

Results of Survey Contracted by Illinois State Board of Education
Illinois Teachers Not Seeking NBPTS: Barriers and Reasons for Their Decision
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This report shows the results of exit slip surveys from 311 Illinois teachers in areas 1-6 teaching in schools outside of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) who attended National Board Certification (NBC) awareness presentations and who reported they were undecided or would not seek NBC. The purpose of the survey was to identify the barriers to Illinois teachers to participate in the NBC process.

About the Respondents

Over 800 Illinois teachers attended NBC awareness sessions in regions 1-6. The National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) Regional and Local Coordinators held summit meetings and communicated through listservs with NBCTs to arrange awareness presentations locally for teachers in schools throughout Illinois.

Participants at the awareness sessions were given the opportunity to complete a survey and return it to the presenter as they left the presentation to ensure responses. The NBCT presenter mailed the forms to the National Board Resource Center at Illinois State University and the graduate student compiled the data into a SelectSurvey online system. The director of the NBRC emailed respondents to participate in a follow-up online survey. Only 12 of 200 teachers contacted by email who were undecided or decided not to seek NBC responded to the online survey. It is assumed that the short time between the presentations and the end of the school year and the fact that some teachers decided to seek NBC and others just withdrew from involvement in the process contributed to the low response rate of the online follow-up survey. Therefore, only the data of the exit surveys from the awareness sessions were compiled and analyzed to show the results of the survey. The 311 respondents to the exit surveys taught in schools in each region of Illinois outside of CPS as shown in the following chart.

Area 1N	Area 1S	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6
39	66	24	41	31	34	76

Ninety-eight percent of the teachers taught in schools with less than five NBCTs and 96% of the teachers taught in districts with less than ten NBCTs. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents

taught in targeted schools -- Academic Early Watch Status (AEWS), Academic Warning Status (AWS), 50% or more students on free or reduced lunch, or in the 29 counties in 2007 with no National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs).

Data was analyzed by grouping the respondents in the following ways: all respondents, those who selected “no” and “undecided for seeking NBC, and each of the seven regions. Results are explained below based on similarities and differences among the groups

Reasons for Not Seeking NBC

Summary

Limitations in Time

The main reason cited by teachers for not seeking National Board Certification was because of personal and professional commitments and family responsibilities. Sixty-seven percent of all respondents said there was limited time in their life and over half said they had too many other personal commitments and family responsibilities. A slightly higher percentage of teachers deciding not to seek NBC and a slightly lower percentage of undecided teachers cited family as a reason not to seek NBC at this time. Though 35% of all respondents selected that too many professional commitments was a reason not to seek NBC, 59% of those deciding not to seek NBC cited professional responsibilities versus 27% of those undecided. The range of percentages among the regions was from 13% to 50% in each region, with nearly half of Region 1 and region 6 respondents citing professional commitments as a barrier. Less than 20% of teachers in all regions were working on graduate degrees currently and did not cite that as a reason not to seek NBC. Teachers deciding it was not the right time to seek NBC based their decision on their perception of personal and professional commitments and responsibilities.

“I would need more time in both my working time and personal time. I need to set up a plan that gives us time to do NBC.”

“For my baby to be little older and not have the other part-time job.”

“I was told it would take 200 to 400 hours in a year. I don’t have that kind of time to spare besides my full time job, family, and just living.”

“At age 56, I feel that my married children and young grandchildren are a priority in my life.”

Support

When asked about their knowledge of support for their candidacy as a barrier, teachers did not cite lack of support as a reason not to seek NBC. Only 11% of all respondents were unsure about the availability of candidate support in their region with no difference between those who were undecided and those who already decided not to seek NBC. All respondents in region 4 said they knew about support with 25% of respondents in region 5 knowing about support. Less than 15% of all respondents lacked school support and less than 10% of respondents believed they lacked family support. A range of 20% to 35% of respondents across all regions cited that the lack of support for the initial \$500 fee payment was a barrier to the teacher to seek NBC. Thirty-three percent of those who already decided not to seek NBC was higher than the 19% of the undecided teachers. Though teachers were aware of candidate support and family, district, and school support, one-fifth to one-third of respondents said that the lack of \$500 was a barrier to them seeking NBC at this time.

“Money is an issue for all of us here. We’re a very small district that cannot afford to pay the big money, but we have parental support, board support and superintendent support as well as the freedom to do our jobs. The staff atmosphere is familial and supportive. Money is an issue more than ever.”

“Our superintendent would need to recognize it as an asset for the district and support my endeavors.”

Preparation for NBC

Responses to the survey showed that teachers attending the awareness sessions had limited knowledge and professional experiences leading to NBC. Only 7% of all respondents had professional development experiences focused on NBC and the range was from 0% to 15% in all regions. Twenty-eight percent of all respondents had no preparation for NBC with 40% of teachers not seeking NBC said they had no preparation. Only regions 1N, 2 and 3 were below 15% who had no preparation for NBC. About 1/3 of all respondents knew or worked with an NBCT with higher percentages in regions 1N, 3 and 5. However less than 15% of respondents in all regions knew or worked with a candidate. More than two-thirds of the teachers did not have access to NBCTs and candidates to learn about the process. The respondents also had limited access to print or online information about NBC. Only about 20% of respondents read flyers from NBCTs or ROEs and visited the NBPTS website and about 10% had read articles or

publications from NBPTS. Thirty percent of all respondents said attending the awareness session was the first time they had heard about NBC. Only region 5 had a higher percentage of 45% of respondents just learning about NBC at the presentation. Though 70% of the respondents had heard about NBC prior to the awareness session, most respondents did not have professional experience or knowledge about NBC prior to the presentation.

“I would like to hear more positive responses from the teachers that have completed the process.”

“It is too much pressure. I have heard that many teachers are having a tough time getting through the process.”

Experience and Readiness for NBC

In addition, the teachers attending the awareness sessions had little knowledge or experiences with the NBPTS TAKE ONE process. Less than 1% of all respondents were currently working on or had completed the TAKE ONE process. However, almost 1/5 of respondents said they wanted to complete the TAKE ONE process first before beginning the NBC process. Only 14% of all respondents said they were not yet ready professionally to participate in NBC. In contrast, 29% of those who had already decided not to seek NBC perceived that they were not yet ready for NBC. Though the teachers attending the sessions and responding to the survey had limited preparation and knowledge about the NBC process and no experience with TAKE ONE, 95% of the respondents believed in the NBPTS standards and process. Only 15% of all respondents said they would never seek NBC and 26% of those already deciding not to seek NBC at this time said they would never seek NBC. Between 74% and 85% of respondents may seek NBC in the future but not at this time.