

Supporting and Staffing High-Needs Schools



*Recommendations
from Washington's
National Board
Certified Teachers®*



by
Barnett Berry
and
Melissa Rasberry



 **NBCT**
POLICY SUMMIT



June 2007

Supporting and Staffing High-Needs Schools

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Washington's National Board Certified Teachers®*

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Great Public Schools for Every Child

**National Education
Association**



**Center for
Teaching Quality**

June 2007

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing 3.2 million elementary and secondary teachers, education support professionals, college faculty, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.

For additional copies of this report, please contact Jim Meadows at the Washington Education Association (e-mail: jmeadows@washingtonea.org)

The recommendations contained in this report do not necessarily reflect the organizational positions of the convening and sponsoring organizations. Recommendations were generated by attendees at the NBCT Summit and reviewed and prioritized by NBCTs from around the state.

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Executive Summary

On October 21, 2006, more than 200 Washington National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) assembled in Seattle to address the vexing problem of recruiting and retaining accomplished teachers for high-needs schools. Before the Summit, the NBCTs read a number of background papers and research summaries. At the Summit, they listened to the state's leading policymakers and fellow educators articulate their views on the issues at hand and then participated in ten highly structured, small group work sessions. Facilitated by specially prepared teacher leaders, the NBCTs analyzed the facts, grounded themselves in their own classroom experiences, and then developed preliminary ideas about what needed to be done. After the Summit, they remained connected and continued the conversation via a powerful web-based study group where they refined their thinking and provided more details regarding how and why certain recruitment and retention strategies would or would not work.

Within the full report, there is a fairly exhaustive list of NBCT ideas that, if implemented, could solve Washington's staffing problems in high-needs schools. We realize that it is unlikely that all of these ideas and actions will be implemented and certainly not all at once; therefore, we asked the NBCTs in the state to rank the top 12 recommendations which would have the greatest impact on supporting and staffing high-needs schools. If Washington wants to continue to build upon its momentum for educational improvement, we urge policymakers to pay close attention to their proposed solutions and make supporting and staffing high-needs schools a priority. The following actions, taken together, have potential to positively impact education in Washington State:

1. Ensuring the annual NBCT stipend remains permanent for the life of the certificate and changing policy to make it applicable toward retirement.
2. Changing the formula for calculating class size to reflect real numbers of students in classrooms (rather than averages), with a maximum of 20 students at the elementary level and 22 students per period at the middle and high school levels.
3. Maintaining or increasing an additional stipend for NBCTs who teach in high-needs schools.
4. Providing all day kindergarten, starting with high-needs schools and phasing in all other schools.

-
5. Providing incentives to ensure experienced principals lead high-needs schools.
 6. Providing a menu of incentives for teaching in high-needs schools, such as:
 - housing allowances;
 - added contractual days;
 - additional classroom resources (i.e. materials, supplies, equipment);
 - additional classroom support from paraprofessionals;
 - paid leadership roles for NBCTs;
 - loan forgiveness; and
 - higher education allowances.
 7. Creating a more equalized funding formula for schools that incorporates the number of ELL students, number of low-income students, percent mobility or other special needs.
 8. Allocating additional resources to high-needs schools, such as:
 - instructional aides;
 - before- and after-school teachers; and
 - a full-time NBCT or other accomplished teacher serving as a trained instructional coach.
 9. Creating a new salary schedule that establishes different levels of teacher mastery with accompanying compensation, professional growth opportunities, roles and responsibilities.
 10. Paying NBCTs and other accomplished teachers to serve as leaders and facilitators to implement professional learning communities that foster collaboration and shared leadership.
 11. Creating an induction program for new teachers that includes: building-level mentors released for one-on-one support (1:15 ratio); release time for observations-collaboration-planning; orientation and training before beginning of the year and throughout.
 12. Embedding key information about National Board Certification into all administrator credentialing programs in the state.

On May 9, 2007, Governor Chris Gregoire signed into statute a \$5,000 bonus for NBCTs that is good for the 10-year life of the National Board certificate. This bonus increases annually with inflation, but does not count for retirement purposes. She also signed into statute an additional \$5,000 bonus for NBCTs who work in high-needs schools, as defined by having 70 percent or higher free/reduced lunch numbers. This high-needs bonus does not count for retirement purposes.

Washington is on the threshold of institutionalizing National Board Certification as a powerful, ongoing reform movement. Strategic investments—particularly in ensuring accomplished teachers are teaching in high-needs schools—will yield dividends for the state for years to come. Indeed, silver bullets are not the answer. Washingtonians from all walks of life—from Seattle to Leavenworth to Spokane—must commit themselves to ensuring a quality teacher for every child. Taking the ideas of some of the state’s best teachers and transforming them from recommendation to reality will move the state one step closer to the public education system that policymakers, practitioners, and the public seek. Washington policymakers are taking steps in the right direction.

Public schools in Washington—and across the nation—face many challenges. None are as complex, however, as the challenge of getting the best teachers to teach in high-needs schools. At a time when the state’s political, education, business and community leaders are calling on students to meet much higher academic standards, mounting evidence clearly shows the most qualified teachers are the least likely to be in front of the classrooms with the most disadvantaged students.

Washington educators have accomplished a great deal in recent years. The educational system has repositioned itself to align with new, high standards for student achievement and related assessments. Results from the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) demonstrate progress. Still, closing the achievement gap between white and Asian students and the state’s other minority students remains a lingering challenge. While student achievement gains have been made by all ethnic groups, still only slightly more than one-half of the state’s Native Americans, African-Americans and Latinos passed the state’s tenth grade exam during the 2004-05 school year.¹

After much study and deliberation, *Washington Learns*, an initiative created and led by Governor Chris Gregoire, proposes a provocative blueprint for preparing all of the state’s students to succeed in the global economy, with a tight focus on “clos(ing) the achievement gap that academically sidelines low-income and minority students.”² The report makes a compelling case for transforming schooling, teaching and learning:

*The new economy is not bound by state borders, it isn’t driven by manufactured goods or natural resources alone, and it doesn’t rely solely on services. In the new economy, technology means that a software designer in Redmond is as likely to compete with a worker in Bangladesh as with one in Silicon Valley. A grocery store stocker in Spokane is linked to a complex global supply chain where information and transactions can update in less than a second. New economy workers offer creative solutions and respond instantly to opportunities for innovation. The new economy is based on knowledge, and knowledge is based on education.*³

If schools are going to help students develop the sophisticated skills needed to participate in a knowledge-based society, however, then they will need to be taught

Washington educators have accomplished a great deal in recent years. The educational system has repositioned itself to align with new, high standards for student achievement and related assessments.



by teachers who know how to provide instruction appropriate for the new millennium and who have the support to do so effectively. Research is helping illuminate the kinds of teachers needed for 21st century teaching and learning, and new evidence is emerging that can inform policymakers about how to make sure all

students are taught by qualified and well-supported teachers. These teachers not only know their content. They also know how to challenge students by using a variety of instructional techniques and by offering extensive feedback using multiple assessments.⁴

Recently, the National Academy of Education, surveying a wealth of research on human cognition, teaching effectiveness, teacher education and professional development, identified key attributes of the “good teacher.”⁵ The promising news is that policymakers now have at least one tool to identify accomplished teachers—those who have attained certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). The National Board’s rigorous examination assesses teachers’ content knowledge, teaching skills and growth as a professional, in similar ways to how doctors, engineers, and architects earn their advanced certificates.

Recent research shows that the National Board process promotes teacher learning and that NBCTs are more likely to produce higher student achievement gains than teachers who have attempted but not earned the

certificate.⁷ Throughout Washington, NBCTs are viewed as important resources in closing the state’s significant student achievement gaps. According to a recent study, the state’s administrators who “know NBCTs” recognize the power and potential of the assessment process in increasing teachers’ ability to analyze student work and create lesson plans and activities to meet the diverse needs of their students.⁸

Policymakers have begun to recognize the power and potential of NBCTs as well. Presently, all states and the District of Columbia provide some sort of incentive for teachers to seek National Board Certification, with 31 states offering monetary incentives.⁹ For example, North Carolina pays the \$2,500 assessment fee for any teacher who agrees to tackle the tough assessment of their teaching practice, offers

Achieving National Board Certification

In the mid-1990s, the NBPTS offered and granted its first advanced certification, using state-of-the-art assessment tools driven by five core propositions:

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

The National Board assessment process, designed for 24 different subject areas and several student developmental age levels, includes a portfolio—mirroring the rigors of an Architect Registration Examination—as well as an online battery measuring a teacher’s content knowledge. Both exam parts assess teaching’s “double helix”—that teachers know their subject matter and how to teach it effectively to diverse learners. Teachers often describe the portfolio process as grueling, usually taking over 300 hours to complete. During the process, candidates are required to analyze videotapes of their classroom teaching, assess why their students meet (or do not meet) standards, document their educational accomplishments outside of the regular classroom, and offer evidence of how their efforts improve student learning. The National Board reports that fewer than 50 percent of teachers who take the exam achieve certification the first time. As of January 2007, there are 55,306 National Board Certified Teachers nationwide.⁶

three additional days of professional development for those who undergo the process, and awards a 12 percent annual salary supplement to teachers who make the grade. Florida offers a 10 percent salary supplement and then another 10 percent bonus for NBCTs who agree to mentor other teachers. South Carolina has provided some of the most lucrative incentives in the nation, offering a salary supplement of \$7,500 annually for the life of the certificate (up to ten years). Thus, no one should be surprised to learn that North Carolina (11,325), Florida (9,238), and South Carolina (5,077) are home to the largest numbers of NBCTs in the nation.¹⁰

Unfortunately, across the nation, NBCTs are far less likely to teach in schools that serve low-income and minority students.¹¹ This maldistribution problem has caused policymakers to question the current incentives offered to NBCTs. For example, the Governor and the legislature in Georgia recently approved a law that awards teachers who earn or renew National Board Certification status with a 10 percent salary bonus *only* if they work in a school that has been on the state's roster of low-performing schools for two or more consecutive years. A similar proposal from the Governor's office has been on the table in South Carolina. While these proposals may seem reasonable, recent research on NBCTs indicates that these policy solutions are too simplistic and could well be counterproductive. Drawing on 2,000 NBCTs from the six states with the largest numbers of NBCTs, Dan Humphrey and colleagues found that strong principal leadership, a collegial staff with a shared teaching philosophy, adequate resources necessary to teach, and a supportive and active parent community were the most powerful determinants of whether research participants would teach in a challenging school.¹² Financial incentives alone were insufficient to attract NBCTs to high-needs schools and did not account for the other factors necessary for them to be effective.

Too often, teaching policies are developed without a sufficient understanding of the realities of classrooms, teachers and students. We believe policymakers can deepen their understandings and fine-tune their policy decisions by tapping into the expertise of accomplished teachers who share their interest in high-performing schools. Why not ask NBCTs themselves? Those in Washington are ready to assist lawmakers in developing more effective policies, especially around supporting accomplished teaching in high-needs schools. At the 2006 Washington NBCT Policy Summit (described in more detail in the next section), NBCT Dave Wright from Tahoma, noted:

Too often, teaching policies are developed without a sufficient understanding of the realities of classrooms, teachers and students.



*Joe Aguerrebere, President;
Kevin Teeley, Board Member;
National Board for
Professional Teaching Standards*

It is amazing to see what happens when you put a large group of highly effective teachers together in one room and ask them to solve a problem. The energy and commitment of the teachers in the room was extraordinary and the ideas that were developed were awesome!

The Voices of NBCTs in Washington

On October 21, 2006, more than 200 Washington NBCTs assembled in Seattle to address the vexing problem of recruiting and retaining accomplished teachers for high-needs schools. Before the Summit, NBCT participants read a number of

background papers and research summaries. At the Summit, they listened to the state's leading policymakers and fellow educators articulate their views on the issues at hand and then participated in ten highly structured, small group work sessions. Facilitated by specially prepared teacher leaders, NBCTs analyzed the facts, grounded themselves in their own classroom experiences, and then quickly developed preliminary ideas about what needed to be done. After the meeting, they were invited to remain connected and to continue the conversation about policy strategies through a powerful listserv dialogue. What the NBCTs have to say about present barriers and possible solutions is focused, insightful and provocative. Their knowledge of classrooms, the students they teach and the communities in which they work clearly provide a powerful context for the recommendations that are assembled herein.

I've taught at high-needs secondary schools for my entire career. I feel like I've been fighting for equity for my kids for that entire time. At the Summit, I had the opportunity to talk to sincere, dedicated teachers who could tell me why they have chosen *not* to teach high-needs kids. While I may not be able to change the minds of those accomplished educators, I have decided to re-commit myself to "growing our own" by recruiting more teachers at my school into National Board Certification. Currently, I am leading a *Take One!* group, of which all five teachers plan to complete full certification next year. Plus, we have tried to start an NBCT network in our district to "rally the troops." We desperately need our district, which is comprised of three middle class high schools and one with a large percentage of free-reduced lunch students (almost 70 percent), to make more decisions based on the understanding that equity and equality are not the same thing when it comes to funding and staffing. Despite the obstacles, my motivation to step forward and advocate for my students has jumped up a notch as a result of the Summit.

—Kim McClung, NBCT, Kent School District

Here is the good news: More than 75 percent of the Washington NBCTs who participated in the Summit reported that they would move to a high-needs school under the right conditions. Based on their experiences, these NBCTs would bring much talent and expertise to the classroom. At the Summit, they overwhelmingly reported that the National Board process helped them to understand the cultural and linguistic issues that affect student learning and assisted them in teaching children of poverty more effectively. Like almost all teachers, particularly those who are highly motivated, they want deeply to be effective—that is why they teach. But they also know what it takes for them to help all students learn.

What follows is a fairly exhaustive list of NBCT ideas and recommendations that, if heeded, could help solve Washington’s staffing problems in high-needs schools. While Washington policymakers have already begun to act on these recommendations, we realize that it is unlikely that all of these will be implemented and certainly not all at once. We urge policymakers, however, to give close attention to the proposed 31 solutions under each of these five critical issue areas and seek to understand their interconnections. Each approach is defined by both context and the voices of NBCTs. Only a comprehensive set of solutions will solve the complex problem of supporting accomplished teaching in high-needs schools. As NBCT Laura Treece from Spokane noted, “Policymakers should take a long, hard look at the data and the facts when it comes to getting the best teachers into the schools that need them the most.”

1. *Providing Leadership Opportunities for Teachers Who Can Lead*

Research has surfaced that many teachers would move to high-needs schools if they had opportunities to lead and if their principals and other administrators knew how to utilize their skills and talents. However, while teacher leadership is often discussed in policy circles, and sometimes even touted, research suggests it is rarely enacted in meaningful ways.

Some NBCTs have begun to extend their influence beyond their own classrooms by developing curricula, guiding well-informed peer reviews of school practice, participating productively in school-level decision-making, creating and influencing professional development, assuming leadership roles in their local education associations, mentoring novices and coaching veteran colleagues. But these examples are rare. In other instances, NBCTs are even conducting research, starting their own schools and informing policymakers of what works and what does not. These examples are far rarer.

Fortunately for the teachers of Washington, several initiatives are already in place to tap the leadership skills of the state’s accomplished educators. For more than four years, the Washington Initiative for National Board Teacher Certification (WINBTC) and The Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP) have supported the Leadership Grants Project, which offers NBCTs financial assistance for the development and implementation of programs that support student learning and teacher growth. NBCTs in several schools lead “lesson study” groups, wherein teachers collaborate on the design of a lesson, observe one another teaching it, and



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then collaborate on refining the design. Others have spearheaded literacy, math and science initiatives, using student learning data to guide professional development focus. Still others have facilitated book studies, curriculum alignment projects, and efforts to personalize the secondary school experience. These pilot initiatives, supported with modest funding, have made much progress.



*Eric Liu
Keynote Speaker
Guiding Lights Network*

Another program, the state's National Board Speakers Bureau, provides one of the first leadership roles that new NBCTs assume after certification. Jointly coordinated by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Washington Education Association (WEA), the Speakers Bureau has involved more than 300 NBCTs in trainings during the past six years. The ripple effect created through local NBCT outreach has raised a high level of interest in National Board Certification

in all regions of the state. The WEA has also actively sought the leadership of NBCTs within the association. NBCTs are identified for top-level policy appointments and to serve on committees and boards dealing with teacher quality topics. WEA appoints hundreds of teachers every year, including a growing number of NBCTs, to serve on Professional Educator Advisory Boards (PEABs) which, per state rule, advise all educator preparation programs in the state.

These leadership opportunities support new research about the potential of NBCTs in leading school improvement efforts. Gary Sykes and colleagues have found that when NBCTs are present in a critical mass in a school, their teaching talent can begin to spill over to positively impact other teachers. However, it is one thing for teachers to attain National Board Certification; it is another for their knowledge and skills to be used and spread.¹³

A number of obstacles keep most NBCTs and other accomplished teachers from influencing their teaching colleagues, as well as administrators and policymakers. In many cases, administrators themselves can be a serious barrier. As Mary McClellan, an NBCT and K-12 science coordinator from Issaquah, noted:

The work needed to be done to provide all students the highest level of learning is huge. I think that one of the pieces that would facilitate getting this task done for students would be a culture shift that would actually promote teacher leadership ... that accomplished teachers would actually be seen by administrators and school board members as teacher leaders and instructional experts—vital parts of the leadership of schools and districts.

A number of obstacles keep most NBCTs and other accomplished teachers from influencing their teaching colleagues, as well as administrators and policymakers.

Too few administrators and policymakers know what it means to be an NBCT and fail to recognize the kinds of knowledge, skills and dispositions these accomplished teachers possess and how they can be utilized. At the Washington Policy Summit, one NBCT lamented:

I teach in a high-needs school. Since I started there, I've had 14 administrators. They don't know how to support us ... don't understand what National Board Certification is all about. They do not have the right training. The administrators must be educated.

Christina Bird Macaya, a 6th grade National Board teacher from Camas, noted that she and others are often “ostracized” by administrators and colleagues alike. Until the National Board program was created, there were few, if any, formal means to identify accomplished teachers and give them a chance to stand out among their peers while still teaching. While Sykes found that NBCTs report increased confidence in their teaching and leadership abilities, some are often “reluctant to differentiate themselves from their colleagues.”¹⁴ Teaching’s long-standing egalitarian culture continues to hamper the potential of NBCTs to guide their peers.

And then there is the reality that few schools in Washington—and across the nation—give teachers the time to lead. The state’s business leaders call for Washington teachers to help their students compete with peers from Japan, China and Singapore as well as many European nations. However, teachers in those nations tend to have 10 to 20 hours per week to collaborate with their colleagues “inside the work day.”¹⁵ More than 83 percent of Washington teachers have reported that they have less than two hours per week to devote to learning with their colleagues.¹⁶ As Bernie Hite, an NBCT from Central Valley School District, said, “It’s hard to get together to collaborate and lead when the schedules get in the way.” In a recent CSTP study, teachers noted that their school leadership lacks the expertise to manage scheduling and staffing in ways that create opportunities for collaboration.¹⁷

That is why the Washington NBCTs who attended the Summit recommend:

- 1A. Providing incentives to ensure experienced principals lead high-needs schools.
- 1B. Embedding key information about National Board Certification into all administrator credentialing programs in the state.

The reality is that few schools in Washington—and across the nation—give teachers the time to lead.



Barnett Berry
President
Center for Teaching Quality

Research shows that accomplished teachers often do not teach in high-needs schools because there are too few opportunities to develop and spread their expertise.

- 1C. Paying NBCTs and other accomplished teachers to serve as leaders and facilitators to implement professional learning communities that foster collaboration and shared leadership.
- 1D. Creating an infrastructure and outreach to engage key educators (e.g., superintendents, school board members, human resources staff and faculty in administrator preparation programs) in understanding the National Board Certification process, outcomes, value and research.
- 1E. Restructuring the student day to have a continuous three-hour block per week for teacher-led collaboration to improve student learning (e.g., lesson study, observation of accomplished teachers and developing assessments).
- 1F. Providing funding and incentives for administrators to complete a “*Take One!*” entry.

2. *Developing and Spreading Teaching Expertise*

Research shows that accomplished teachers often do not teach in high-needs schools because there are too few opportunities to develop and spread their expertise. During the last decade or so, countless studies have documented the poor state of professional development—both growth opportunities for experienced teachers and tailored mentoring and induction programs for novices. This is especially the case in high-needs schools, which typically have more beginning teachers and fewer accomplished teachers available to mentor them.

State-of-the-art programs exist, like those in Chattanooga and Boston, where professional development has been shown to directly change teaching practices and student learning. However, in most cases, outside consultants typically deliver one-shot teacher in-services, focusing on issues and topics chosen by administrators. Too few teachers

experience professional coaching from their more seasoned colleagues. In addition, virtually no time is allotted for teachers to watch each other teach and critique lessons. Professional development is episodic and not sustained over time. If mentors do exist for novices, they are rarely trained and have little time and organizational space to support their mentees in meaningful ways.



*Charles Hasse,
WEA President;
Terry Bergeson,
Superintendent of Public
Instruction*

In Washington, there are a number of efforts underway to improve professional development, as well as new teacher mentoring and induction. The state has adopted standards for both professional development and mentoring. Also, the Teacher Assistance Program (TAP) provides some funding to districts to support new teachers through training, mentoring from experienced and exemplary teachers, observing other teachers, and assisting with professional growth and planning.

These efforts are certainly needed, as evidenced by a CSTP study reporting that teachers in the state note a lack of training in how to teach the increasingly diverse students who are entering the state's schools (e.g., English language learners, students of various racial and ethnic groups and students receiving special education services). Strikingly, 72 percent of the state's teachers also noted that they have no time for professional learning in the weekly school schedule.¹⁸ Fewer than 18 percent of Washington teachers reported in another study that they had the chance to observe peers at their own school.¹⁹

These findings were supported by many NBCTs who attended the Summit. According to one NBCT, the “time crunch” and the “frenetic pace in our schools do not allow us to model good teaching.” Another admitted, “The piling on of new curriculum requirements makes the time to do professional development impossible.”

These challenges impede the efforts of mentors working with novices, as well. “There is no time to go in-depth with mentoring,” reported one Washington NBCT at the Summit. “And we certainly cannot go deep enough in pedagogy.” Her colleague added, “There is a lack of quality in mentor pairing too. In fact, a lot of district administrators just put a body with a body.” While NBCTs in Washington more frequently serve as mentors and are much more likely to report feeling comfortable with managing diverse learning needs and preparing students for state assessments,²⁰ new teacher mentoring still has a long way to go. TAP only provides interested school districts with limited funds—\$800 per new teacher—for mentoring support. Nationwide, effective new induction programs, like the one developed by the New Teacher Center at the University of California-Santa Cruz, allot more than six times that amount. In addition, district participation in Washington is voluntary, guaranteeing that novices will experience inconsistent support from one school community to the next.



While NBCTs in Washington more frequently serve as mentors and are much more likely to report feeling comfortable with managing diverse learning needs and preparing students for state assessments, new teacher mentoring still has a long way to go.

That is why the Washington NBCTs who attended the Summit recommend:

- 2A. Providing a two-year, state-funded induction program for all new teachers to include:
- Building-level mentors released for one-on-one support (1:15 ratio);
 - Structured release time within the day for mentors and mentees to work together (i.e. for observations, collaboration, and planning); and
 - Orientation and training for mentors and novices before and during the school year.
- 2B. Fully funding a 200-day teaching calendar with 180 days of student contact time plus 20 dedicated days of professional development, based on student and teacher needs.
- 2C. Strengthening the state's ability to provide information about best practices for effective professional development.
- 2D. Creating a career pathway for mentoring.

3. Diversifying the Teaching Force and Preparing Teachers to Teach All Students

Teachers must know students in order to teach them effectively. Cognitive scientists have shown that when teachers can make connections between home life and school, student achievement increases. That is, if teachers are more familiar with community contexts and norms, then they are more likely to help all students reach higher standards.

Unfortunately, many low-income students and children of color face an unfamiliar environment in schools, which often leaves them disengaged. One way to overcome this barrier is to diversify the teaching force by recruiting teachers who are “like” the students they teach. As one Washington NBCT at the Summit noted:

It is important for our teachers to reflect the students we teach. We need to “grow our own” from our students of color. We should intervene in high school and help them to understand the importance of teaching and provide them with an incentive to enter and stay in the profession.

Unfortunately, many low-income students and children of color face an unfamiliar environment in schools, which often leaves them disengaged. One way to overcome this barrier is to diversify the teaching force by recruiting teachers who are “like” the students they teach.



Indeed, more diverse teachers can be recruited into teaching. Experiences from a number of alternative certification programs show that with proper marketing and substantive recruiting more minority teachers can be enticed into the profession. However, solely bringing teachers of color into teaching is insufficient to address all of the diversity issues at play.

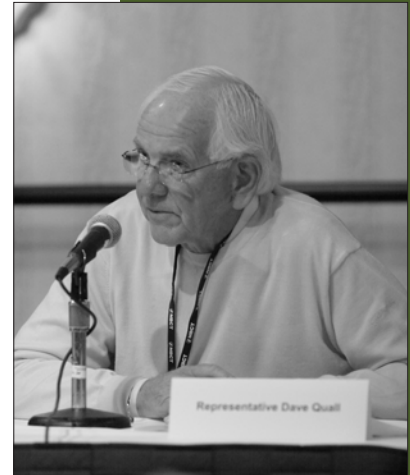
Diversifying teaching is also about preparing teachers who may not be like the students they teach by specifically developing their skills to reach and engage them. Many teachers, including NBCTs, may know how to teach differently. But no matter their skill level, they may need more support in learning how to teach a child whose cultural norms limit their class participation or whose native tongue may be Russian, Khmer, Samoan or Tagalog. As one NBCT eloquently asserted:

It is time for us to get out there and find out who our students are by getting involved with the community. We need strategies as teachers to be able to do this. In doing so, we will be able to help the students better by knowing them inside and out.

The demographics of Washington schools reveal that 30 percent of the state's students are Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, African-American or American Indian. However, only 7 percent of teachers are members of these ethnic groups. The divide is exacerbated by the growing language diversity of immigrant students. For example, in the Seattle Public Schools, students speak more than one hundred different native languages.

A recent study commissioned by CSTP found that 67 percent of the state's teachers are teaching one or more students for whom English is a second language.²¹ About half of those teachers indicated "moderate" to "great" challenges in working with these students. Only one-third of teachers feel very prepared to manage their pupils' diverse needs. Teachers of second language learners identified their greatest needs as communicating with students' parents, lack of one-on-one assistance, difficulty in assessing students' learning and lack of appropriate curricula or texts.

One NBCT from the Summit provided an alternative, "I know we can learn more to help all students succeed. But we also can utilize community members as experts in training school staff members to understand cultures in order to better meet the educational needs of diverse students." Another added, "It takes a long time to address needs of cultural competence. Training and awareness activities need to be ongoing, not one-shot deals."



State Representative
Dave Quall

Teachers of second language learners identified their greatest needs as communicating with students' parents, lack of one-on-one assistance, difficulty in assessing students' learning and lack of appropriate curricula or texts.

That is why the Washington NBCTs who attended the Summit recommend:

- 3A. Offering ongoing support and financial assistance (e.g., grants, scholarships, loan forgiveness and mentoring) for people from diverse populations who are enrolled in teacher preparation programs.
- 3B. Partnering with communities of color to market teaching as an important profession (e.g., expanding high school teaching academies).

I started out teaching in a school with 90 percent free and reduced lunch students and 80 percent English language learners. I left after my first year. Why? Because none of the following were present:

I want to work in a school where ...

... I'm respected and treated as a professional. I don't want to work at a school where principals allow a few to make decisions for all.

... I'm given a realistic classroom budget or the school has a well-stocked, open supply room. Please don't lock up supplies. This says to me that the principal doesn't trust teachers to make reasonable decisions about the needs of their students.

... I feel safe. I need to be able to stay late and come early without worrying about being attacked.

... I teach in a positive teacher-administrator climate. I want to work with teachers and administrators who love kids, love teaching, and believe they can make a difference.

... I have a reasonable class size. Thirty or more fifth graders is not reasonable. I can't do what needs to be done with each of them when I have so many.

Without the conditions above, I'm not going to work in a high-needs school. I am always dismayed when the first thing mentioned to get good teachers to teach at high-needs schools is money. If there aren't the conditions listed above, I'm not going to teach there for an extra \$10,000 a year—not even for an extra \$20,000—if these positive working conditions are not present.

—Rachel Peters, NBCT, Saint George's School

- 3C. Providing high-needs schools with a cultural competency fund to increase availability of interpreters and translators as well as to create a statewide clearinghouse of resources for them.
- 3D. Providing ongoing funding to build relationships and provide outreach activities between schools and their diverse communities.
- 3E. Utilizing community members as experts in training school staff to understand cultural norms in order to better meet the educational needs of diverse students.
- 3F. Providing funding for professional development to foster teachers' awareness of cultural beliefs, behaviors and values held by the state's students and their families.

4. Offering Incentives for Recruiting and Growing NBCTs for High-Needs Schools

Few states have specific policies to attract teachers to high-needs schools. If they do, the primary recruitment lever has been to offer signing bonuses or “combat” pay. For example, in Wisconsin, the state provides \$5,000 bonuses for qualified teachers to teach in high-needs schools. In Mobile, Alabama, some teachers can earn up to \$4,000 more for teaching in the district's lowest-performing schools and an additional \$4,000 if they help raise student achievement scores. In California, National Board Certified Teachers can receive \$20,000 over four years if they go to

and stay in some of the state's lowest-performing schools. South Carolina offered 50 percent bonuses to highly qualified teachers to become specialists in the state's most underperforming, rural schools. Most recently, Washington State now offers NBCTs an additional \$5,000 incentive to work in high-needs schools. Some of these efforts have worked, but most have suffered from a lack of attention to local conditions and the need for even well-qualified teachers to have support to get the job done.²²

In addition, some researchers have shown that working conditions matter as much or more than money in recruiting teachers to high-needs schools.²³

Other researchers have found that negative labels from high-stakes accountability systems encourage qualified teachers to move to a higher performing school or quit altogether.²⁴ Still more have discovered that local economic and demographic conditions often preclude some high-needs schools, especially those in isolated, rural areas, from competing at all in the larger statewide teacher labor market. Their only hope to recruit "good" teachers is to "grow their own."²⁵ What is clear is that a one-size-fits-all approach to recruiting accomplished teachers to high-needs schools will not work. As one NBCT from the Washington Policy Summit noted, "If you are the only National Board teacher in an AYP school, you can't keep the whole ship from sinking. You cannot do it alone."

A bonus for NBCTs who work in high-needs schools is the most visible financial incentive to attract and retain teachers to Washington's high-needs schools. The state also provides educational funding assistance through the Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program for teachers who obtain endorsements in high-needs subject areas. The State Partnership Alternative Route to Teacher Certification Programs also provide conditional loan scholarships for teacher candidates who participate in alternative route programs and agree to teach in teacher shortage areas. As of January 2007, 537 individuals have completed certificate programs and another 120 individuals are currently enrolled. Most are currently teaching; only eight have been required to repay their scholarship.

As of May 9, 2007, the state of Washington now provides an annual \$5,000 stipend to teachers who earn National Board Certification. This bonus is valid for the 10-year span of the National Board certificate. The bonus increases annually with inflation, but does not count toward retirement. New state law also provides

Washington provides only limited financial incentives to attract and retain teachers to high-needs schools.



an additional \$5,000 annual bonus to NBCTs who work in high-needs schools (70 percent or higher free/reduced lunch counts). Since the passage of these bonuses, Washington State has seen a dramatic increase in the number of educators seeking National Board Certification.

Through the Washington Initiative, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) provides private and federally funded scholarships to pay \$1,250 of the \$2,500 National Board application fee. Given that the average teacher in Washington only earns \$45,434,²⁶ paying for remainder of the certification fee and related support expenses—on top of other professional development requirements—is an unnecessary financial burden.



There are a variety of supports in place to help NBCTs with the certification process. OSPI's scholarship program requires candidates to work with a university or district support group during their candidacy year. Most support cohort groups meet once or twice per month. Candidates working through a university often pay \$500 for yearlong

candidate support. WEA also offers an intensive four-day National Board Jump Start Seminar to candidates as they begin the process and then follows up with a one-day Home Stretch Portfolio Review and Assessment Center Preparation Day toward the end of the candidacy. In addition to these statewide support initiatives, there are also targeted efforts at the district level to promote certification, in the form of funding assistance, release days, materials or use of technology and other resources. Many of these incentives have been negotiated through collective bargaining agreements at the local level.

When support is in place, the payoffs are obvious as another Washington NBCT noted:

Our district is very supportive. In our small district, our superintendent brought in a full-time coordinator to support National Board candidates. I was able to complete the process because of this support, along with a group of colleagues who worked together with me. I would not have undertaken this if I hadn't had others to work with or if I worked in another district.

In 2006, Washington was selected by the NBPTS as a Targeted High-Needs Initiative (THNI) grant site. The goal of the THNI grant over five years is to increase National Board activity in high-needs schools in the Seattle School Dis-

In 2006, Washington was selected by the NBPTS as a Targeted High-Needs Initiative (THNI) grant site.

trict, particularly among teachers of color. WEA and OSPI are the sponsoring partners in this collaborative initiative. The University of Washington is lending technical assistance in running candidate support.

While these efforts are promising, much more support will be needed to overcome the obstacles of teaching in a high-needs school. An NBCT from the policy Summit aptly noted:

Working in high-risk schools is emotionally draining. NBCTs committed enough to staying in these schools are usually called upon to serve and help other teachers on top of doing their daily job. I believe they deserve extra compensation for their extra duties and hours spent helping other teachers. Having them in positions where they can help other teachers improve their skills at these high-risk schools (e.g. serving as a reading coach, mentor, grade level leader, helping NBCT candidates) will have further impact.

That is why the Washington NBCTs who attended the Summit recommend:

- 4A. Ensuring the annual NBCT stipend remains permanent for the life of the certificate and changing policy to make it applicable toward retirement.
- 4B. Maintaining or increasing an additional stipend for NBCTs who teach in high-needs schools.
- 4C. Creating a new salary schedule that establishes different levels of teacher mastery with accompanying compensation, professional growth opportunities, roles and responsibilities.
- 4D. Providing a menu of incentives for teaching in high-needs schools, such as:
 - housing allowances;
 - added contractual days;
 - additional classroom resources (i.e. materials, supplies, equipment);
 - additional classroom support from paraprofessionals;
 - paid leadership roles for NBCTs;
 - loan forgiveness; and
 - higher education allowances.

Washington NBCTs who attended the Summit recommend creating a new salary schedule that establishes different levels of teacher mastery with accompanying compensation, professional growth opportunities, roles and responsibilities.



Research confirms that high-needs schools have greater concentrations of beginning teachers as well as teachers with less than full credentials ... these schools too often cannot attract highly experienced and skilled teachers—precisely the types of teachers their students need the most.
—John Wilson,
Executive Director, NEA



- 4E. Fully funding the National Board Certification process in high-needs schools.
- 4F. Providing state funding to pay for any required endorsements (including testing and coursework) for teachers who teach in high-needs schools.
- 4G. Eliminating provisional status of NBCTs who move to high-needs schools.
- 4H. Providing state funding to standardize National Board candidate support in high-needs schools including:
 - providing trained NBCT facilitators to run support groups for candidates;
 - capping participation in support groups to eight candidates per facilitator;
 - continuing support for retake candidates;
 - providing five release days per candidate;
 - offering technical support of \$100 per candidate (for video, copies, mail, computer, etc.); and
 - ensuring that interested NBCTs from all parts of the state can be trained as NBCT facilitators.
- 4I. Creating a state campaign to recruit NBCTs to teach in high-needs schools; posting all initial job announcements for high-needs schools on a statewide bulletin for NBCTs to apply.
- 4J. Allocating a stipend to high-needs schools based on the number of NBCTs working at the school. The funds will equal 25 percent of the NBCTs' average district salaries at their position. They will be allocated directly to the school and teachers will determine how money is best spent to increase student learning by a 2/3 vote of the faculty.

5. Providing the Resources Needed to Capitalize on Teaching Expertise

Richard Rothstein's research has shown that while teachers are the most powerful in-school predictors of student achievement, other factors also play into the equation.²⁷ His sophisticated econometric analyses show that social class variations in health care quality and access, nutrition, child-rearing styles, housing quality and

stability, parental occupation and aspirations, and even exposure to environmental toxins, play a critical role in how well students perform in school and later life. More effective instructional practices alone cannot close the student achievement gaps in Washington and across the nation. As researchers who study the teaching profession have long noted, it is one thing to recruit and prepare “highly qualified” teachers for schools serving more disadvantaged students; it is another thing to ensure that they have the right resources to be effective.²⁸ NBCTs, perhaps because of their training and accomplishments, are more likely to see the “holes” in the system and the “gaps” that need to be filled in order to be effective. At the Summit, almost uniformly, NBCTs clearly articulated what it takes for effective teaching strategies to take hold and for the state’s achievement gaps to be closed: Attention needs to be paid to ensuring that students come to school ready to learn, teachers must have adequate resources and low class sizes, and the state funding formula must more accurately take into account the growing demands of diverse students entering Washington’s public schools.

That is why the Washington NBCTs who attended the Summit recommend:

- 5A. Changing the formula for calculating class size to reflect real numbers of students in classrooms (rather than averages), with a maximum of 20 students at the elementary level and 22 students per period at the middle and high school levels.
- 5B. Providing all-day kindergarten, starting with high-needs schools and phasing in all other schools.
- 5C. Creating a more equalized funding formula for schools that incorporates the number of ELL students, number of low-income students, percent mobility or other special needs.
- 5D. Allocating additional resources to high-needs schools, such as:
 - instructional aides;
 - before- and after-school teachers; and
 - a full-time NBCT or other accomplished teacher serving as a trained instructional coach.
- 5E. Providing supplemental curricular resources for teachers to be able to differentiate instruction for the diverse needs of their students.



*Segun Eubanks
Director of Teacher Quality
National Education Association*

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Conclusion

Now is the time for policymakers to not only support and reward NBCTs, but also utilize their skills and talents to craft the solutions to the vexing problem of staffing and supporting high-needs schools.

If Washington State wants to continue to build upon its momentum for educational improvement, policymakers must continue to make supporting and staffing high-needs schools a priority. Investing in National Board Certification is a strategic resource for state policymakers. Early investments have increased Washington's NBCT ranks to more than 1,300; recent policy changes providing bonuses have promise to further increase interest in the process. Based on the enthusiasm of the more than 200 NBCTs who attended the October 2006 Policy Summit, they are ready to lead a comprehensive effort to close the student achievement gaps by closing the teaching quality gaps. NBCTs represent the best of the teaching profession—where teachers seek to demand excellence, hold themselves accountable, and promote policies and practices in the best interests of the students they serve. At the closing of the Summit, NBCT Jennifer (Jan) Tyger from Evergreen School District poignantly noted:

I didn't realize until I participated in the Summit that there was such an agreement among NBCTs as to what needs to be done to close the achievement gaps. It is up to us now to approach our Senators and Representatives to make sure the recommendations are put into law.

And Duane Pitts, NBCT from Odessa, proudly claimed: “For the first time, I felt teachers’ voices were being heard by the shakers and makers of policy.”

Washington has one of the lowest NBCT candidate dropout rates in the nation and one of the highest certification rates. In fact, Washington had the fifth-highest number of NBCTs certified in the nation in 2006. The state's comprehensive National Board support system, and the partnership between many organizations, is gaining national recognition. Now is the time for policymakers to not only support and reward NBCTs, but also utilize their skills and talents to craft the solutions to the vexing problem of staffing and supporting high-needs schools.

Our work with NBCTs, especially those involved in the Center for Teaching Quality's Teacher Leaders Network, has taught us that accomplished teachers do not seek to avoid challenging schools and assignments. As expert teachers, they know their content and how to teach it to diverse children and communities. They also know what it takes to turn around underperforming, hard-to-staff schools. They are hopeful; but they are not naïve. The challenges facing high-needs schools are complex; therefore, the



plan to reform them must be comprehensive. Indeed, as H.L. Mencken once wrote, “For every complex problem there is a solution that is simple, neat, and wrong.”

Programs should be established to create: 1) awareness of the National Board process among policymakers, practitioners, and the public and leadership opportunities for NBCTs to lead; 2) new career and organizational structures that allow NBCTs to spread their teaching expertise to novices and colleagues; 3) a more diversified teaching force as well as opportunities for all teachers to teach all students more effectively; 4) both the financial incentives and the working conditions that can recruit and grow NBCTs for high-needs schools; and 5) resources that can capitalize on NBCTs’ knowledge, skills, and commitment to all of the state’s students.

Washington is on the threshold of institutionalizing National Board Certification as a powerful, ongoing reform movement. Strategic investments—particularly in ensuring accomplished teachers are teaching in high-needs schools—will yield dividends for the state for years to come. Indeed, silver bullets are not the answer. Washingtonians from all walks of life—from Seattle to Leavenworth to Spokane—must commit themselves to ensuring a quality teacher for every child. Taking the ideas of some of the state’s best teachers and transforming them from recommendation to reality will move the state one step closer to the public education system that policymakers, practitioners, and the public seek.



Strategic investments—particularly in ensuring accomplished teachers are teaching in high-needs schools—will yield dividends for the state for years to come.

We asked the NBCTs in the state to rank the top 12 recommendations which would have the greatest impact on supporting and staffing high-needs schools. If Washington wants to continue to build upon its momentum for educational improvement, we urge policymakers to pay close attention to their proposed solutions and make supporting and staffing high-needs schools a priority. The following actions, taken together, have potential to positively impact education in Washington State:

1. Ensuring the annual NBCT stipend remains permanent for the life of the certificate and changing policy to make it applicable toward retirement.
2. Changing the formula for calculating class size to reflect real numbers of students in classrooms (rather than averages), with a maximum of 20 students at the elementary level and 22 students per period at the middle and high school levels.
3. Maintaining or increasing an additional stipend for NBCTs who teach in high-needs schools.
4. Providing all day kindergarten, starting with high-needs schools and phasing in all other schools.
5. Providing incentives to ensure experienced principals lead high-needs schools.
6. Providing a menu of incentives for teaching in high-needs schools, such as:
 - housing allowances;
 - added contractual days;
 - additional classroom resources (i.e. materials, supplies, equipment);
 - additional classroom support from paraprofessionals;
 - paid leadership roles for NBCTs;
 - loan forgiveness; and
 - higher education allowances.
7. Creating a more equalized funding formula for schools that incorporates the number of ELL students, number of low-income students, percent mobility or other special needs.
8. Allocating additional resources to high-needs schools, such as:
 - instructional aides;
 - before- and after-school teachers; and
 - a full-time NBCT or other accomplished teacher serving as a trained instructional coach.
9. Creating a new salary schedule that establishes different levels of teacher mastery with accompanying compensation, professional growth opportunities, roles and responsibilities.
10. Paying NBCTs and other accomplished teachers to serve as leaders and facilitators to implement professional learning communities that foster collaboration and shared leadership.
11. Creating an induction program for new teachers that includes: building-level mentors released for one-on-one support (1:15 ratio); release time for observations-collaboration-planning; orientation and training before beginning of the year and throughout.
12. Embedding key information about National Board Certification into all administrator credentialing programs in the state.

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Biographies

Bernie Hite has taught biology in the Central Valley School District for the past 24 years. The NBCT in Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Science serves as department chair and mentors National Board candidates in the “Jump Start” and “Home Stretch” programs.

Mary McClellan, an NBCT in Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Science, is a science specialist for the Issaquah School District. She is a faculty member of the National Academy for Curriculum Leadership and past-president of the Washington Science Teachers Association.

Kim McClung teaches ninth and tenth grade core and honors English at Kent-Meridian High School. The 16-year teaching veteran earned National Board Certification in Adolescence and Young Adulthood/English Language Arts in 2002.

Rachel Peters is a Middle Childhood Generalist NBCT who currently teaches 4th grade in Spokane. In May 2007, she will be traveling to Vietnam on an Earthwatch Teacher Fellowship to help evaluate the effects of pollution on the butterfly population in Tam Dao National Park.

Duane Pitts has been a high school English teacher since 1971. The NBCT is a member of the state’s Writing Assessment Leadership Team and a teacher consultant for the Northwest Inland Writing Project. He currently teaches English to 9th through 12th graders at Odessa High School.

Laura Treece is an Early Adolescence Mathematics NBCT from Spokane. She currently teaches 8th grade science and math at Sacajawea Middle. Her leadership roles have included serving on the WEA Political Action Committee and working as a facilitator for National Board candidates.

Jennifer “Jan” Tyger achieved National Board Certification as an Early Childhood Generalist in 2001. Presently, she teaches second grade in the Evergreen School District. She also serves as her district’s coordinator for National Board candidates.

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