

NATIONAL BOARD

for Professional Teaching Standards®

Policy Priorities: State Equity Plans

Integrating National Board Certification into State Equity Plans

Across the nation, states and districts are grappling with the challenge of staffing high-need schools with high-quality teachers. In these schools, teacher turnover can be high, professional culture weak, and student achievement persistently low.¹ While there are many variables involved in student success, research has proven that teachers are the single most important school-based factor.

Unfortunately, poor and minority students are less likely than their peers to have access to high-quality teachers.⁴ [More than a decade of rigorous research](#) in states and cities across the country show that students taught by Board-certified teachers learn more than their peers.² Furthermore, research suggests that **Board-certified teachers produce larger learning gains for students receiving free or reduced-price lunch.**³ Given this evidence, it is critical that state equity plans increase access to Board-certified teachers for high-need schools and students.

Analyze the number and distribution of Board-certified teachers

- As one indicator of teacher quality, collect data on the distribution of Board-certified teachers across the state and within schools.

Engage the expertise of Board-certified teachers

- Include Board-certified teachers as a stakeholder group when developing equity strategies.
- Engage Board-certified teachers in raising awareness of equity gaps and setting priorities for taking action to address these gaps.

Ensure Board-certified teachers reach the students that need them the most

- A number of states, including Washington, Colorado, Maryland, Wisconsin, and Hawaii, offer an additional stipend to Board-certified teachers in high-need schools on top of the base stipend that all Board-certified teachers in the state receive.
- Three years after Washington began offering a \$5,000 stipend to Board-certified teachers in schools with high levels of poverty, the total number of Board-certified teachers in high-poverty schools increased from 79 to 746; the proportion of Board-certified teachers in these schools increased from about 12% to almost 20%; and almost 60% of high-poverty schools had at least one Board-certified teacher, compared to only 20% three years earlier.⁵

National Board Certification is a voluntary advanced professional certification for PreK-12 educators that identifies teaching expertise through a performance-based, peer-reviewed assessment.

81% of Americans across the political spectrum believe teachers should achieve Board certification, beyond licensure, as it is in other professions (2014 PDK/Gallup poll).⁵

Learn more at
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Build a culture of professional learning and growth through Board certification

- The [increased flexibility](#) of permitting candidates three years to complete Board certification presents schools with the opportunity to build professional development around the National Board process. For example, Illinois is launching National Board [developing schools](#), a school-based candidate support model that guides groups of 10 or more interested teachers in a school or district through the National Board Certification process. Over a three-year period these school-based cohorts will complete all four National Board Certification components. Principals across the state have responded enthusiastically to this opportunity.
- [Montgomery County, MD leveraged National Board Certification to improve teacher capacity](#) as a strategy to address achievement gaps and promote college- and career-ready standards. In addition to financial incentives, the district embeds the National Board's Five Core Propositions—the framework for what teachers should know and be able to do—into professional development, hiring, and evaluation. As a result, some 40 percent of the Board-certified teachers teach in the district's 30 Title I schools. These efforts helped narrow the achievement gap in the district.

Strengthen the continuum for teaching quality statewide, with a focus on high-need students

- In addition to targeted interventions to address the equitable distribution of teaching quality, states can accelerate and focus their work on [strengthening the teaching continuum](#), with an emphasis on those teaching high-need students. For example, in strengthening induction supports for new teachers, states can target resources and attention to high-need schools.



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¹ Borman, G. D., & Kimball, S. M. (2005). Teacher quality and educational equality: Do teachers with higher standards-based evaluation ratings close student achievement gaps? *The Elementary School Journal*, 106(1), 3-20; Ferguson, R. F. (1998). Can schools narrow the black-white test score gap? in C. Jencks & M. Phillips (Eds.), *The Black-White test score gap* (pp. 318-374). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution; Jacob, A., Vidyarthi, E., & Carroll, K. (2012). The irreplaceables: Understanding the real retention crisis in America's urban schools. TNTP. http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP_irreplaceables_2012.pdf; Kain, J. F., & Singleton, K. (1996). Equality of education opportunity revisited. *New England Economic Review*, (May/June), 87-114.

² See, e.g., Strategic Data Project (2012). SDP Human Capital Diagnostic: Los Angeles Unified School District. Center for Education Policy Research, Harvard University; Strategic Data Project (2012a). Learning about Teacher Effectiveness: SDP Human Capital Diagnostic: Gwinnett County Public Schools, Ga. Center for Education Policy Research, Harvard University; Goldhaber, D., & Anthony, E. (2007). Can teacher quality be effectively assessed? *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 89(1), 134-150.

³ Goldhaber, D., & Anthony, E. (2007). Can teacher quality be effectively assessed? *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 89(1), 134-150.

⁴ Humphrey, D., Koppich, J., & Hough, H. (2005). Sharing the Wealth: National Board Certified Teachers and the Students Who Need Them Most. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives* 13(18).

⁵ Plecki, M. et al. (2010). Study of the Incentive Program for Washington's National Board Certified Teachers, Prepared for Washington State Board of Education. The Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy at the University of Washington & The Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession.

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New Research and Policy Implications

Board Certification: A Proven Tool for Identifying Quality Teaching

Summary of New Research

In February 2015, two separate groups of independent researchers released new studies finding Board-certified teachers are more effective at advancing student learning than non-Board-certified teachers. These new reports build on more than [a decade of research](#) finding similar results. Estimates of the impact of a student being taught by a Board-certified teacher range up to two months of additional learning gains.

New evidence from Washington State: Researchers Goldhaber and Cowan use seven years of statewide data to study the effectiveness of Board-certified teachers in Washington, a state that has not been the focus of prior research. The authors find that Board-certified teachers produce nearly six weeks of **additional learning gains** in middle school math classrooms and one to two weeks of additional learning gains in elementary classrooms and middle school reading classrooms. They also find that teachers who achieve Board certification on their first attempt produce four and a half weeks of additional learning gains compared to those teachers who pursue but never achieve Board certification. Finally, they find that the scale score a teacher receives on the assessment—in addition to whether or not a teacher achieves—is predictive of gains in student achievement. Read more at http://cedr.us/papers/working/CEDR%20WP%202015-3_NBPTS%20Cert.pdf.

New evidence from Kentucky and Chicago, IL: Lead researcher Cavalluzzo and her co-researchers extend the research base by studying the effects of Board-certified teachers in two new locations – Chicago and Kentucky; by focusing on high schools as opposed to elementary and middle schools through the use of ACT and PLAN student tests; and incorporating science in addition to English and math. The researchers find that National Board Certification is an **effective “signal” of teacher quality** across locales, test types, and subject areas, while effect sizes varied. They also find that National Board Certification effectively “screens” applicants; in other words, that teachers who achieve Board certification produce larger student gains when compared to teachers who pursue but do not achieve board certification. Read more in their study at <http://www.cna.org/research/2014/national-board-certification>.

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Did you know?

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Implications for Policymakers Aiming to Improve Teaching Quality:

Given this consistent and compelling evidence base, we must take advantage of Board certification as a vehicle to **systematically develop a high-quality, professional teaching workforce** so that every student is prepared to meet the demands of society and the global economy. Right now, even with more than 110,000 Board-certified teachers, only 3% of the teaching workforce is Board certified. This is true even though more than 80% of Americans believe that teachers should be Board-certified, in addition to being licensed.

This evidence base is a call to action—the teaching profession must come together in partnership with policymakers to create the conditions for accomplished teaching, as measured by Board certification, to become the norm, not the exception.

Policymakers can leverage Board certification to strengthen teaching through three [policy priorities](#):



1. Build the Pipeline to Accomplished Teaching and Board Certification



2. Raise Teaching Standards by Investing in Board Certification



3. Spread the Expertise of Board-Certified Teachers

Washington State provides a leading example of the pursuit of these strategies in their state through its integration of Board certification into its teaching culture, structures, and policies. The pipeline to accomplished teaching is anchored with the edTPA as an initial licensure assessment and, once successful on that performance-based exam, teachers progress into a statewide induction program. As educators approach the second stage of their teaching career, they can **achieve Board certification as a pathway for acquiring a professional teaching license**. Board-certified teachers are recognized for their experience with a \$5,000 salary stipend. To best serve the students who need great teaching the most, Board-certified teachers who teach in challenging schools receive an additional salary stipend of up to \$5,000. Teachers are supported in their pursuit through a statewide interest-free conditional loan program to pay certification fees and have access to a robust candidate support program coordinated by the state department and the state teachers union. As a result, although Washington has only the 15th largest population of K-12 students, it has the fourth most Board-certified teachers of any state and it produced the most new Board-certified teachers of any state this year. **Board-certified teachers increasingly serve in leadership roles, improving instruction and strengthening the teaching practices of their colleagues in a variety of roles.**

These strategies, while new to teaching, are what other professions have done to systematically elevate the quality of the workforce. The teaching profession must follow their lead, working in partnership with policymakers to make Board certification the expectation for all teachers. Through these efforts, **we can collectively ensure that accomplished teachers advance the learning of all students.**