

Name: Jennifer Smith

Area of Certification: EA Science

District & School: Monticello CUSD- Monticello Middle School

Year of Certification: 2010

Renewal: 2019

When I began teaching, I remember hearing about National Board certification. Even before I had finished my first year in the classroom, I decided that I wanted to pursue National Board certification. After I had taught for three years, I began the process of certification because I wanted to push myself to learn and grow to be the best teacher possible for my students. As I began the journey of reading through the standards, my understanding of education and what it meant to be a teacher began to change. I began to more fully embrace the idea of the student-centered classroom and that students should play an active role in the development of their understanding. Learning in my classroom is very hands-on and it is a very recursive process, largely due to my certification experience. I make sure that the learning my students participate in is connected to a previous lesson or life experience and that the students clearly understand the connections. My students know that I am always willing to try something new in the classroom, which keeps them interested and allows me to continue to learn as well.

National Board Certification was not an easy process, but it was the most worthwhile learning experience I have participated in because every aspect of it focused on my students as learners and what I needed to do to help them be successful. As an NBCT, I have had numerous opportunities to work with my colleagues within Illinois and to work with other NBCTs throughout the nation. Being in a room full of NBCTs reminds me that teachers full of passion can accomplish great things for students.