colleagues. Following are excerpts from their *Open Letter to America's National Board Certified Teachers*.*

We are a diverse group of ten National Board Certified Teachers from across the nation, commissioned by the Center for Teaching Quality and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to consider the impact of National Board Certification on our students, our practice, and our profession.

We began this work convinced by the evidence of our own practice that the standards undergirding the National Board Certification process not only define accomplished teaching but have the potential to transform our schools. That is still our conviction today. As a result of our collaborative journey, we have also gained a deeper understanding of the factors that diminish the impact of quality teaching standards on school performance. Chief among them is this:

***Teachers are not yet considered full partners in the important work of educational reform.***

We believe National Board Certified Teachers are uniquely positioned to challenge this outdated perception of teachers as mere instruments of policy and not co-creators. It is time for NBCTs to use what we know, as exemplary teachers, to lead our schools, colleagues, and policymakers toward more effective decisions and practices focused on genuine student learning.

It is time for us to begin leading from the classroom, to be our own best advocates for positive change for policies and practices we know from experience will work.

***Let us act, not react.***

If we continue to sit by and let others define effective teaching, we will always be reactors, not actors, on the school reform stage where the policies that control our daily work are played out.

# LEADERSHIP

## *America's National Board Certified Teachers*

We believe National Board Certified Teachers can inspire and guide the work of re-imagining the teaching profession in their districts and states. We recognize that many exemplary teacher leaders are not National Board Certified, and we welcome them as partners.

***We challenge our National Board certified colleagues to join us in building the profession as we:***

- Establish and grow local and state networks dedicated to educational problem-solving and innovation.
- Add to the knowledge base about effective teaching through classroom-based research that documents and spreads ideas about practice.
- Become informed and active participants in the discourse about educational policy matters, from the building level to the national arena.
- Serve in mentoring, peer coaching, and other instructional leadership roles that support colleagues who are striving to improve their practice.
- Speak out on key questions and issues, from a teaching perspective.
- Design our own collaborative experiences for professional learning and leadership development, creating a robust vision of what it means to be an effective teacher leader and pursuing that vision together.

We encourage NBCTs to look around, to scrutinize the policy terrain, and the everyday practices of schools and districts . There is ample evidence that top-down mandates have not improved student learning or “teacher-proofed” our schools . As NBCTs, we have demonstrated our mastery of effective teaching practice. We understand how to teach students at the highest levels of learning.

We know what to do. But if we ever hope to move from “know” to “do,” we must also learn to lead at the highest levels.

### ***The TeacherSolutions NBCT Team***

*For more information about the CTQ report, Measuring What Matters , visit [www.teachingquality.org](http://www.teachingquality.org)*



## **NBCTs SPEAKING OUT IN THE MEDIA**

“It was important for me to obtain National Board Certification. This was an essential step in my career to assess my development as a teacher. The process allows you to look at your teaching abilities under a microscope. This was instrumental to my success as a teacher.” Justin Jordan, 2007 NBCT in adolescent and young adult history and social science, who teaches at Enterprise High School in Redding, California.

— **Simpson Alumnus Earns Prestigious National Board Certification, Record Searchlight, Dec. 28, 2007**

“It’s about how your teaching impacts students. It’ll make the good teachers become great teachers. It shows you the latest resources, technology that will help students. The world is changing and teachers have to change with it. We have to go out and find resources and bring them to the classroom so every child can learn. It’s our responsibility to find out how they learn and then teach them in that way.” Tia Trahan, 2007 NBCT in early childhood, generalist, who teaches in Louisiana’s Lafayette Parish.

— **Teachers Get Gold Star, Daily Advertiser, Dec. 12, 2007**

“Personally, [National Board Certification] was an accomplishment—it’s something that you can undertake as professional development, but it’s a meaningful thing. Professionally, I felt like it would make me a better teacher—and it did—so I can continue to grow and help my students.” Edward Kupiec, 2007 NBCT in physical education, who teaches at Enders Road Elementary School in Manlius, New York.

— **Gym Teacher Hopes to Have Impact, The Post-Standard, Jan. 24, 2008**

“I feel that the National Board program is a powerful process for a teacher to go through and that it instills in a teacher a practice of always asking yourself why this lesson plan or project will be beneficial to the students and how it will increase student learning.” Kim Garrett, 2007 NBCT in elementary education, who teaches at Central Elementary School in Eden, North Carolina.

— **County Teachers Recognized for Certification, The Reidsville Review, Jan 23, 2008**

“I don’t think the experience would have been nearly as valuable if I had done it by myself.” Susan Gibbs, 2007 NBCT in adolescent and young adult history and social studies, who teaches at Capshaw Middle School in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and who earned certification with a group of her colleagues.

— **Teachers Earn Top Honors, Santa Fe New Mexican, Dec. 16, 2007**

“[National Board Certification] was a professional goal I had for myself. I ask my students to do their best, and I also want to be the best I can.” Amy Dopp, 2007 NBCT in adolescent and young adult science, who teaches at Marshfield High School in Marshfield, Wisconsin.

— **Teachers Earn National Board Certification, Marshfield News, Dec. 14, 2007**



# MOVING FORWARD

Looking ahead, the National Board and its growing number of NBCTs will continue to do what they have done best, while working steadily to improve. Several high-priority areas deserving special attention include:

**Reaching Out to High-Need Schools and Communities.** Through the combined efforts of the National Board, policymakers, and school officials, more National Board Certified Teachers than ever before are working in schools with large populations of low-income and academically struggling students. Nearly 42 percent of all NBCTs teach in Title I schools. This shift is important: Research shows that NBCTs help raise the quality of teaching and learning (e.g. student achievement and engagement, teacher mentoring and retention, and school improvement), particularly for minority children, and are likely to stay on the job longer than non-NBCTs.

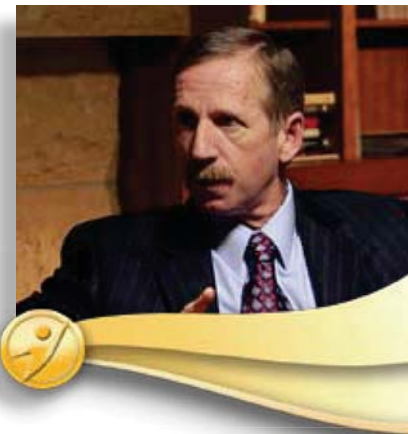
Since 2000, California has awarded NBCTs who teach 50 percent of the time in low-performing schools a one-time \$20,000 bonus. “The National Board needs to think about how we enable NBCTs, as we have done in some communities, to reinvent schools and design schools...especially where they are historically underserved,” said Linda Darling-Hammond.

*To accelerate that trend, NBPTS is pursuing strategies that include:*

- Recruiting teachers already working in high-need schools to become candidates for National Board Certification, while intensifying recruitment of NBCTs to work in such schools.
- Encouraging the deployment of teams of NBCTs to high-need schools, where they can form a critical core for schoolwide improvement.
- Helping to link teacher-education schools that model best practices to high-need schools and bolstering recruitment of career-changers, particularly those who are interested in working in such schools.
- Advocating improved working conditions and strong school-based leadership in urban schools and supporting efforts to provide financial incentives to teachers who choose high-need schools.

**Redefining the Debate about Student Learning and Excellent Teaching.** The federal No Child Left Behind Act, by placing more emphasis than ever on standardized tests, has dramatically changed how schools view and measure student achievement. As a result, the National Board continues to navigate a path between the need to use standardized test scores and the desirability of broader sets of indicators of student progress and teacher performance.

Of greatest concern, however, is that focusing exclusively on test scores will produce an incomplete picture. For example, when economists examine the state of the U.S. economy, they do not look at just one indicator, whether it is the unemployment rate, new housing starts, or wholesale inventories. They use a dozen or more of them to make a nuanced judgment on how well the economy is doing. No one looks only to changes in Gross Domestic Product to determine future steps — and scores on standardized achievement test scores are education’s equivalent of GDP.



***“While we have great indication that NBCTs produce higher-achieving kids, in those places we’re measuring the real benefit hasn’t been identified and measured...There needs to be a conscious effort to expand what we measure.”***

***—Roger Sampson,  
president,  
Education Commission  
of the States***



“While we have great indication that NBCTs produce higher-achieving kids, in those places we’re measuring the real benefit hasn’t been identified and measured,” said Roger Sampson, president of the Education Commission of the States. He added, “There needs to be a conscious effort to expand what we measure.”

NBPTS has formed a task force to inform the national discussion about effective measures of student learning. The effort will identify various measures of student progress that can be applied uniformly across the many content disciplines.

*Drawing on its expertise and experience, the National Board will continue to:*

- Help the field better understand teacher quality and how it relates to student learning – as measured through tests, student work, understanding of material, and other ways. The National Board also will maintain its instrumental role in broadening dialogue and commissioning research about what constitutes student learning and achievement.
- Raise awareness of National Board Standards and of how the assessment process enhances teaching and learning by conducting research on NBCTs’ spillover benefits for school change and student achievement.
- Quantify and publish information about the contributions of the National Board Standards and build networks to disseminate the data.

**Using National Board Standards, Assessment, and Mentoring to Help All Teachers Improve.** NBPTS is working with other organizations to identify new ways to embed National Board Standards and assessments in pre-service training and to use NBCTs as mentors as part of a career-long continuum of teacher professional development.

*Opportunities for the National Board in this area include:*

- Expanding its Five Core Propositions and Standards in initial preparation and induction and working with partners to embed the National Board Standards, reflection and reflective writing, and portfolio concepts throughout the teaching continuum for all teachers. Post baccalaureate programs would benefit from better and more systemic integration of National Board Standards and assessment processes.
- Encouraging and training more NBCTs to play leading roles in mentoring and other support programs for new or struggling teachers, as well as for teachers who aspire to become National Board certified.

**“Now that the National Board has tens of thousands of NBCTs, NBPTS is in a position to address broader issues of education and the community of how instruction is organized in schools.”**

**—James A. Kelly,  
founding president,  
NBPTS**

- Collaborating with colleges, universities, and institutions that serve large minority populations to increase NBPTS knowledge and participation early in the teacher-education process.
- Promoting wider use of the National Board's *Take One!*® among teachers. Through *Take One!*, teachers prepare and submit one video portfolio entry of their teaching practice in any of the current 25 National Board certificate areas. The process allows teachers to “sample” the National Board Certification process or serves as a stand-alone professional development opportunity.

**Helping Principals to Understand Teaching and How to Use NBCTs to Change School Culture.**

School and district administrators are critical to using NBCTs to create and support learning in all schools — especially high-need schools. “When you ask NBCTs what it takes to be in — and stay in — school, they’ll say: ‘It’s school leadership and school culture,’” said Barbara Kelley, former chair, NBPTS Board of Directors. “The first recommendation I would make to the National Board would be to move forward with all due speed on the concept of developing standards and assessments for school leaders.” NBCTs, in collaboration with teacher leaders and administrators, can improve support for new and struggling teachers and change school culture. Accordingly, NBPTS is:

- Working with other national organizations and policymakers to develop a certification process for school leadership. To encourage standards-based school leadership and to recognize and reward highly accomplished school leaders, NBPTS is ready to work as a partner with national school leadership groups to develop an advanced certification system for principals.
- Studying and promoting ways to help educate principals about National Board Certification as a vehicle for student and school improvement.
- Encouraging the use of school-based teams of teachers to improve practice and to increase teachers’ willingness to open their classrooms to colleagues and school administrators.

***“The first recommendation I would make to the National Board would be to move forward with all due speed on the concept of developing standards and assessments for school leaders.”***

**– Barbara Kelley,  
former chair,  
NBPTS Board of Directors**

## CONCLUSION

Since its inception in 1987, NBPTS has advanced teaching as a profession by creating a system of certification that is built around high standards and is recognized by educators and policymakers. As a result, National Board Certification is helping to improve teaching and teacher preparation, while also advancing the understanding of how highly accomplished teaching affects student learning. And, as evidenced by the National Research Council report, NBCTs are helping to raise student achievement.

But the knowledge and skills demanded in the 21st century are changing rapidly, and teachers must keep tomorrow's workforce ahead of the curve. The National Board and NBCTs will help meet these challenges. "Now that the National Board has tens of thousands of NBCTs, NBPTS is in a position to address broader issues of education and the community of how instruction is organized in schools," said James A. Kelly, founding president, NBPTS.

The National Board's vision includes more NBCTs nationwide and particularly in high-need schools, districts that do a better job of fully using these highly accomplished teachers, and broader use of National Board Certification methods and tools. The National Board also plans to address the restructuring of the teaching-career continuum to incorporate special roles for mentor teachers, master teachers, and curriculum developers. Alternately empowering teachers, then preventing them from exercising their expertise, must cease.

Capitalizing on its solid foundation and considerable momentum to expand its profile and influence does not mean that NBPTS will retreat from its core mission. Indeed, NBPTS vows to continue setting high standards for what teachers should know and be able to do. "For some reason, we're in the midst of a period in our society where, when people are not fully satisfied with what teachers are doing, they advocate lowering the standards," said Lee S. Shulman, president of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. "The National Board stands as a symbol of why those standards have to be rigorous, visible, widely understood, and supported by our population as a whole."



***"For some reason, we're in the midst of a period in our society where, when people are not fully satisfied with what teachers are doing, they advocate lowering the standards....The National Board stands as a symbol of why those standards have to be rigorous, visible, widely understood, and supported by our population as a whole."***

***— Lee S. Shulman, president,  
The Carnegie Foundation  
for the Advancement  
of Teaching***

# WINGSPREAD CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

**Joseph A. Aguerrebere**  
President and CEO,  
NBPTS

**Joan Auchter**  
Vice President, Standards  
and Assessment,  
NBPTS

**Gov. Roy E. Barnes**  
Chair, NBPTS Board of Directors,  
The Barnes Law Group

**Barnett Berry**  
President and CEO,  
Center for Teaching Quality

**Lloyd Bond**  
Senior Scholar,  
The Carnegie Foundation for the  
Advancement of Teaching

**Anne L. Bryant**  
Executive Director,  
National School Boards Association

**David Crippens**  
Consultant of Interim-Management,  
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**Mary E. Dilworth**  
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**Daniel A. Domenech**  
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**Kimberly Oliver, NBCT**  
2006 National Teacher of the Year

**Arturo Pacheco**  
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National Council for  
Accreditation of Teacher Education



## ABOUT NBPTS

Created by educators and policymakers in 1987, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and nongovernmental organization. NBPTS advances the quality of teaching and learning by developing professional standards for accomplished teaching; creating and administering National Board Certification, a voluntary system to certify teachers who meet those standards; and integrating certified teachers into educational reform efforts. Today, nearly 64,000 National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) are making a positive difference in the lives of students across the nation.



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