

Testimony before the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee
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Thank you for the opportunity to address the changes that are being implemented in the funding for the National Board Certification Process.

When I entered the National Board Process in 1994, I was on my way out of the profession. I was formulating plans for a new career. It was not that I didn't like teaching, but I thought that all the challenge for so little money was just not satisfying. While I had been successful as a teacher – always receiving excellent evaluations, I really did not have the professional direction that I needed. The National Board Process changed all that. At that time, there was not the lure of a high monetary payoff, but I thought I'd try it. I should add that I didn't know what a challenging process I was getting into. Six months later, after finishing the process but long before I had received my scores, I knew that I had become a 100% better teacher. Sixteen years later, I am contributing to education on the National and State levels, but more importantly, I am leading in my school and in my classroom to improve student learning every day. My story is just one of over 15,000 stories of North Carolina National Board Certified Teachers and thousands of others who have been through the National Board process that tell you that funding the fee for teachers is worth its weight in gold to the state of North Carolina and to the students we serve.

You have heard about the positive effect that National Board Certification has on student performance as measured by test scores. What you may not have heard is that when teachers and administrators encounter the National Board Standards, the conversation in the school changes. As the slide describes, I work with a very challenging population; our students and their families are often in crisis and chaos. Because my colleagues and I understand what Accomplished Teaching is, we do not use their circumstances as an explanation or excuse for weaknesses in achievement. Instead, we take responsibility for what we CAN do, using "I" and "we" instead of "they" as we strive for improvement. Two of my teammates are going through the National Board process right now, and the transformations that are occurring in their teaching are noticeable daily.

Why should North Carolina continue to fund the fee for National Board Certification? Quite simply, because teachers cannot afford it! Ask anyone who has been through the process: this is the most effective professional development. It changes teachers, schools, and, most of all, students. This is why teachers, fearful of not being able to attempt the process, registered in such high numbers when they saw that North Carolina was going to stop funding it. The state needs for teachers to have access to this superior professional development opportunity. And the state needs to see that this is not only one of the best ways to improve student performance, but is actually one of the best ways to retain accomplished teachers. Years ago, we all were skeptical when an inexperienced teacher attempted National Board Certification. This is no longer the case. Our university teacher preparation programs are producing bright, analytical, and effective teachers who are already working to meet the National Board Standards. These are the people that we want to keep in the profession and the National Board process is key to doing that. Yet, these newer teachers are the teachers who can least afford to pay the fee.

I fully recognize the financial pressure that has caused the reassessment of the fee payment for National Board certification. However, I urge you understand the value of the process to the teachers and students of the state. Please consider the suggestions that have been made by National Board Certified Teachers to preserve this professional development opportunity for teachers. Instead of saying that we cannot afford to fund this, realize that we cannot afford not to.