

Prairie Central Teacher Achieves National Board Certification, Meets Nation's Highest Teaching Standards

Fairbury, IL--Teaching excellence in Illinois has taken a major step forward following a recent announcement by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards that Becky Shafer, a mathematics teacher at Prairie Central High School, has achieved National Board Certification in 2009.

An "extraordinary group," is how U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan referred to this year's class of National Board Certified Teachers. He said teachers and school counselors who have achieved National Board Certification this year have "demonstrated a commitment of taking their teaching practice to an entirely different level," adding, "these amazing leaders."

A voluntary assessment program designed to develop, recognize and retain accomplished teachers, National Board Certification is achieved through a performance-based assessment that typically takes one to three years to complete. While state licensing systems set basic requirements to teach in each state, NBCTs have successfully demonstrated advanced teaching knowledge, skills and practices.

"National Board Certification is a growing education reform movement that is reshaping American education," said Joseph A. Aguerrebere, NBPTS president and chief executive officer. "We are committed to providing school districts like Prairie Central with high-quality teachers who have a deep knowledge of content and teaching practices to support diverse learners. I am proud that Becky Shafer is among the 82,000 teachers throughout the country who have achieved National Board Certification. These outstanding educators are making a positive difference in the lives of students."

Last year, the highly respected National Research Council of the National Academies found students taught by National Board Certified Teachers make higher gains on achievement tests than students taught by teachers who have not applied or did not achieve certification. The study affirmed the "evidence is clear that National Board Certification distinguishes more effective teachers from less effective teachers with respect to student achievement." The congressionally mandated report also found that National Board Certification has a positive impact on teacher retention and professional development.

"Just as doctors and accountants gain professional certification beyond licensure by demonstrating their expertise, National Board Certified Teachers have met rigorous standards and are among the nation's best," said Aguerrebere.

National Board Certified Teachers consistently receive top teaching honors while representing about two percent of the nation's teaching population. For example:

- Four of the last nine National Teacher of the Year recipients are NBCTs.
- More than a quarter of the 2009 State Teachers of the Year are NBCTs.
- More than one-third of the recipients of the 2008 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching are NBCTs.

National Board Certification is recognized as a model of pay-for-performance and is supported by teachers and administrators nationwide. All 50 states, the District of Columbia and hundreds of local school districts recognize National Board Certification as a mark of distinction. Many states and local school districts provide salary incentives and cover the cost for teachers who pursue and achieve this advanced teaching credential.

NBPTS has more than 20 years of experience in developing rigorous standards and corresponding assessments for teachers who want to demonstrate advanced teaching knowledge, skills and practices. Building on its highly successful program for teachers and school counselors, the National Board is developing a program that will not only create standards and an assessment process for principals, it will also lay the groundwork for new certifications for assistant principals and teacher leaders who positively impact the culture of learning in schools. This initiative is expected to launch in 2011.

For more information about NBPTS and National Board Certification, visit the NBPTS Web site at www.nbpts.org.

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About the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

NBPTS is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and nongovernmental organization. NBPTS advances the quality of teaching and learning by developing professional standards for accomplished teaching; creating and administering National Board Certification, a voluntary system to certify teachers who meet those standards; and integrating certified teachers into education reform efforts. Today, 82,000 teachers have achieved National Board Certification.

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