

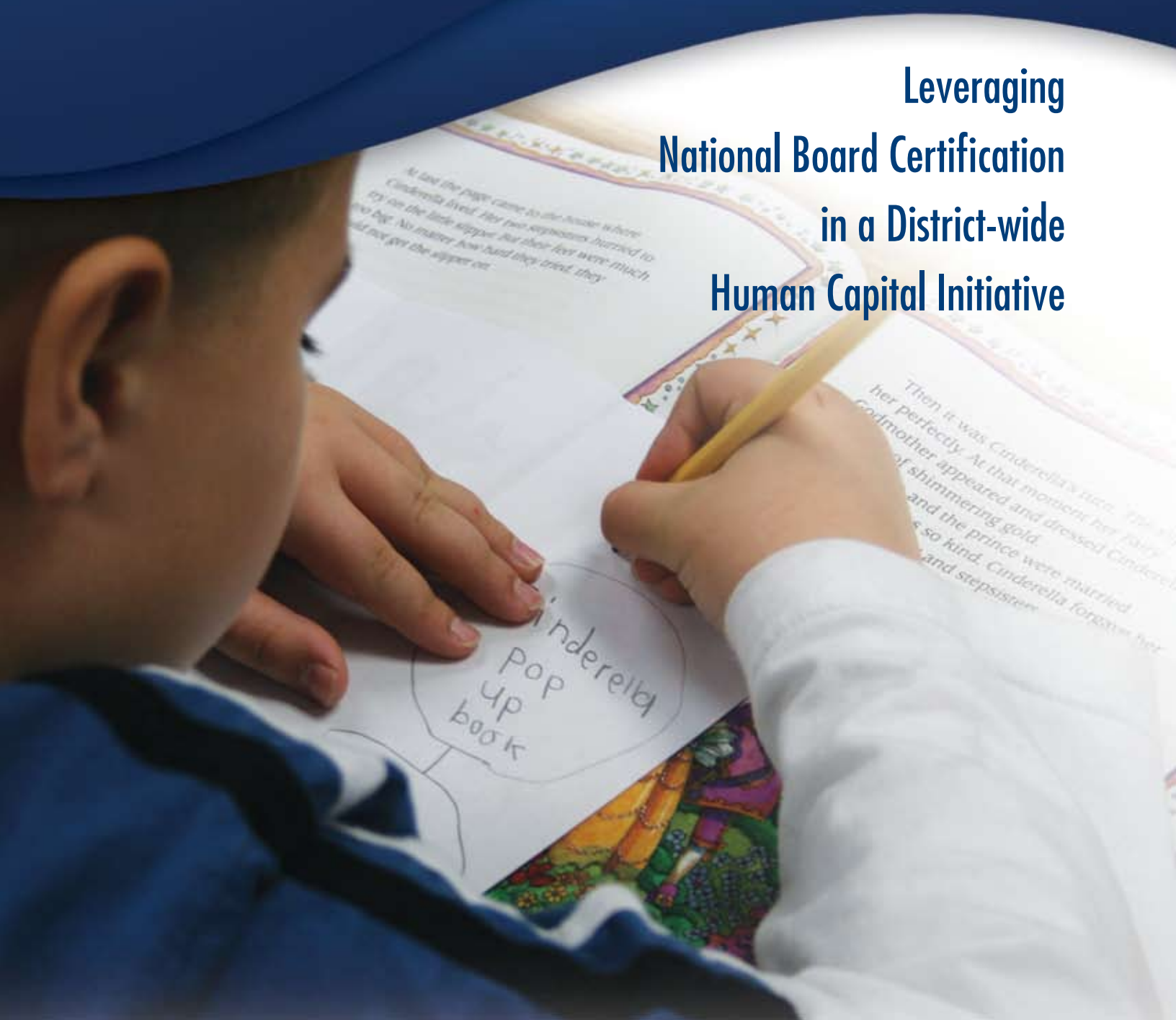


NBPTS[®]

National Board for
Professional Teaching Standards

PROFILES IN EXCELLENCE: Chicago, Illinois

Leveraging
National Board Certification
in a District-wide
Human Capital Initiative



A SNAPSHOT OF THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS (CPS)

ENROLLMENT:

With some 408,600 students, CPS is the nation's third-largest public school system.

SCHOOLS:

627

(483 elementary, 116 secondary, and 28 charter)

TEACHERS:

23,727

NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS (NBCTs):

1,200

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:

82.7% low-income;
14.8% limited English proficiency;
46.5% African American;
39.1% Hispanic;
8% White;
3.3% Asian/Pacific Islander;
2.9% Multiracial
0.2% Native American

Sources: CPS, The Chicago Public Education Fund



PROFILES IN EXCELLENCE: Chicago, Illinois

Leveraging National Board Certification in a District-wide Human Capital Initiative

Chicago's efforts to encourage and support National Board Certification in its public schools serve as a model for a broad community focus on teaching and learning. Thanks to a coalition of Chicago public and private organizations committed to promoting National Board Certification, the number of National Board Certified Teachers in the nation's third-largest public school system rose from 11 to 1,200 in less than a decade. Incredibly, nearly 90 percent of all Chicago teachers who have become NBCTs in the past decade remain in the school system, and school leaders say they are one of the factors behind the improving achievement trends throughout the district. In addition, as NBCTs take on more leadership positions both at the school and district levels, they have begun to spread best practices and help sustain reform. In his role as U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan has focused on building human capital in schools and praised the work of NBCTs in Chicago and nationwide.

***Nearly nine out of 10 teachers
who have gone through the
National Board Certification
process in Chicago remain
in the district, a teacher retention
rate far higher than in other
urban school systems.***

CHICAGO PUTS NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION AT CENTER OF PUSH TO IMPROVE TEACHING

In the spring of 2002, 57 National Board Certified Teachers gathered in a small room in Chicago's City Hall for a celebratory photo with Mayor Richard M. Daley and Arne Duncan, then the new CEO of the Chicago Public Schools. With just 11 of the district's nearly 25,000 teachers at the time becoming National Board Certified in the program's first few years in Chicago, the relatively large class of NBCTs in 2002 was something to celebrate. These accomplished teachers represented the early fruits of an ambitious public-private partnership to attract and develop the best teaching talent in the nation's third-largest public school system.

Just five years later, the same group shot had to be taken in the massive Great Hall of Chicago's Union Station, the photographer perched on a riser to photograph the 210 new National Board Certified Teachers. Then, in fall 2008, the latest record class in Chicago's history—328 new NBCTs—joined the ranks of 1,200 NBCTs throughout the city.

Just as significant as the size of the incoming class—the second largest in any large school system in the country that year—was the fact that 90 percent of their counterparts who had gone through the National Board Certification process in previous years were still in the district, which was far above typical teacher retention rates in urban school systems.

The rapid growth in the number of NBCTs in Chicago is important because school and city officials have long understood that hiring and retaining accomplished teachers is critical to improving instruction and bolstering student achievement. The growth is also important because it illustrates what can happen when an entire community—including schools, government and business leaders,

and the nonprofit sector—comes together around a common goal. In Chicago, that goal was to improve teacher quality on a district-wide scale and to keep more effective teachers in the city.

“We’re not losing them to the suburbs,” said Duncan, soon before President Obama picked him to be the U.S. Secretary of Education. “They’re staying in inner-city schools, they’re committed to the system, and that’s what we want. We want our best talent going back and working in those communities that need the most help.”

The growth has been largely the result of a longstanding—and highly effective—partnership between the Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), the Mayor’s office, and The Chicago Public Education Fund, a nonprofit organization that raises venture capital for the district. Starting in 2000, the groups worked together to develop a strategy to boost the number of National Board Certified Teachers in the district, setting the ambitious goal of having 1,200 NBCTs in the city’s classrooms by 2008. Eight years later, they reached the goal.



“[National Board Certified Teachers are] staying in inner-city schools, they’re committed to the system, and that’s what we want. We want our best talent going back and working in those communities that need the most help.”

— Arne Duncan, CEO, Chicago Public Schools (current U.S. Secretary of Education)

The Chicago Education Fund has invested more than \$6 million in the National Board Certification program. It’s all part of a “deliberate strategy,” said Janet Knupp, founding president and CEO of The Fund, “to get these

talented teachers in front of the children that need them the most.”

The results have been striking:

- **Student performance is improving:** District-wide performance on state standardized tests has risen for seven years running, a fact Arne Duncan, former CEO, Chicago Public Schools and current U.S. Secretary of Education, attributed in part to growing numbers of NBCTs.
- **NBCTs are staying in the system:** Nearly nine out of 10 teachers who have gone through the National Board Certification process in Chicago remain in the district, a teacher retention rate far higher than in other urban school systems.
- **NBCTs are in schools throughout the district:** More than half of the district’s 627 schools now have at least one National Board Certified Teacher.
- **Many schools benefit from high numbers of NBCTs:** More than 50 schools have 15 percent or more of their teaching staff with National Board Certification.
- **NBCTs are working in high-need schools:** Sixty percent of schools with National Board Certified Teachers have at least 85 percent of their students from low-income families.

- **NBCTs work with diverse students:** Eighty-five percent work in schools where at least 85 percent of the student population is of color.
- **Most NBCTs take on leadership roles:** Fifty percent of National Board Certified Teachers report holding leadership positions in their schools.

“Working together, we have been able to turn what were once called the worst schools in the nation into a national model for reform,” Mayor Richard Daley said. Much of the impetus for change has come from The Chicago Public Education Fund’s \$50 million overall investment in programs to develop the district’s teachers and principals and provide incentives and career ladders to keep them working where they are needed.

“We believe that great teachers and great principals are the best levers for improving student performance,” Knupp said. “Any good organization focuses on talent, and National Board Certification is a rigorous and effective way to identify and compensate the most talented teachers.”

The Fund provided financial incentives for teachers who achieve National Board Certification and for schools with multiple NBCTs on staff. The Fund, in collaboration with the Illinois State Board of Education, also worked to expand the program and increase state support. Illinois offered a \$1,000 fee subsidy (at times matched with another \$1,000 in federal funds) to teachers going through the certification process. And, by 2002, NBCTs qualified for a state master teaching certificate and a \$3,000 annual stipend for the

life of the 10-year certificate, as well as additional financial support if they provide professional development or mentoring at high-need schools.

In its own contract with the district, the Chicago Teachers Union also won an additional pensionable \$1,750 salary increase for NBCTs and extra support for mentors. It is part of the union's efforts to "raise the bar on teacher quality," explained CTU President Marilyn Stewart, who notes that her organization was the first to support teachers pursuing National Board Certification in Chicago more than a decade ago. "We have to take back our profession and say that we're promoting teacher quality, because the single most important factor in student achievement is the quality of the teacher in front of them."

Together, financial incentives can amount to nearly \$4,000 a year, and the partnership has also provided formal venues to support teachers seeking National Board Certification. Today, three separate programs—one run by the district, one run by the Chicago Teachers Union, and a third, a joint master's/National Board program run by National-Louis University—provide multiple avenues to National Board Certification for Chicago teachers. The combination of financial incentives and support has helped more teachers go through the process. "I could not have done it on a teacher's salary without all this help," said Patrice Turk, NBCT, a 9th-grade teacher at Chicago Academy High School.

After Duncan was named U.S. Secretary of Education by President Barack Obama, the President specifically cited the district's work in developing teachers through National Board Certification. "He's worked tirelessly to improve teacher quality,

increasing the number of master teachers who've completed a rigorous national certification process from just 11 to just shy of 1,200," the President said during a Chicago ceremony announcing Duncan's appointment in January 2009.

But Chicago's success with National Board Certification goes far beyond numbers. From the central office to the individual school level, district officials have embedded the idea that the most effective route to improving student outcomes in the city's most troubled schools has been creating a critical mass of high-performing teachers and administrators in leadership roles. Both within individual schools and in the district as a whole, NBCTs have taken on a wide range of leadership roles, including the mentoring and support of the next generation of teachers. The sections that follow explore some of the effects NBCTs have had on schools and on students in Chicago.

With a vocal supporter of National Board Certification assuming the role of the nation's lead educator, that same message could have a national impact. Secretary Duncan has stressed his desire to make the U.S. Department of Education an "engine of reform," as he put it during a conference early in his tenure as Secretary, making it clear that his focus on identifying and supporting high-performing educators will continue.

"We're in the business of human talent," he said, "and the more we can recognize and reward top performers, the better."



"Working together, we have been able to turn what were once called the worst schools in the nation into a national model for reform."

— Richard Daley, Mayor, City of Chicago

***Within individual schools
and in the district as a whole,
NBCTs have taken on a wide range
of leadership roles, including the
mentoring and support of
the next generation of
teachers in the district.***

II.

NBCTs ADD GREATER CAPACITY TO SCHOOLS

It is midway through her Advanced Placement U.S. History class at Lindblom Math and Science Academy, and National Board Certified Teacher Molly Myers is taping sheets of paper to a whiteboard, each listing a different element of how to write a thesis statement. Myers teaches a full load of classes, but the NBCT has also taken the lead on teacher-directed professional development at her high school.

Working with her colleagues, Myers developed a rubric for teachers to assess each other and helped conduct a needs assessment to identify their most pressing professional development needs, many of which come from the challenge of teaching 100-minute blocks. “It came from us and was initiated by us,” said math teacher and fellow NBCT Kayley Hennessy, who worked with Myers on the effort.

That same block schedule makes it difficult for teachers to plan traditional professional development sessions, so Myers reached back to her own experience with National Board Certification for a solution. Earlier this year, she picked up a video camera, walked downstairs, and videotaped fellow NBCT Lisa Podromo conducting a Socratic seminar as her AP Literature students analyzed a short story. Myers then posted the video, along with documents, rubrics, and other material, on her personal Web site so her time-strapped colleagues could reflect on the video and post comments on their own time. That has been followed by ongoing e-mail exchanges and informal observations and discussions among the school’s faculty members, nearly 20 percent whom are National Board Certified.

“Everyone’s involved, but there are some clear leaders,” said NBCT Kelly Mest, who was named the school’s assistant principal this fall.

Myers believes the certification process made her “much more comfortable observing other teachers.” At Lindblom, “there are so many opportunities for leadership,” she said. “It’s such a teacher-driven school. My [NBCT] cohort was so rewarding, I wanted to collaborate more.”

In schools throughout Chicago, NBCTs are taking similar leadership roles, often serving as the driving force behind formal and informal learning communities that improve the quality of instruction. According to a study by the Consortium on Chicago School Research:

- Fifty percent of Chicago NBCTs report holding leadership positions in their schools, compared to 32 percent of other teachers.
- There was evidence of strong teacher leadership and increased professional capacity in elementary schools with clusters of NBCTs.

“Smart principals will use National Board Certified Teachers to lead professional development, to mentor the new teachers, and to fundamentally shape a culture of excellence and



“We have to take back our profession and say that we’re promoting teacher quality because the single most important factor in student achievement is the quality of the teacher in front of them.”

— Marilyn Stewart, President, Chicago Teachers Union

professionalism,” said The Fund’s Knupp. “You can’t even measure the return on that culture that you’ve set in school buildings. Where you talk the language of National Board, you talk quality instruction.”

As more Chicago schools build cohorts of NBCTs, school leaders often place NBCTs into leadership roles and encourage others to enter the program.

That has been true at Talcott Fine Arts and Museum Academy, an elementary school where nearly one-quarter of the teaching faculty is now National Board Certified. Knupp points to 2004 as a turning point at the school, which had been trailing the district average on state standardized tests for several years. That year, a new principal came on board and began encouraging teachers to seek National Board Certification. Test scores have since nearly doubled.

“Talcott fully represents our theory of change,” Knupp said. “Principals and teachers are the highest leverage points we have in our schools. We believe that highly trained and talented teams of principals and teachers, like those who achieve National Board Certification, working together can accelerate student achievement. And we have seen that play out at Talcott.”

Principal Craig Benes agrees, pointing to the half-dozen teacher study groups and teacher teams now in place, many of which are led by NBCTs. “Your NBCTs become your teacher leaders,” he said. “They set the standards for high-quality practice, and they help develop the rest of your staff. No principal can do the job alone. When teachers focus on learning from one another, students benefit.”

National Board Certification “gives all the teachers in the school a common language for discourse to discuss teaching,” said 4th-grade teacher and NBCT Susan Bohman. “Everybody’s approaching teaching and learning from the same perspective.”

Another benefit of a critical mass of NBCTs in a school is that it encourages additional teachers to pursue certification, often in groups. NBCT Colleen Bitar, a math teacher at Lindblom, went through the process with another math teacher while teaching at Clemente High School. “I don’t know if I would have done it without her,” she said. Lindblom music teacher and swimming coach Alan Demski, an NBCT who was named the boys’ coach of the year for the district, had an even more unusual experience—a former student went through the certification process with him.

At Lindblom, Hennessy and other NBCTs also play a key role in tutoring the school’s new



As the number of National Board Certified Teachers in Chicago schools rose from just 11 to 1,200 in less than a decade, district leaders say they are one of the factors driving improving student achievement trends.

teachers. Talking with Podromo, the two agreed it made sense to video-record their mentees as well, including one of Hennessy's who teaches several Mandarin classes.

"I know nothing about that content, but I can ask questions about process," she said. "The administration pushes us to do these things, but we find ways to make it our own."

That is the kind of snowball effect Duncan and other school leaders believed would be the result of building clusters of NBCTs in school buildings. "We go from one and two to four to five [NBCTs] in a building to eight and 10, and we're starting to get that critical mass in some schools," Duncan said in describing the growth of NBCTs districtwide. "I'm convinced that the culture's going to move in some very, very important ways."

***NBCTs in leadership roles
help embed best practices
throughout the district and ensure
they grow beyond individual
teachers and schools.***



SUSTAINABILITY AND RETENTION IMPROVE AS NUMBER OF NBCTs GROWS

As CEO of the Chicago Public Schools, Arne Duncan was a strong believer in developing leadership that extends beyond individual schools. Largely due to that philosophy, National Board Certified Teachers now play critical leadership roles that have a far-ranging impact throughout the 408,600-student district.

“**W**e have to develop the best talent. We have to retain the best talent,” Duncan said. “We have to put in place career ladders that help our teachers continue to grow and expand. National Board Certification is just an extraordinary vehicle for doing all of that.”

As part of providing career ladders and building institutional support for the program, NBCTs have been tapped as instructional coaches, principals, vice principals, and district facilitators, as well as for leadership roles in district administration. That is one reason 90 percent of all teachers who have become NBCTs in Chicago over the past eight years still work in the district, far above national teacher retention rates. More importantly, NBCTs in leadership roles help embed best practices throughout the district and ensure they grow beyond individual teachers and schools.

Perhaps the best example of how NBCTs have been tapped to provide institutional support for the program is an individual who was not even a teacher when he pursued National Board Certification. During the 2005-06 school year, Joe Kallas, then principal of Peterson Elementary in northwest Chicago, had nine NBCTs on staff.

As evidence of his early support of National Board Certification, most of his grade-level and committee chairs were NBCTs. “At Peterson, if you were going to be a great teacher, becoming an NBCT was part of the process,” he said. “I wouldn’t turn to NBCTs because they were NBCTs, but because they were the best teachers in the building.”

Kallas decided he “wanted to get another group going,” he said. So the principal made a promise to his staff: If a group of teachers would pursue certification, he would go through the entire process with them. “I was trying to convince a few foot-draggers,” he said. “I hadn’t been in a classroom in a very long time, so it was a challenge.”

Kallas won over the foot-draggers and kept his promise, changing his schedule so he could teach two hours a day. The following year, he received National Board Certification—and then-CEO of the Chicago Public Schools Arne Duncan promoted him to area instructional officer (AIO), the district’s equivalent of a regional superintendent. In that role, he has hired NBCTs as principals and assistant principals for schools he oversees. Four of his seven instructional coaches, who travel from



“Smart principals will use National Board Certified Teachers to lead professional development, to mentor the new teachers, and to fundamentally shape a culture of excellence and professionalism ... Where you talk the language of National Board, you talk quality instruction.”

— Janet Knupp, Founding President, CEO, The Chicago Public Education Fund

school to school to help teachers with instructional issues, are also NBCTs.

“We believe instruction starts in the classroom, so we do professional development at the room level or the grade level,” Kallas said. “They’re in classrooms 90 percent of the day, every day.” NBCTs on Kallas’ AIO staff are also helping develop a differentiated literacy curriculum that is being tested in 10 schools.

“I’m really trying to promote growing our own talent,” Kallas said. “I work hard to identify people in our own schools and move them forward. I have a shorthand for hiring—if I see someone is an NBCT, that’s a starting point for an interview.”

Similar stories can be found throughout the district. Under Duncan’s leadership, CPS was not only “compelled to grow the number of National Board Certified Teachers but to use them differently,” Knupp said. One way in which CPS is using NBCTs differently is in the city’s teacher intake programs, which are growing the next generation of educators for the district.

NBCT Carrie Kamm jumped at the opportunity to become a mentor when Chicago venture capitalist Mike Koldyke tapped her principal to start a new urban residency model to train teachers at the Chicago Academy Elementary School, the first of what are now six training academies oper-

ated by the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL). AUSL’s urban teacher residency program provides a stipend and tuition support for incoming teachers who receive mentoring in one of its academy schools while they take coursework. In return, they agree to teach in high-need Chicago schools for four years and are often selected for the city’s most troubled schools, many of which are run under AUSL’s auspices. President Barack Obama has called for 200 similar training academies to be established nationwide.

Kamm received word she had received National Board Certification the same year she started mentoring new teachers at Chicago Academy. “It helped give me credibility in terms of mentoring,” Kamm said. “I tried as often as I could to embed the National Board Standards, especially using knowledge of your students to drive what you do. I wanted my mentees to think like an NBCT.” Now a resident mentor coach at AUSL’s National Teachers Academy, Kamm provides support for 10 mentor teachers and their residents. Four out of five of AUSL’s resident mentor coaches are now NBCTs, and the fifth is in the process of becoming certified, according to Kamm. “AUSL really does value National Board Certification,” she said. “It’s encouraged at all our training academies and supported by all our principals.” And residents who have gone on to teach in Chicago’s neediest schools have also gone on to become NBCTs, continuing the cycle of instructional improvement.

IV.

NBCTs ARE AT THE FOREFRONT OF SCHOOL REFORM

Along with celebrating its largest-ever class of National Board Certified Teachers this past fall, Chicago Public Schools reached an even more significant milestone. District-wide, state standardized test scores had risen for seven consecutive years. While still lagging behind state averages, the 65.4 percent of the district's elementary students meeting or exceeding state standards was an all-time high. "We've had seven years of rising test scores," then-CPS CEO Arne Duncan said at the time. He attributed this rise, in part, to the fact that many of the district's best teachers have become National Board Certified.

Researchers continue to study the impact of National Board Certification on student achievement in Chicago schools. Fund President Knupp observes experiences like those at Talcott, where test scores nearly doubled once a Fund-trained principal began extensively recruiting NBCTs. In January 2009, she said that schools with Fund-supported teams of principals and teachers working together saw standardized test scores as much as 10 to 13 percent higher than schools without them.

"We were one of the first to identify talent as the critical lever to impact student learning, and we remain a nationally recognized expert on human capital and school leadership," Knupp said. "Research demonstrates that the quality of a child's teacher ranks as the single largest factor impacting student performance."

But the true impact of National Board Certified Teachers can best be seen at individual schools where NBCTs have begun to build critical mass and focus instruction on the students who need them the most.

Nearly five years ago as he prepared to re-open Lindblom Math and Science Academy, an imposing edifice on Chicago's South Side dating back to

1918, Principal Alan Mather first hired a National Board Certified Teacher. Mather's criteria—knowing subject matter, liking adolescents, and being able to engage a class for a full 100-minute block—dovetail with the key tenets of National Board Certification. Today, NBCTs make up nearly 20 percent of the high school's teaching staff. "They have taken on incredible leadership," he said.

Lindblom is a selective enrollment school. More than 75 percent of Lindblom's students are African-American, and 1 percent is white. Nearly 7 in 10 students come from low-income families. Many of its teachers came from high-achieving schools in the district to teach at Lindblom, in part to work with students who would be the first in their families to attend college.

The school's NBCTs play a wide range of leadership roles but in particular have focused on developing programs to support the students who need the most help adjusting to the rigors of high school. Mather's first hire, math chair and NBCT Danna Dotson, leads the school's Academic Center, a program to prepare 7th- and 8th-grade students for the rest of their secondary career. Academic Center students take Algebra I and English



“[Among our faculty’s National Board Certified Teachers] there are some clear leaders.”

— Kelly Mest, NBCT, Assistant Principal, Lindblom Math and Science Academy

courses for high school credit over two years, using a specially tailored curriculum developed by Dotson.

“The opportunity to start a program and be able to modify parts of it was appealing to me,” she said.

Dotson also worked with two other NBCTs—assistant principal Kelly Mest and social studies teacher Molly Myers—to create a program to help struggling freshmen develop study skills. The program, which got its start after Mather asked teachers to come up with a way to help freshmen in danger of failing, brought Dotson, Mest, Myers, and nine other teachers to Lindblom on a Saturday to discuss ways to ease the transition to high school. They ultimately settled on a study skills program taught during the school’s weekly colloquium time, when faculty develop and teach a wide range of multidisciplinary classes, combined with mentoring and other supports. “It was completely teacher driven,” said Mest, and the percentage of high school freshmen the district considers to be “on track” exceeds district averages.

Lindblom’s first class of seniors graduated in spring, 2009. More than 97 percent applied to college, as Mather watched the thickets of acceptance letters on bulletin boards across the school grow.

Across town on Chicago’s North Side, Solomon Elementary may have the distinction of having the highest percentage of NBCTs of any school in the district. Nine of the school’s 12 full-time teachers are National Board Certified, including physical education and special education teachers. (The

remaining three teachers do not yet have the three year’s experience necessary to pursue National Board Certification, but when they do, Principal Susan L. Moy plans to encourage them to do so. “It’s the culture of the building,” she said. “Why not be part of it?”)

The students at the small K-8 school speak 18 different languages. About 24 percent are English Language Learners, and more than half come from low-income backgrounds. The growth of NBCTs at Solomon mirrors that in the district as a whole. One teacher became National Board Certified in 2001, followed by two in 2003, and then one more during each of the next two years. Then in 2006 came the “tipping point,” said Moy, when half the teachers in the school were NBCTs and three of the remaining six began the process of becoming certified. At one time, half of the school’s teachers were at some point in the certification process. “That made a huge difference,” said 1st-grade teacher Alena McCarthy. “I had teachers who gave up their preps to help me.” The teachers critiqued each other’s work and encouraged each other through the rigorous process.

CPS leaders observe that throughout the district, groups of teachers going through the process together have seen similar benefits. “Another way that National Board Certification can leverage change within a school building is when teams of teachers go through this process together,” Fund President Knupp said. “That way you’re constantly working together at your quality of instruction—you’re asking each other the tough questions.”

Solomon Principal Moy has seen the effects of the certification process on her staff. “They were good teachers to begin with and had that desire

to help children learn,” she said. “The rigorous process and reflection helped them sharpen their craft.” Joe Kallas, the district’s area instructional officer and NBCT who oversees Solomon, agrees. “It’s one of the places where we can see the spiraling effects of NBCTs,” he said. “They’re feeding off each other.”

As the number of NBCTs continued to grow at Solomon, its composite test scores on state standardized tests steadily increased, from 63.5 percent to 95.6 percent of students scoring at or above proficient levels in math, for instance. Moy acknowledges that other changes—including curriculum changes that emphasized differentiated instruction—played a role in the school’s improvement. But 5th-grade teacher and NBCT Donna Goode adds that the National Board Certification process helped teachers see “the relationship between that curriculum, our activities, and student learning.”

While its tight-knit staff had always been collegial, the fact that Solomon has only one teacher per grade level provides limited opportunities to collaborate and share instructional strategies. But the National Board Certification process helped teachers connect with grade-level counterparts throughout the district. Seventh-grade teacher Deb Liu, an NBCT since 2005, is one of several Solomon teachers who now mentors other candidates through the National Board Certification process, which she finds helps inform her own teaching. “As you meet new groups of people, you see more classrooms and more videos, and that helps with your instruction,” she said, pointing to a voting technique to help coax reluctant students during whole-group discussions that she picked up from one of her mentees’ videos.

That is a common theme for specialized teachers throughout the district. NBCT Alanna

Chuprevich, the library media specialist at Talcott, said one of the reasons she pursued National Board Certification was that she “needed camaraderie among my colleagues. You feel really isolated sometimes in the library because in most schools, you’re the only specialist that exists in the school.” Solomon physical education teacher and NBCT Christopher Martin adds that becoming certified helped him better work with the school’s classroom teachers to integrate core content into his instruction. “The process let me branch out at my own school,” he said.

As a special education teacher, NBCT Ellen Shea is one of the few teachers who works regularly in her colleagues’ classrooms at Solomon. She points to the difference in students now that more of the teachers have gone through the National Board Certification process. “As an upper-grade teacher, I see it carry through,” she said, noting that students have been taught to be more engaged in classroom discussions and other group-learning activities.

Arne Duncan, in his role as CEO of the Chicago Public Schools, pointed out that developing such a “critical mass” of highly skilled educators working together within individual schools is one reason that National Board Certified Teachers stay in the district at such unprecedented rates. “The more we get to critical mass and get to communities that historically have been under-served and where talent has historically fled ... the more I’m hopeful of what our teachers can accomplish,” he said. “They’re staying with us for the long haul, and that’s all you can ask.”



“Your NBCTs become your teacher leaders. They set the standards for high-quality practice, and they help develop the rest of your staff.”

— Craig Benes, Principal, Talcott Fine Arts and Museum Academy

When Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Teachers Union, the Mayor's office, and The Chicago Public Education Fund began their partnership in 2000 to boost the number of National Board Certified Teachers in the district, the groups did more than set an ambitious goal. They worked together to provide financial incentives, support teachers going through the National Board Certification process, create multiple avenues to certification, and place National Board Certified Teachers in a wide range of formal and informal leadership roles, helping build capacity and infrastructure for certification throughout the district.

Driving these moves is the core belief that creating a critical mass of high-performing educators in leadership roles is the most effective route to improving student outcomes. As the number of National Board Certified Teachers in Chicago schools rose from just 11 to 1,200 in less than a decade, district leaders say they are one of the factors driving improving student achievement trends. The fact that nearly 90 percent of Chicago NBCTs have remained in the school system, teach in the schools where they are needed the most, and have become embedded in the district's leadership structures are all highly encouraging signs that the

investment in high-quality educators has paid off for the district and its students.

"We want our best talent going back and working in those communities that need the most help," Duncan said of the district's efforts while CEO of Chicago Public Schools, and that experience has led him to continue to stress the impact that highly skilled educators can have. "We're in the business of human talent," Duncan said shortly after becoming U.S. Secretary of Education, "and the more we can recognize and reward top performers, the better."

SPECIAL THANKS TO

The Chicago Public Education Fund
Chicago Public Schools
Chicago Public Schools NBPTS Candidate Support Program
Chicago Teacher Union's Nurturing Teacher Leadership Program

Chicago's National Board Certified Teachers
Lindblom Math and Science Academy
Solomon Elementary
Talcott Fine Arts and Museum Academy



ABOUT NBPTS

National Board Certification is administered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and non-governmental organization.

NBPTS advances the quality of teaching and learning by developing professional standards for accomplished teaching, creating a voluntary system to certify teachers who meet those standards and integrating certified teachers into educational reform efforts.

© 2009 National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. All rights reserved. NBPTS, NBCT, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, National Board Certified Teacher, National Board Certification, Take One!, Accomplished Teacher and 1-800-22TEACH are registered trademarks or service marks of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Other marks are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective organizations.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Inc. has been funded, in part, with grants from the U.S. Department of Education and the National Science Foundation. Through September 2008, NBPTS has been appropriated federal funds of \$177.3 million, of which \$159.5 million was expended. Such amount represents approximately 31 percent of the National Board's total cumulative costs. Approximately \$360.8 million (69 percent) of the National Board's costs were financed by non-federal sources. The contents of this publication were developed in whole or in part under a grant from the U.S. 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.

*The true impact of National Board Certified Teachers
can best be seen at individual schools where NBCTs
have begun to build critical mass and focus
instruction on the students who need them the most.*

NBPTS[®]

National Board for
Professional Teaching Standards

1525 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 500
Arlington, VA 22209
www.nbpts.org | 1-800-22TEACH

June 2009

ISBN-13: 978-1-878520-11-1
ISBN-10: 1-878520-11-3