

**TESTIMONY OF C. KENT MCGUIRE, PH.D.**  
**MEMBER, BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL**  
**TEACHING STANDARDS**  
**DEAN OF EDUCATION, TEMPLE UNIVERSITY**

**House Education Committee**  
**House Bill 1045**

*Wednesday, February 13, 2008*

Good morning, Chairman Roebuck, honorable members of the House Education Committee, staff, and guests. I am Kent McGuire, dean of the College of Education at Temple University. Previously, I served in the Clinton Administration as an assistant secretary in the US Department of Education, overseeing the department's research and development program. My professional life has been spent in a variety of positions that afforded me the opportunity to help advance quality teaching and learning for all children. I am also a member of the Board of Directors of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. It is with those perspectives and background that I address you today.

My colleague, Rebecca Pringle, described the National Board Certification process and its important impact on student learning and achievement, as well as teacher effectiveness. I am here to discuss the Pennsylvania Teaching Quality Initiative, which is designed to align contractual, programmatic, and legislative guidelines with the shared vision of the stakeholders and supporters of National Board efforts in Pennsylvania. To that end, I urge you to quickly move to enact House Bill 1045, a bill to institutionalize National Board Certification in our Commonwealth that is at the core of the Pennsylvania Teaching Quality Initiative.

Almost two years ago, Governor Rendell announced the Pennsylvania Teaching Quality Initiative. In the Initiative, he committed \$1.2 million as part of his "Pennsylvania Competes" education initiative. The early successes of his efforts are impressive. Four individual grants of \$75,000 helped establish Centers for Teaching Excellence on the campuses of Gannon, Duquesne, and East Stroudsburg Universities, as well as at Temple University, where I serve as dean of the College of Education. These Centers are geographically targeted to cover each region of the state. They are charged to work closely with local school districts to recruit candidates and provide locations for mentoring, group work and research activities. That important catalyst has resulted in a doubling of the number of Pennsylvania teachers seeking National Board Certification. To illustrate: During the 2006-07 cycle, there were 168 candidates for National Board Certification. By the next cycle, 2007-08, that number had more than doubled—to 373 candidates. This means more than 500 National Board candidates were served during the first 18 months of the Centers' operations.

We need to build on this early success. House Bill 1045 will institutionalize National Board Certification in Pennsylvania. If you look at the states where National Board

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Certification has its strongest presence, those states have built-in legislative incentives to support the program. This is done through a combination of fee supports and salary supplements. Why is this so important? When you look at these states, a couple of factors emerge. First, National Board Certification must be embedded in the state's infrastructure. Teachers need the assurance that the program is permanent and stable. The law must incorporate financial support for both the assessment fee and for a salary incentive. Second, there must be evidence of strong support from state officials for the National Board. This clearly exists in Pennsylvania as demonstrated by the leadership of Governor Rendell and Secretary Zahorchak. If Pennsylvania is to fully embrace National Board Certification, these factors must be present. If House Bill 1045 is enacted, I am confident that the result will be that Pennsylvania will become a leader among states with a strong National Board presence.

Now is the time to act. In 2006, our state government provided funding to put programs into our schools that were designed to support and retain teachers. The resulting statewide effort to provide a quality education for every child in Pennsylvania has jump-started a quality revolution. Many school systems now support a recognized model of staff development, with intense training buttressed by rigorous support provided by National Board Certified Teachers and other instructional advocates. These individuals provide National Board Certification candidates with continual support. In addition, the National Board Certified Teachers provide direct interventions for teachers who are struggling.

National Board Certified Teachers provide intensive, personal interactions designed to help each candidate with their specific need. Many of these teachers work with school and central office administrators to build a "culture of school success" where all teachers work together to positively impact learning in their schools. National Board Certified Teachers, as experienced mentors, work very closely with teachers new to the profession. In some school systems, these mentors meet with groups of new teachers to work through common issues and concerns. The support of mentors and fellow teachers alleviates some of the sense of isolation felt by new teachers struggling to juggle the responsibilities and pressures associated with the initial stages of teaching.

### **Pennsylvania's Progress**

The Centers have played an important role in making this happen. Temple University, where I am affiliated, has been privileged to serve as one of the four Centers for Teaching Excellence established under Governor Rendell's vision. This also gives me a great vantage point from which to view National Board Certification. I believe in the National Board Certification process because I see first-hand its dramatic effect on teaching and learning.

There are now 369 National Board Certified Teachers in Pennsylvania. We rank 25th nationwide in the number of National Board Certified Teachers, and, based on the number of current candidates, Pennsylvania is expected to rise significantly in future rankings. Pennsylvania's National Board Certified Teachers joined the ranks of the 8,500 teachers nationwide who achieved certification in 2007 – the largest one-year increase in

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the history of the National Board. This growth represents an 8.6 percent increase over the number of teachers nationwide who earned certification in 2006. The cumulative total of NBCTs stands at 64,000.

There are other factors that demonstrate the success of the National Board in our state. For example, fifty-eight percent of the state's NBCTs teach in Title I schools<sup>1</sup>. The state's top five school districts in terms of the cumulative total of NBCTs are Pittsburgh (80), Quaker Valley (18), Central Bucks (40), Philadelphia City (18), and East Lycoming (8)<sup>2</sup>.

### **Closing**

We have much to applaud and for which to be proud. But we must take action to sustain and build upon our successes. I strongly encourage the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to offer vigorous support for House Bill 1045. This support will signify strong sponsorship for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification efforts and consequently school improvement efforts in the Commonwealth. It will demonstrate the commitment and support to enable teachers—our strongest assets in promoting student learning and school improvement—to deliver the high-quality instruction that all students need and deserve.

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<sup>1</sup> This percentage is based on teachers whose schools could be identified as Title I using NCES criteria.

<sup>2</sup> NOTE: All NBPTS data are derived from information reported to NBPTS by National Board Certified Teachers and candidates as part of the certification process