



The National Board Resource Center

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Using Illinois NBCTs to Improve Student Achievement

Overview

The purpose of this white paper is to show how National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) improve student achievement and how the expansion of the Illinois Teaching Excellence Act will improve performance in Illinois schools. This paper highlights:

- Illinois case studies and results of research showing NBCT impact on student achievement,
- The Illinois National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Comprehensive Support System, a partnership between the National Board Resource Center (NBRC) at Illinois State University and the Illinois State Board of Education, as a resource to grow and train NBCT leaders, and
- Research-based strategies for Illinois leaders to expand the impact of NBCTs on Illinois student achievement.

Case studies of three Illinois schools in Chicago, Elgin, and Sorrento, and independent research studies show that NBCTs improved student achievement on standardized tests in classrooms and schools. The Illinois NBPTS Comprehensive Support is the only statewide system in the country with the capacity to recruit and support candidates for National Board Certification, and train NBCTs as mentors and leaders in school improvement throughout Illinois. Illinois leaders can advance the state's Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education (ISBE, 2005) by:

- Growing the number of Illinois NBCTs,
- Providing NBCTs continued access to leadership and school improvement training, and
- Building the capacity of leaders in schools, districts, and Regional Offices of Education, and the Illinois State Board of Education to use NBCTs as school improvement leaders and professional development providers.

*Lynn Gaddis, NBCT and Stephanie Epp, NBCT
Co-Directors, National Board Resource Center at
Illinois State University*

www.coe.ilstu.edu/ilnbpts/

Illinois Case Study
Chicago Public Schools
Gray Elementary School

NBCTs Increase ISAT Reading and Math Scores above State Average

As a result of a teacher survey, Principal Sandra Carlson asked the six National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) at Gray Elementary School to design and deliver professional development to the teachers focused on reading and math. As a result, third and fifth grade students at Gray Elementary School outscored state averages on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) reading and math in 2004 with eighth grade students improving to within 3 percent of the state.

- Third grade students improved 14 percent in reading and 7 percent in math.
- Fifth grade students improved 19 percent in reading and 23 percent in math.
- Eighth grade students improved 9 percent in reading and 3 percent in math.

The six NBCTs used what they learned in the NBPTS process to teach other teachers how to analyze student work, collaboratively identify what was working and not working, and use scientifically based research instructional strategies to improve reading and math learning. NBCT Lisa Pappas believes that a key factor in the student achievement gains was that the NBCTs worked with the principal, school improvement team, and mentor teams to support changes at the school. The team of NBCTs at Gray Elementary School immersed their staff in the National Board's standards for accomplished teaching — Curriculum, Learning Environment, Diversity, Multiple Pathways to Student Learning, and Assessment to improve student achievement.

“NBCTs used what they learned as candidates for National Board Certification in the Chicago Public Schools training to teach other teachers about best practices, to lead other teachers, and to not be afraid to help those teachers be leaders.”

*Lisa Pappas, NBCT
Illinois Case Study
Gray Elementary School*

Illinois Case Study
Bond County Community Unit School District No. 2
Sorrento Elementary School and Greenville
Elementary School

NBCTs' Students in Title One Rural School Score over 80% in ISAT Tests

The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Peggy Allan, identified National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) to improve student Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) performance at Sorrento School. One NBCT moved to third grade, where students improved writing scores from 28 percent in 2003 to 83 percent in 2004 meeting or exceeding the state standards. Another NBCT showed consistent results over three years with 100 percent of students meeting or exceeding the state writing standards.

“Having five NBCTs in Sorrento Elementary School and four NBCTs in Greenville Elementary School created a new legion of teacher leaders. Such personal, professional growth has enabled them to become more confident and anxious to share what they have learned from the NBPTS process with colleagues. The NBCTs are ready and willing to be teacher leaders and mentors and to be risk takers and innovative to implement their new learning in the classroom. They feel so much more analytical and reflective and they constantly evaluate themselves to redirect their teaching and look at students more as individuals. From an administrative standpoint of promoting instructional leadership and better teaching, having teachers engaged in analyzing themselves and their teaching strategies, what else could you ask for?”

*Peggy Allan, Assistant Superintendent
Bond County Community Unit School District No. 2*

Independent Research: NBCTs Impact Student Achievement

Elementary Students Gain 25 Days of Instruction with NBCTs

In a study of the 1999-2003 Stanford Achievement Test-ninth edition scores of Arizona third to sixth grade students in 14 school districts, researchers found that students in National Board Certified Teachers' (NBCTs) classrooms outperformed students whose teachers are not NBCTs. Further, researchers found that those gains went beyond higher test scores, adding up to learning improvements equivalent to more than a month's worth of additional time in the classroom. (Vandevoort, Amrein-Beardsley, & Berliner, 2004).

High School Students of NBCTs Achieve in Math

In a National Science Foundation-funded study of more than 100,000 Miami-Dade, Florida, ninth and tenth grade math students, Cavalluzzo found that students of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) scored higher on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Records show that NBCTs were particularly effective with black and Hispanic students. The research also showed that National Board Certification had a greater effect than state certification to teach math or relatively more teaching experience (Cavalluzzo, 2004).

Students in NBCT Classrooms Score Higher On Achievement Tests

In a U.S. Department of Education-funded study of more than 600,000 North Carolina third to fifth grade students' annual test scores from 1996-1999, researchers found that students of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) outperformed the students of other teachers. The gain was higher (15 percent) for younger and lower-income students of NBCTs (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004).

Students of NBCTs Learn More

In a national study of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) and teachers who did not achieve National Board Certification, researchers found that NBCTs outperformed non-NBCTs on 13 dimensions of effective teaching. Students of NBCTs demonstrated a deeper understanding of the content taught than the students of non-NBCTs (Bond, 2002).

Chicago Principals Rate NBCTs as Extraordinary

In a University of Chicago study, researchers found that most Chicago National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) work in high-needs schools and are rated by their principals as demonstrating extraordinary skill in teaching, diagnosing student needs, setting high standards, and helping colleagues (Chicago Public Education Fund, 2004).

NBCT Leadership for Student Achievement

"It makes sense that if NBCTs have skills that help students learn more, they need to be in positions to help lower performing students and schools achieve at higher levels."

*Barnett Berry, President
Southeast Center for Teaching Quality*

National Board Certification is all about data-driven instructional improvement. Teachers who achieve this designation spend one year and hundreds of hours videotaping their teaching, analyzing student work, and documenting their ability to help all learners achieve to high standards. Research shows that teachers who complete the process, whether or not they achieve, believe they experienced outstanding professional development that helped them improve the work they do with students (NBPTS, 2001). NBCTs seek and assume leadership roles.

- In a survey by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) of all National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in 2001, 99.6 percent said they were involved in at least one leadership activity to improve the quality of teaching or boost student learning in the nation's classrooms.
- On average, NBCTs were involved in 10 leadership activities and almost all respondents, 89 percent, agreed that increased involvement in leadership activities made them more effective as educators (NBPTS, 2001).
- The Chicago Public Education Fund study (2004) found that "schools with clusters of candidates and/or NBCTs showed more intense involvement of teachers in school wide decisions, a stronger orientation toward innovation, and slightly stronger sense of teacher responsibility for the whole school and not only their classrooms."
- In a February 2005 survey of Illinois NBCTs by the National Board Resource Center (NBRC) at Illinois State University, more than 58 percent of NBCTs currently have leadership roles as mentors of teachers and 39 percent have roles in curriculum development.

However, not all NBCTs have access to support other teachers. Two research studies (Berry, 2005, and WestEd,

2001) shed light on the factors that impede NBCTs in accessing leadership opportunities.

- Berry (2005) found three factors as barriers to NBCTs' involvement in school reform:
 1. The lack of administrator support for and knowledge of the National Board standards and assessment process,
 2. Too little time for teachers to work with their colleagues, and
 3. A critical need among NBCTs for professional development in the area of adult leadership.
- The WestEd study, similarly, found that NBCTs had little access to leadership opportunities in school improvement. The WestEd study reported that NBCTs, on completing the National Board Certification process, found a renewed commitment to working with the lowest-performing students. "On the other hand, several recently completed candidate and NBCTs expressed frustration with the lack of opportunities for leadership and professional growth at both school and district levels."

Illinois Case Study

Elgin School District U-46 – Channing School

NBCTs Led Teachers in Poverty School to Increase ISAT Scores

The Elgin School District U-46 in Illinois used the expertise of four National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) to support teachers in an Academic Early Warning List (AEWL) school to produce the second largest percentage of increase in Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) scores in both reading and math in 2004. When Channing School was identified on the AEWL, NBCT Deb Fralick asked Superintendent Connie Neal if she and three other NBCTs could help the teachers impact the learning of the 99 percent poverty-level, and Hispanic students. These four NBCTs delivered professional development twice a month and mentored teachers from November 2003 to March 2004. They supported teachers in learning about the ISAT reading, math, and writing tests and implementing instructional strategies to improve student skills. The result is that Channing Elementary School students increased their performance by 24.7 percent in the 2004 ISAT scores with 67.3 percent of students meeting or exceeding state standards.

"The National Board Resource Center at Illinois State University was designated by NBPTS in 1999 as one of five National Board Resource Centers in the country. By using a comprehensive support system and Web-based services, this center has distinguished itself as a model program ensuring that teachers in urban, suburban, and rural communities across Illinois have access to training which is improving teaching and student learning in their schools."

*Joseph Aguerrebere, President
National Board for Professional
Teaching Standards*

Capacity of Illinois NBPTS Comprehensive Support System

Since 1995, the Illinois State Board of Education has supported National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' (NBPTS) candidates by paying the application fee and offering mentoring support. In 1997, the legislature passed the Illinois Teaching Excellence Act, stipulating the only means to the Illinois Master Teaching Certificate is by achieving National Board Certification. Illinois Master Teachers are eligible for a \$3,000-a-year stipend and mentor compensation. From 2002 to the present, the Illinois State Board of Education partnered with the National Board Resource Center at Illinois State University to implement statewide expansion of NBPTS in Illinois through the Illinois NBPTS Comprehensive Support System.

The Illinois NBPTS Comprehensive Support System has the capacity to continue to increase the number of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs), offer leadership training to Illinois NBCTs and collaborate with leaders in schools, districts, Regional Offices of Education, and the Illinois State Board of Education to use NBCTs in improving student learning throughout Illinois. Since 2002, this NBCT-led system:

- More than tripled the number of NBCTs from 348 in 2001 to 1,239 in 2004,
- Developed and delivered mentor and leadership training to NBCTs, and
- Worked with educational leaders in schools, districts, unions, Regional Offices of Education, and universities in all regions of Illinois.

NBCT Regional Coordinators in eight regions of the state coordinated the work of five local coordinators each to recruit, support candidates, train NBCTs and support

school leaders in developing programs. The Illinois NBPTS Comprehensive Support System led by NBCTs has the networked system and the capacity to train NBCTs and collaborate with school leaders to use NBCTs as leaders of increased student achievement and school improvement.

Research-based Strategies for NBCTs to Impact Student Achievement

Research results and the Illinois case studies suggest a few key policies that the state could adopt to use National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) to improve student achievement.

- Continue to increase the number of NBCTs to enable all teachers and students throughout Illinois access to highly accomplished teacher leaders. Recruit and support candidates in identified regions of the state with greatest need, particularly those areas with few NBCTs or high incidence of low performing schools.
- Continue to use the Illinois National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Comprehensive Support System at the National Board Resource Center at Illinois State University to offer training to NBCTs in leading teachers and administrators in school improvement process, mentoring, and professional development. NBCTs have been assessed to show they can analyze student work and their teaching decisions to redirect their instruction so all students will move toward meeting standards. It makes sense that these accomplished teachers should have opportunities to continue to learn how to impact other teachers through mentoring and professional development of best practices.
- Build the capacity of leaders in schools, districts, unions, Regional Offices of Education, and universities to use NBCTs in leadership roles to improve student achievement. Design opportunities for NBCT teacher leaders in their schools, districts, and regions to work toward the goals and objectives of the Illinois State Board of Education Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education.