

## **What Is The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards?**

NBPTS is an independent, nonprofit and nonpartisan organization founded in 1987 to create a system of advanced certification for teachers based on high and rigorous standards. NBPTS developed the National Board Certification process and certifies teachers who successfully complete related assessments.

## **What Is National Board Certification?**

National Board Certification is achieved upon successful completion of a voluntary assessment program designed to recognize effective and accomplished teachers who meet high and rigorous standards based on what teachers should know and be able to do. National Board Certification is available nationwide for most preK-12 teachers.

National Board Certification is an advanced teaching credential. It complements, but does not replace, a state's teacher license. It is valid for up to 10 years, and renewal candidates must begin the renewal process during their eighth or ninth years as NBCTs.

As part of the certification process, candidates complete 10 assessments that are reviewed by trained teachers in their certificate areas. The assessments include four portfolio entries that feature teaching practice and six constructed response exercises that assess content knowledge.

## **Who Is Eligible?**

To pursue National Board Certification, candidates must have

- A baccalaureate degree;
- Three years of teaching experience in early childhood, elementary, middle or secondary schools prior to submitting an application; and
- A valid state teaching license, where required, for each of those three years.

*Check the NBPTS Web site for complete eligibility requirements.*

## **Why Become A National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT)?**

In addition to being among the most accomplished teachers in the nation, National Board Certified Teachers benefit students, schools and communities by

- Strengthening teaching practice – Research shows candidates demonstrate significant improvement in their teaching practice;
- Improving student learning – Research demonstrates that National Board Certified Teachers have a greater impact on students' academic performance;
- Advancing careers – National Board Certification provides routes for NBCTs to advance as master teachers, school leaders and mentors without leaving the classroom;
- Increasing financial opportunities – Most states and hundreds of local districts offer salary incentives for teachers who certify;

- Providing a portable teaching license – Many states recognize National Board Certification as sufficient proof for state licensure, allowing movement from state to state; and
- Contributing to Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and re-certification requirements – Many higher-education institutions give graduate credits to NBCTs who complete the certification process.

### **How Does NBPTS Support NBCTs Throughout Their Careers?**

NBPTS recognizes that NBCTs are powerful teacher leaders who have an influential voice in education. To ensure NBCTs have ongoing support throughout their careers, NBPTS provides resources, information and opportunities via

- **NBCTLink** – the online community that connects NBCTs who want to share classroom experiences; exchange information about best teaching practices, technology and methods to improve student learning; and discuss opinions about education-related topics. [www.nbctlink.org](http://www.nbctlink.org)
- **AdvocacyLink** – the NBPTS legislative action center that provides up-to-date news about education issues in Congress and state governments, and gives to constituents the opportunity to volunteer to contact policymakers and media positively impact education policy. [www.capwiz.com/nbpts/home](http://www.capwiz.com/nbpts/home)
- **NewsLink** – the NBPTS online newsletter that provides the latest information about events and issues surrounding the organization and, most importantly, National Board Certified Teachers. [www.nbpts.org/about\\_us/newslink](http://www.nbpts.org/about_us/newslink)

### **Additionally:**

- NBPTS provides direct opportunities for NBCTs to participate as National Board assessors, candidate support providers, outreach and recruitment liaisons, and advisors.
- NBPTS shares with NBCTs opportunities from other professional organizations that wish to use National Board Certified Teachers' knowledge and skills to further other teaching-related initiatives and projects.

### **Why Standards For Accomplished Teaching?**

Every child deserves an accomplished teacher – one who is qualified to equip students with the skills to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global community. NBPTS Standards and National Board Certification give teachers and schools the tools to define and measure teaching excellence.

NBPTS Standards are based on the Five Core Propositions that form the foundation for what all accomplished teachers should know and be able to do and provide a reference that helps educators link teaching standards to teaching practice.

### **The Five Core Propositions**

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.

### **Why Do All 50 States, The District Of Columbia And More Than 700 School Districts Support National Board Certification?**

District and state officials know NBCTs make a positive difference in student learning. They also know NBCTs are powerful teacher leaders who help advance agendas for school improvement.

### **What Are The Standards And Certificate Areas?**

Building upon the Five Core Propositions, NBPTS developed standards of accomplishment in 16 different subject areas with students at various developmental levels. These standards were developed and validated by representative councils comprised of master teachers, disciplinary organizations and other education experts. Many school systems use the standards as the basis for ongoing teacher and school counselor professional development, and many colleges and universities incorporate them into their undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs.

Based on these standards, NBPTS offers 25 certificates that cover a variety of subjects and student developmental levels and are applicable to most teachers in American schools. For more information, visit [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).

### **What Is Required Of Candidates?**

The rigor of NBPTS Standards leads candidates to spend approximately 200-400 hours preparing for and completing the certification process, which can take from one to three years.

Throughout this period, candidates become familiar with the standards for their certificate areas, review their content knowledge to prepare for assessment questions, evaluate their teaching practices and prepare their portfolio entries. Specifically, candidates submit the following components for scoring:

- Analysis of and reflection on small and large group work that is supported by video recordings of their classroom teaching (two portfolio entries)
- Analysis of and reflection on student work with samples (one portfolio entry)
- Documented accomplishments of work outside the classroom and evidence of how that work impacts student learning (one portfolio entry)
- Online assessment exercises that demonstrate subject-matter expertise (six 30-minute constructed response questions scheduled at a local assessment center)

### **How Much Does It Cost?**

The 2008 assessment fee is \$2500, including a non-refundable fee of \$500. In addition, there is a non-refundable \$65 processing charge due at the time of application.

## What Financial Assistance Is Available For Candidates?

Although many teachers and school counselors invest in National Board Certification as their career development choice, full or partial financial support is often available to help many candidates pay the assessment fee. Below are examples of financial support options that may be available to candidates.

- **Candidate Subsidy Program**

Partial financial support is available in every state through the Candidate Subsidy Program. Made possible through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the program provides funds to a number of candidates in each state to help offset assessment fees. To qualify for this fee support, candidates must contact their state subsidy administrators to ensure compliance with state registration requirements. Information about the Candidate Subsidy Program is available at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org)

- **State And Local Incentives**

Most states and many districts offer support for candidates and/or salary incentives for those who achieve certification. Information about state and local support incentives is available at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org) or from state program administrators.

- **National Board Scholarship Program (NBSP)**

NBPTS offers a limited number of scholarships to teachers seeking National Board Certification through the National Board Scholarship Program.

Scholarships are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis only to teachers who have submitted their candidate applications, have paid the non-refundable \$500 initial fee, and do not have access to financial support from their states or local school districts. Information about the National Board Scholarship Program is available at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org) and 1-888-908-FEES (3337).

- **Extended Payment Options By E-Check**

NBPTS offers a flexible payment plan that allows first-time candidates to pay assessment fees by electronic check. Candidates using this option will have an extended payment deadline of March 14, 2008. Candidates will be allowed to decide on the due date of each monthly installment, and NBPTS will send a monthly e-mail reminder regarding payment.

- **Low-Interest Loans From Teacher Associations**

National Education Association (NEA) members can apply for low-interest loans to pay their initial and retake candidate fees. For more information, call 1-800-545-4094 or visit the NEA Member Benefits Web site at [www.neamb.com/loans/loan.bc.jsp](http://www.neamb.com/loans/loan.bc.jsp). American Federation of Teachers (AFT) members can apply for low-interest loans to pay their initial and retake candidates. For more information, call 1-888-238-5646.

- **Local Programs**

Many local businesses and foundations support candidates for National Board Certification. Candidates should check with their local chambers of commerce or school districts.

## How Are Candidates Assessed?

NBPTS uses proven protocols to train experienced classroom teachers and school

counselors as NBPTS assessors. The assessors teach subjects and development levels that relate to the certificate areas they are assessing. Assessors who successfully complete the training score the candidates' submissions (portfolio entries and online assessments) to determine whether their responses meet the applicable standards. Each assessor scores only a portion of a candidate's submission, and a certain percentage of entries are scored independently by two different assessors. This ensures that at least 17 different assessors have reviewed a component of each candidate's work.

### **What Help Is Available To Candidates?**

NBPTS works to ensure that candidates are never alone as they go through the certification process. The NBPTS Web site is a gateway to extensive resources, including portfolio guidelines, assessment center instructions, tutorials and scoring guides. In addition, NBPTS provides access to a network of Candidate Support Providers – NBCTs, higher education institutions and others who provide support programs for National Board candidates. NBPTS also offers *Take One!*, which can be used as an initial step in becoming a candidate for National Board Certification. More information is available at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).

### **What Happens If Candidates Don't Achieve In Year One?**

National Board Certification is a rigorous process, and candidates often do not achieve certification on their first attempt, which is why they have up to three years to certify. Candidates who do not achieve in year one continue with the process by retaking selected portions of their original entries through the NBPTS score banking and retake process. This process allows candidates to save their original scores, take up to two more years to complete selected entries (at \$350 each) and submit them for scoring. Many candidates who follow this path are able to achieve National Board Certification within this extended time period.