

Part II:

TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

This second part of the Toolkit offers more detailed guidance on how to get started designing your own district or school teacher professional learning model that moves all teachers towards the accomplished teaching standard. In Part II, we offer suggestions on how to engage decision-makers and key stakeholders to support this initiative and how to go about designing a program that fits in your local context, responds to particular school- or district-level challenges, and can be sustained over time. While led by a school or system leader, this work will require a team of instructional leaders who can help design and conduct the program. Naturally, if possible, it makes sense to engage one or more National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) who can speak to the power of forming teams of teachers doing the work collaboratively at a school site. (If your school or district does not have NBCTs, we also present options for engaging other teacher leaders.) In addition, when building your planning team, consider inviting others who are committed to teacher professional development and capacity building.

Throughout this section, as in Part I, we will continue to refer to the four model programs that represent two broad approaches to embed National Board Certification as a powerful, research-based, job-embedded professional learning experience for teachers.

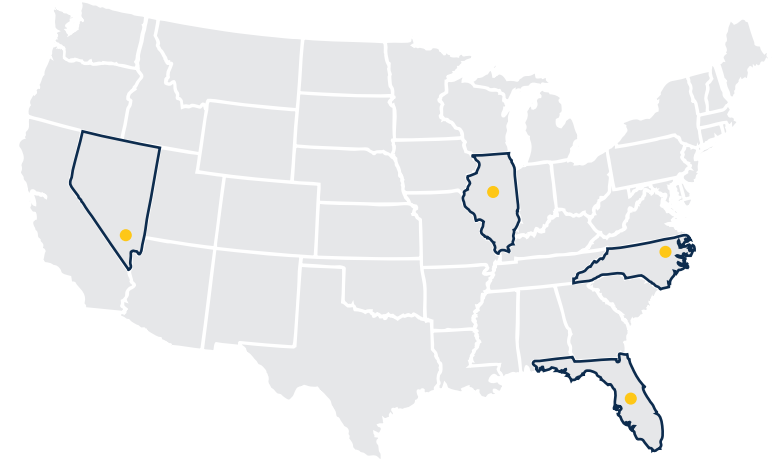


APPROACH 1: SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING THAT STRENGTHENS PRACTICE FOR ALL TEACHERS

In **Illinois** and **Clark County, Nevada**, state and district leaders have been grappling with the challenge of staffing all schools with accomplished teachers. Over time, the combination of high teacher turnover, inadequate professional development, and a weak professional culture contributed to low student achievement results. In response, Board-certified teachers serving as leaders in their context, designed a research-supported model that provides teachers learning opportunities in their schools to develop and deepen their professional practice in alignment with the goals of accomplished teaching and Board certification. **By design, these National Board Professional Development (NBPD) Schools set out from the beginning to address larger systemic challenges of teacher recruitment and retention, improved instructional practice, and greater student outcomes.**

APPROACH 2: AN INTENTIONAL PIPELINE MOVES EARLY CAREER TEACHERS TOWARDS AN ACCOMPLISHED TEACHING STANDARD

Both **Wake County, North Carolina** and **Hillsborough County, Florida** have strengthened the professional learning that happens in their induction programs by drawing on the instructional expertise of district-based Board-certified teachers and by embedding the Five Core Propositions <http://accomplishedteacher.org/> for what teachers should know and be able to do. This pairing helps new teachers better understand what accomplished teaching looks like and gives them a clear target to work towards. **With a defined and deliberate trajectory from entry and induction supports to Board certification, teachers are guided on a path toward accomplished teaching.**



Navigating the Toolkit

This Toolkit for School and System Leaders aims to help principals and superintendents learn from the work of National Board Certified Teacher leaders from across the country who are successfully working to improve schools and student achievement by driving accomplished teaching practice leading to Board certification. It provides ready-made resources that advocates can use to bring decision-makers and stakeholders on board and engage a team of people to design and lead the program.

Resources include:

- ✓ Communication tools
- ✓ Visuals
- ✓ Testimonials
- ✓ Detailed case studies
- ✓ Planning tools
- ✓ General tips based on Board-certified teacher-led initiatives that have shown success



All of the tools are available on the Toolkit webpage: www.nbpts.org/cohort-toolkit.

The Toolkit Is Organized into Two Sections

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Part I: Making the Case for Change

Part I begins with descriptions of four model programs that are making a difference in building teacher effectiveness and improving school culture and student learning. These programs—Illinois; Clark County, NV; Wake County, NC; and Hillsborough, FL—can serve as examples to guide your work. Part I concludes with a look at some common systemic teacher quality challenges and proposed responses to help you think about how to make your case for organizing teacher professional learning around National Board Certification so that all teachers move naturally towards accomplished teaching.

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Part II: Tools for Implementation

After making the case for change, the next step is engaging the right decision-makers who need to sign off on this work and support it. Support can take the form of publicity, information sharing, financing, making connections to key stakeholders, contributing personnel or other resources, etc. Part II of the toolkit provides suggestions and considerations about how to identify needs, build support, and help others see the power of this work.

Further resources and guidance are provided for those who will design and implement the program once stakeholder approval is given. Resources draw from the work of other successful models in schools and districts across the country. There are planning tools, templates, and general tips and lessons learned to make your work easier.

2 Part II

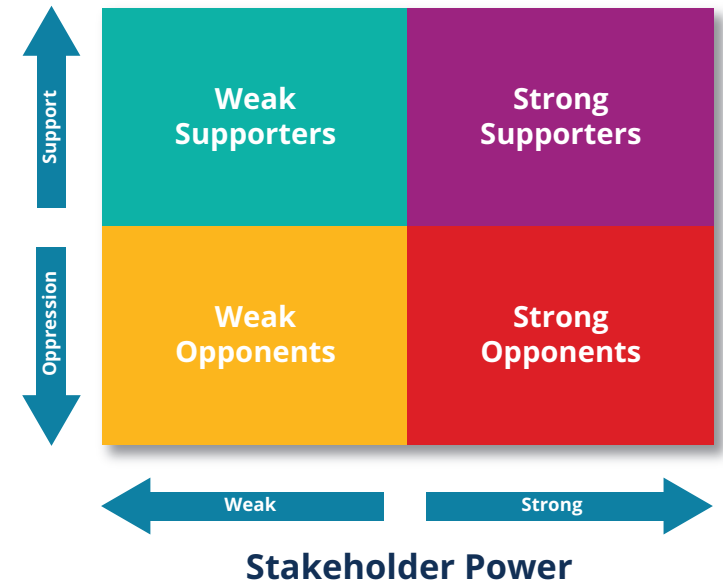
ENGAGING DECISION-MAKERS AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS

After establishing a clear and persuasive case for investing in job-embedded professional learning that advances teachers towards the highest standards of practice, the next step is to think about engaging the decision-makers who need to understand and sign off on this work. As leaders in your systems, you know the importance of internal and external buy-in and support when launching new strategic initiatives. School leaders and teachers must understand how this work aligns with larger school goals and the anticipated positive impacts on both student achievement and teacher efficacy. Parents, community members, funding partners and other stakeholders need to see how resource investments will pay off in growing the accomplished teacher ranks and what that means for schools and students.

Key to this work is identifying and aligning your vision with current state and district initiatives. The more you can make the case that you are providing a research-based professional development solution focused on improving teacher practice, the better. By first thinking about how your program contributes to system needs and goals, you can then best identify key stakeholders who see the value and importance of developing and retaining accomplished teachers.

Power Mapping

While many stakeholders will be easy to identify, it may be worth brainstorming who should be involved in early conversations and planning to ensure your outreach plan is comprehensive. Power mapping is a conceptual exercise of mapping networks of relationships (between individuals, organizations, institutions, etc.) with the idea that stronger networks yield more effective solutions.



Source: Anderson Bryson and Crosby 1999; adapted from Nutt and Backoff 1992 198.

By thinking broadly about key players in the community who should participate and contribute to getting a new program off the ground, you can begin to identify connections in relationships and leverage networks. The goal might be just to communicate with the various levels and layers within institutions and organizations about the proposed initiative or it might be to think strategically about which groups could provide potential support (thought partnership, financial, personnel, expertise, information sharing, etc.). In the end, you need to make the case to stakeholders that this program is solving a problem and meeting a need. The Power Mapping Template is a tool for mapping support or opposition from stakeholders and their level of power.

The purpose of mapping commitments is to develop a comprehensive map of key players who can be supportive in launching your program. Encourage your team to be creative in thinking about how the people and organizations listed are interconnected and where there are relationships that could be leveraged.

After generating a list of key players through the power mapping exercise, you can begin to consider how to engage stakeholders and what specific support you might need from individuals and organizations. When planning engagement meetings, it is important to have a clear sense of the types of support needed (financial, tools, expertise, etc.), which individuals or organizations have the tools or expertise, and how to access this support. The Next Steps and Commitment Template is a tool to help you map out desired stakeholder participation and build a plan for accessing resources and support.

Potential Stakeholders

- State or local policymakers
- Area superintendents
- District-level directors of instruction, teacher effectiveness, teacher evaluation, etc.
- School principals
- School board members
- Union leadership
- NBCT Networks
- Universities and alternative teacher preparation programs
- Education support organizations
- Parent organizations
- Key funding partners

Securing support from a wide range of partners can be essential to success. As an example, Clark County's National Board Professional Development (NBPD) School program <http://bit.ly/ccea-nbct> is run by the union (the Clark County Education Association) with a variety of other partners that include the Clark County School District; the Nevada Department of Education; the University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Nevada State College; the Nevada NBCT Network; Nevada Succeeds (a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational policy organization); Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program; and Teach for America (TFA).

In Clark County, many of the district's beginning teachers came through alternative teacher preparation routes with less formal training time than university-based programs. When designing NBPD Schools, the partners in Clark County knew that these beginning teachers would benefit from professional learning cohorts where more experienced colleagues supported newer teachers. The NBPD School model provides school-based structures to help teachers grow professionally toward the standard of accomplished teaching. And in addition, aspiring teachers attending Nevada State College now do their residencies at NBPD school sites so they benefit from collaborative teaching models and get an early introduction to the National Board Certification process before they are even licensed. From the beginning, Clark County has been able to bring together multiple organizations with a stake in teacher quality.



Click below for online Tools for Implementation

■ **Stakeholder Next Steps and Commitments template**

Engagement Meetings

Once you determine the best approaches to accessing individuals and institutions, you can begin to create a clear plan for engaging them. Consider your goals and desired outcome of each conversation. Is it simply to inform them and ask for their advice or input? Or perhaps you want to seek support, whether publicity, bully pulpit support, information sharing, financing, contributions of personnel or other resources.

The best people to convey the power of National Board Certification when pitching a new idea or soliciting support are NBCTs themselves because they can tell their stories of how challenging, rewarding, and meaningful the process is. If the lead presenter has not been through the certification process, identifying an NBCT who can play a role in organizing engagement and attending important meetings is recommended. You can find where the National Board is working with statewide teachers associations, NBCT Networks and professional learning facilitators to support teachers pursuing certification by clicking on your state www.nbpts.org/in-your-state.

Tip: What if We Don't Have an NBCT Network or Many NBCTs?

It is possible to start a new program without the expertise of Board-certified teachers. In this case, we recommend calling on teachers who have expressed a deep commitment to continued professional growth and teacher leaders interested in promoting collaborative professional learning opportunities. Perhaps there are teachers already engaged in instructional rounds to observe teacher practices and encourage discussion and reflection. The goal is to encourage teachers to take ownership of their professional growth and develop skills and expertise in school-based teams.

Scheduling in-person meetings with key players is probably the most effective way to ensure that you can make the case about the potential power of your program idea. Take the time to do some preparation upfront to make sure the right people are in the room and you have a planned presentation and agenda. After the meeting, follow up right away with any next steps or additional information. If the person or organization is unwilling to sign on immediately, think about how you could go back later with more information.

The Program Introduction Sample Meeting Agenda provides an example of topics that might be covered in an introductory stakeholder meeting.



SETTING UP YOUR MEETING

PREP

- ✓ Research state and local initiatives; provide evidence that growing the accomplished teaching workforce meets needs, solves current problems
- ✓ Determine who needs to be there
- ✓ Write an agenda—even if it's only for your team
- ✓ Practice!

MEET

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Present clear action plan connected to their context and need
- ✓ Time for questions and answers
- ✓ Close

AFTER

- ✓ If there is support, follow up with clear next steps
- ✓ If there is opposition, stay professional, don't damage relationship
- ✓ If undecided, understand; give information; influence through others
- ✓ Always say thanks in person AND in writing

*Shown at Teach to Lead Summit, September 2016

Outreach

Publicity is key to your program's success. The more you can find people who are willing to be spokespersons, the more your initiative becomes part of the teacher quality narrative that the community can rally behind. Outreach can start before the program details are ironed out.

For example, Board-certified teachers in Hillsborough County Public Schools put on a "Road Show," going to libraries and union halls to help school leaders understand the rationale and goals of the ASPIRE! program led by the Center for Technology in Education www.hillsboroughnbct.net/aspire/. These information sessions provide an introduction to the program, background on accomplished teaching and National Board Certification, and how ASPIRE! supports candidates and provides career lattice opportunities. During these sessions, school system leaders are encouraged to extend personal invitations to teachers to participate. In addition to the Road Show, the local partners also intend to produce a webinar for use on demand by interested teachers and principals.

Tip: Think About Materials Needed to Gain Support

- Create ready-made information pieces like brochures that can be shared with others. They should present the program vision and connection to systemic goals in a concise and easily digestible format.
- If giving a presentation, think carefully about what works best for your audience.
 - Principals, for example, are busy people with lots of responsibilities. Rather than immersing them in the details, stick to broad talking points that help them see how your program can benefit their schools in the short-term and long-term.
 - School board members or parents, on the other hand, may want or need more background information to fully understand the proposed program and the research on accomplished teachers.
- Different formats may work well with different groups (one-pagers, PowerPoints, videos, graphics, etc.).
- One meeting or conversation may not be enough. Regular updates and outreach can help build support over time. Start an email list to help keep interested parties current on the work and how they might play a role.

Click below for online Tools for Implementation

- [Program Introduction sample meeting agenda](#)



In Illinois, one of the first things the National Board Resource Center www.nbrc.illinoisstate.edu did was to create initiatives aligned to the National Board 's Five Core Propositions www.accomplishedteacher.org/. The alignment includes the Illinois State Standards and Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching to help leaders see how the initiatives aligned and supported one another. This crosswalk made clear that National Board Certification would help teachers and schools meet student learning goals that were already in place. Principals expected teachers to incorporate state standards and use the Danielson Framework to improve their teaching performance, so this work became a logical correlation to current work, not another add on. Similarly, Wake County mapped the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards to the Five Core Propositions to help teachers see how they align and complement one another.



Click below for online Tools for Implementation

- Clark County NBPD School brochure example
- North Carolina Standards and Five Core Propositions alignment example
- Illinois Standards and Five Core Propositions alignment example
- Five Core Propositions alignment template

BUILDING A CORE TEAM

Once you feel you have enough support from key decision-makers and stakeholders, the next step is assembling a core team, empowered to design and execute a plan of action. The team can be small but should, if possible, be comprised of Board-certified teachers and other leaders who have the content expertise, experience, and job positions to be effective in getting a program off the ground successfully. Potential candidates at the district level include the director of teacher effectiveness and NBCT Network leaders, if available. At the school level, this might include NBCTs and other teacher mentors and instructional specialists. This is an opportunity for a principal to give strong teacher leaders a new challenge and additional responsibility.

The core team should have direct knowledge of how their district and school supports teacher professional learning, including:

- Does our district/school set an expectation that teachers will continue to deepen their knowledge and skills for the benefit of the larger system? How is that information conveyed? Is there a clear framework aligned to the standard of accomplished teaching?
- How does our district/school vision for professional learning fit with and support our student learning goals?
- How can these be better integrated?
- Does our school schedule support embedded and collaborative learning time for teachers?
- How do we ensure that disadvantaged students have equal access to effective teachers? Do we have targeted strategies to support teacher recruitment and retention efforts in high-needs districts and schools?



This team needs to understand that they are building a strategic program that focuses on embedding the standards of accomplished teaching and capitalizing on the expertise of NBCTs *on behalf of* district and school teaching and learning goals. Making sure that the program moves the larger agenda forward is key to building and maintaining community support.

Logic Models

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has successfully used logic models to help articulate a common and cohesive vision for the work. By clarifying the problem and proposed program as a solution, the logic model exercise can ensure that all team members have a common vision for bringing about change and what success should look like. The rest of this section will walk you through the various elements of the logic model:

- ✓ Problem Statement and Causes
- ✓ Desired Goal and Timeframe
- ✓ Measures
- ✓ Plan of Action
- ✓ Resources
- ✓ Impact

Fact

More than 300 teams nationwide have used logic models at Teach to Lead summits organized by the National Board, ASCD, and the U.S. Department of Education.

Click below for online Tools for Implementation

■ [Logic Model Template](#)

■ [Logic Model for the Hillsborough ASPIRE! program](#)



Problem Statement and Causes

Begin by developing a problem statement that identifies current challenges in supporting accomplished teaching at scale. Some districts have incorporated their program into the district strategic plan as a strategy to recruit and retain an effective teaching force. This helps to give the program focus and stability. It is then valuable to identify the causes of this problem of practice, which will help direct the focus of the plan.

Examples of challenges and causes:

- Beginning teachers struggle to implement rigorous standards, differentiate learning, or other instructional challenges (possible causes: beginning teachers do not understand the standards thoroughly enough, have not seen them modeled, and/or have not become proficient in a variety of instructional strategies to differentiate)
- Early career teachers lack a pathway towards accomplished teaching (possible causes: the school has no formalized support system for early career teachers and/or professional learning is not personalized to the needs of individual teachers)
- Teacher turnover rate is high (districtwide or possibly in particular schools) (possible causes: beginning teachers need more support, teachers don't see opportunity for growth or leadership, and/or teachers don't have opportunity for collaboration)
- Certain schools or grades do not have equitable access to strong teachers (possible causes: resources are limited and/or there is little access to strong, embedded professional growth activities for teachers)
- Teachers have gaps in their capacity and need additional support (possible causes: teachers have been moved from one position to another frequently and/or have little access to individualized professional learning activities)
- Opportunities for teachers to collaborate and diagnose student needs are limited (possible causes: an overloaded building schedule does not allow time for teachers to collaborate and work on strategies to meet student needs)

Problem Statement from Wake County in Support of the Beginner to Board-Certified Program

"Despite the current state-mandated induction program, Wake County continues to experience retention problems. Novice teachers between their first and third year of teaching are leaving the profession. The school district is seeking innovative recruitment/retention initiatives as well as a means to sustain growth of NBCTs."

Desired Goal and Timeframe

Once the team has a clear problem statement, the next step in designing a logic model is setting a target goal and timeframe. The goal should relate directly back to the problem statement, making it clear how this specific strategy provides a measurable, attainable, and time bound solution. The goal should describe what it will look like if the problem is solved. The logic model requires teams to establish assessment measures and planning timelines. The process of articulating these elements helps teams ensure they are making clear connections between the investment of resources, activities to be conducted, and the desired outcomes (both short-term and long-term). The end result serves as a road map describing the program strategy and approach that can be used to build support and buy-in from key stakeholders.

Problem Statement and Causes from Clark County in Support of National Board Professional Development Schools

“Across Nevada, and especially in Clark County, schools are grappling with the challenge of staffing high-need schools with high-quality teachers. A review of the Nevada Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators (June 1, 2015) equity gap data and focus group findings identified the predominant root causes of Nevada’s equity gaps as high teacher turnover, inadequate professional development, a weak professional culture, and persistently low student achievement. While there are many variables involved in student success, research has proven that teachers are the single most important school-based factor. More than a decade of rigorous research shows that students taught by National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) are more effective at improving student achievement than their non-Board certified counterparts, and that the impact is greater for minority and low-income students. Given this evidence, it is critical to ensure Board-certified teachers reach the students that need them the most; this is not the reality of high-need schools in Clark County.”

Measures

This section identifies methods for assessing improvement and progress towards the desired goal. Although, often left to too late in the process, it is essential to determine how success of the program will be measured. These measures should be both process measures, which show the progress of the program moving forward, and outcome measures, which indicate the level of success in reaching the goal. Process measures may include securing funding, completing any necessary applications or paperwork for approval, and completing segments of the plan. The outcome measures may include having a certain number of participants indicate a change in attitude or behavior, showing incremental progress in a specific area, and reaching specific milestones throughout the school year.

Plan

The logic model also requires teams to articulate changes that will be implemented in the first year. The plan should address the problem statement and attack one or more of the causes of the problem. The proposed actions can be new work, a new way of doing current work, or discontinuing something that is not being effective. Again, this can be wide-ranging from submitting grants to defining teacher pathways, from conducting informational sessions to conducting facilitator trainings and enrolling candidates.

Hillsborough County's Problem Statement and Causes

Evidence shows that NBCTs leverage better student achievement. Yet Board-certified teachers in Hillsborough have not felt valued and Board Certification applications are on the decline. Many teachers express an interest in finding ways to connect with their peers in conversations about quality teaching and learning and challenging themselves to improve their practice. The ASPIRE! program offers teachers a chance for greater engagement and provides a foundation for personalized, professional learning and collaborative dialogue. School culture is enhanced as teachers collaborate and support each other to improve their craft. It also serves to expand career lattice opportunities for multiple groups—teachers who have completed the induction program, mid-career teachers applying for certification, and NBCTs serving in one of various support roles.

Planning Questions to Consider:

- How are current efforts mapped to the Standard of accomplished teaching?
- What already exists that we want to continue or enhance?
- What do we want to introduce that is new?
- What do we do now that we should stop doing?
- Are the proposed changes aligned to the problems or challenges identified?
- How do these changes articulate a cohesive plan?

Resources

This section of the logic model asks teams to consider what resources are need to complete the plan. This includes knowledge and material resources as well as financial and human resources. Funding resources are discussed in the next section of this guide. When considering your resources, think about networking with other organizations or places that are taking on similar work to see if there are lessons to be learned or resources that could be used or adapted. This can include tapping into existing training resources like NEA's Jump Start program (see sidebar) or leveraging the work of other places that have undertaken similar supports. Taking advantage of resources such as these can help your effort get off the ground successfully. In thinking about human resources, it is also useful to identify stakeholders who are critical to the work and who must be brought on board, as well as those who could be champions for the work from a public relations standpoint.

What is Jump Start?

Jump Start seminars are offered by the National Education Association to provide important information about the National Board Certification process, time to examine the requirements, and the opportunity to collaborate and gather resources needed to pursue certification. Designed by teachers who have worked with thousands of candidates, Jump Start workshops help demystify the process. Access to these seminar materials can be gained through partnerships with local union affiliates and the NEA.

Impact

Finally, teams articulate why this work matters to students and the broader community. Going beyond the specific measures defined above, this is a broader statement about the purpose of the work and who benefits. For example, Hillsborough leaders envisioned the ASPIRE! program as having the following impacts: “School sites will retain high-quality teachers who contribute to a strong and vibrant school culture and have a positive impact on student learning and success. The HCPS Career Lattice will be expanded for teachers seeking professional growth and career enhancement.” Keeping focused on why the work is being done will ground the work and increase its success.



Using the Logic Model as an Outreach Tool

It should be noted that the logic model exercise can be completed by the planning team in a relatively short time period as an internal exercise or used as a foundation for a more extensive period of research and outreach. For example, in Wake County, the National Board Director, the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, and the Wake County Public School System Coordinator for National Board Certification had pre-planning meetings by themselves to build the logic model and identify data to measure progress toward reaching their goal. They then took their proposed plan to numerous focus groups with school board members, principals, NBCTs, and beginning teachers to get their input. Only after those conversations did the School Board and the district chief financial officer sign off on the program plan. For Wake County, the logic model was a critical tool for engaging stakeholders and building support upfront.

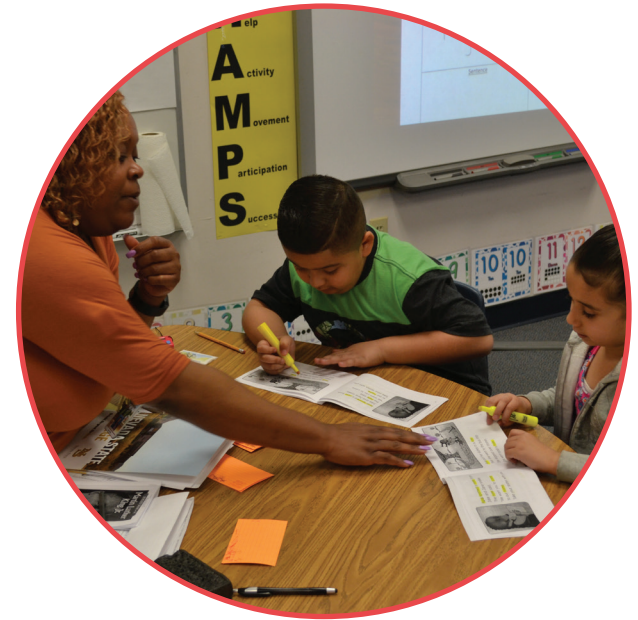
FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES/ CONSIDERATIONS

This section provides teams with tools for conducting an inventory of current teacher professional learning investments, devising plans for funding the proposed program, and tips on how the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and other professional development funding provide opportunities for states and districts to strategically rethink professional learning.

States and districts often view professional development as a means for improving *teachers* by remediating and developing individuals' skills rather than an investment in *overall teaching quality* that results in improved educational systems and schools. A challenge for superintendents and principals is rethinking professional learning investments to maximize impact. Of course, matching the right improvement activities to the right resources to the right teachers for the benefit of school improvement is not an easy task. How can your school/district make smart and strategic investments that pay off in increased teaching and leading capacity?

Reviewing Current Professional Development Funding Allocations

A good place to start is for a district or school to review current professional development allocations. School systems typically use a combination of local, state, and federal funds for professional development. Districts may also secure funding from foundations, union partners, PTA contributions, and more.



Questions to Consider:

- What funding streams support teacher professional development?
- Are there other funding sources that could be tapped?
- How are those distributed? Do all teachers receive an equal amount of professional learning time or funding amount?
- How do you know if professional development is having the desired impact? Is there a method of evaluating “results” in terms of teachers meeting the standard of accomplished teaching with improved practices in the classroom and ultimately, increased student learning?
- How are NBCTs engaged in leading their peers?
- Turnover costs schools and districts a lot of money. Is there a way to consider the opportunity cost of not retaining effective teachers?
- Does your school or district administer surveys, conduct observations or interview teachers to get feedback on teacher learning effectiveness?

Identifying Funds to Support a New Program

Once you have a better sense of how professional development funding is currently allocated and if those investments are delivering the desired results, you can then turn to budgeting the costs of a new program (which may replace or add-on to current efforts). It is also important to note compounding costs as additional cohorts of participating teachers get added over time. New funding may be needed down the road to sustain multiple cohorts simultaneously.



Example: The Clark County NBPD School program includes these as budget line items:

- ✓ Personnel salaries/benefits
- ✓ Staff travel (if needed)
- ✓ Purchased professional services (i.e., NEA Jump Start Facilitator Training)
- ✓ Materials/books
- ✓ Meeting space
- ✓ ATLAS video library access (see sidebar)
- ✓ National Board candidate component fees
- ✓ Evaluation services

For the Clark County NBPD Schools in year one, salaries and benefits of the program director, coordinator, NBCT facilitators, and teacher liaisons made up most of the costs (64 percent) as the program got started. The second largest expense was reimbursement of National Board candidate component fees (21 percent). As the program expanded to more schools, the costs shifted, with the program director, coordinator, NBCT facilitators, and teacher liaisons accounting for 23 percent of the program costs, and reimbursement of National Board candidate component fees bumping up to 58 percent. Clark County has worked to make the program more sustainable by requiring schools to pay a \$250 per candidate fee for support to cover the cost of the NBCT Candidate Support Facilitator. These expenses were covered through a grant made possible through state-appropriated professional development funding.

ATLAS

What is ATLAS?

ATLAS (Accomplished Teaching, Learning and Schools)

ATLAS www.nbpts.org/atlas is a searchable online library of authentic videos showing National Board Certified Teachers at work in the classroom. Each video is accompanied by the teacher's written reflection about the instruction or the activity shown. Aligned to professional teaching standards and indexed by teachers, ATLAS serves as a window into what accomplished teaching looks like.

The four model sites take different approaches to funding. In some cases, monies were reallocated to cover costs. Others chose to apply for new grant funding, noting that there is value in securing support from different stakeholders. Organizations with “skin in the game”—even a small grant or an in-kind contribution such as loaning personnel—are more likely to see the impact of the work and can help bring others on board to support the program’s continuation over time. For example, through donations from local businesses, the Hillsborough Education Foundation provided scholarships to candidates for part of their NEA Jump Start and ASPIRE! fees. Teachers who are union members get an even bigger discount.

In Illinois, the NBPD School program proved to be so popular that organizers could institute a fee-for-service model in response to high demand from additional districts and schools. The fee charged to districts and schools cover the cost of the NBCT facilitator, materials and training. The candidate subsidy fee is paid through the state.

When it comes to covering the fees for National Board Certification, schools and districts can look to a variety of supporting organizations that may be able to help. For example, state departments, school districts, teacher unions, institutions of higher education, and education nonprofits can all offer various resources, including fee assistance and candidate support. Find out what’s available in your state by clicking here www.nbpts.org/in-your-state.

Tip: Investing in Accomplished Teachers Pays Off

While finding money for new programs can be challenging, it may help to present the alternative to *not* investing in helping teachers move to the standard of accomplished teaching. Research www.nbpts.org/research shows that Board-certified teachers are more effective, giving students an additional three months of instruction than their non-Board certified peers. One of the model programs uses this data, asking superintendents and school principals to imagine having a teacher that gives students an extra three months of learning every year for free. Alternatively, if your district can cite the financial costs of a teacher’s departure, program planners can help stakeholders understand the immediate and recurring bottom line benefits to investing in teacher professional learning. Accomplished teachers are more effective in the classroom and engaged professionals are more likely to stay on the job.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Presents an Opportunity

As mentioned in Part I, ESSA offers an opportunity for states and districts to rethink how they structure professional learning in their schools. ESSA defines professional learning as

“an integral part of school and local education agency strategies for providing educators... with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in the core academic subjects and to meet challenging state academic standards.”

Professional development is described as

“sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, and short-term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused...”

In other words, ESSA establishes professional learning as a collaborative activity integrated into the school day rather than something separate from teaching.

Learn more at www.nbpts.org/policy



Title II of ESSA authorizes funding for states and districts for professional learning and offers flexibility in how they spend this money. Districts can leverage ESSA's provisions and funds to strengthen their professional learning agendas in support of a coherent professional continuum—beginning with residency and induction programs, moving to professional learning and growth systems that lead to Board certification, and teacher leadership opportunities that spread the expertise of accomplished teachers. In addition to Title II, other titles can be utilized to support a fully coordinated learning system. The goal is to build the collective capacity of educators by giving all teachers the opportunity to work collaboratively to improve their practice.

Notably, ESSA includes provisions that address equitable distribution of strong teachers. States are required to report data on teachers' qualifications in high- and low-poverty schools. State and district plans must describe strategies to ensure low-income and minority students are not taught at a disproportionate rate by ineffective, out-of-field or inexperienced teachers.

NBCTs As Key Stakeholders in ESSA Discussions

The passage of ESSA presents National Board Certified Teachers an opportunity to participate in education policy decisions at the state and district level. NBCTs should be engaging in the ESSA planning and implementation process along with principals, state, and school district agencies, associations, and other key organizations. Even after initial ESSA plans are implemented, as instructional experts with proven records, NBCTs can provide great insight to revise and strengthen teacher quality initiatives under ESSA.

www.nbpts.org/policy.

THINKING THROUGH PROGRAM DESIGN

This section focuses on elements of program design at the district or school level. How will the teachers be introduced to and work through the National Board components? Who will be the facilitators and what kinds of supports and trainings will be needed? Where and when will this work take place? Who will oversee it and provide supports? How will it be evaluated?

These are elements the core team must consider when designing their program. Engaging NBCTs and other teacher leaders familiar with the current state of teacher collaboration and engagement in the school building(s) will help draw authentic connections between local school improvement goals and this professional learning opportunity for teachers. While early time and energy will naturally focus on design and implementation, it is also important for the core team to begin to think about sustaining the work over time and what it will take to support multiple cohorts of teachers.

Year One

Presumably by this point, you have a team of people in place to help with the work. The team should have the experience and position to help design and implement a program that engages a cohort of teachers in assessing student needs, planning instruction, using data and student work as evidence, and deepening teaching practices. With support, the cohort will work toward the standard of accomplished teaching—and in doing so, build a collaborative and supportive learning environment, making schools better places for teaching and learning.



Keep in mind what makes this work powerful:

- The empowerment and encouragement of teachers learning continuously on the job and as part of the life of the school
- Ensuring professional development is embedded and authentic, not an add-on separate from the work of teaching
- Providing ways to engage NBCTs as leaders and mentors

As part of the logic model and financial planning (see previous sections), your team should have already thought through how job-embedded learning fits with current teacher quality initiatives and professional development investments. For example, Wake County's Beginner to Board-Certified Program builds on a three-year induction program already in place. This permitted the district to continue providing support by using innovative practices such as the introduction of the Five Core Propositions www.AccomplishedTeacher.org for what teachers should know and be able to do, which serves as the foundation for National Board Certification. As a result of this initial introduction and the appeal of working collaboratively, the vast majority of teachers chose to pursue National Board Certification in a district-supported cohort immediately after their three-year induction period.



Factors to Consider in Program Design:

- Focus of the program
 - Which National Board components to engage with first
- Program organization and resources
 - Length of program depending on anticipated level of teacher experiences (an early career teacher may need more time and support than someone who has years of teaching experience)
 - What materials and resources are needed
 - Logistics of teacher meeting times and locations
- School site selection
- Teacher recruitment
 - Desired size of teacher cohort (by school or district)
 - Profile of the cohort in terms of their teaching experience and level of practice
- Program facilitation and support
 - Number of NBCTs available to act as facilitators and mentors (district wide and/or in particular schools)
 - Facilitator training plan for NBCTs (initial training plus follow-up throughout the year)
 - School leadership training and support plan

Tip: What If Our Teachers Aren't National Board-Certified Yet?

If your program is starting in a school or district without many NBCTs, the planning team should consider identifying high-performing instructional leaders who are willing to serve as professional learning facilitators while also completing the National Board Certification process together with their colleagues.

Once a general outline of a support plan is in place, the program leads will need to think through the timeline for getting started, taking into account the district/school calendar and budgeting. At the school site, teacher commitments need to be considered. Is the school day structured such that a cohort of teachers can meet regularly (either in person or virtually)? Will all meetings happen during the school day or will there be evening or weekend meetings? Is there space in the school for teachers to sit and work together? Will online sessions be needed as check-in points to help keep teachers moving forward?

Tip: Plan Meeting Times that Work for Teachers

When scheduling teacher cohort meeting dates, be careful to avoid hectic times in the school year such as testing dates and dates near the release of report cards.



Click below for online Tools for Implementation

■ [Planning Timeline template](#)

■ [Hillsborough ASPIRE! Timeline](#)



Focus of the Program

The process for National Board Certification is designed to collect standards-based evidence of accomplished practice. In all certificate areas, candidates are required to complete four components: one computer-based assessment and three portfolio entries. Candidates must attempt each of the four components within the first three years of their candidacy. Programs should consider the order in which the candidate cohort will proceed through each of the four components, giving consideration to school and system needs when selecting which and how many of the components to undertake each year.

National Board Certification’s Four Components



When deciding which component(s) should be the initial focus of the cohort, consideration should be given to the fit between the component(s) and school/system needs. Here is a brief description of each component:

- **Component 1: Content Knowledge:** A computer-based assessment asks candidates to demonstrate their understanding of content knowledge and pedagogical practices for teaching that content.
- **Component 2: Differentiation in Instruction:** This classroom-based component requires that candidates gather and analyze information about individual students' strengths and needs and use that information to design and implement instruction to advance student learning and achievement.
- **Component 3: Teaching Practice and Learning Environment:** This classroom-based component requires video recordings of interactions between the candidate and their students. The candidates also submit a written commentary in which they describe, analyze and reflect on their teaching and interactions with students.
- **Component 4: Effective and Reflective Practitioner:** This component requires candidates to demonstrate evidence of their abilities as an effective and reflective practitioner in developing and applying knowledge of their students; their use of assessments to effectively plan for and positively impact their students' learning; and their collaboration to advance students' learning and growth.

The Illinois National Board Professional Development (NBPD) schools/districts focus on two components per year while incorporating the Illinois State Standards and common school and district goals. This approach allows teacher cohort members to draw parallels between state, district and NBPTS standards while emphasizing best teaching practices centered on their classrooms and students.



Program Organization and Resources

Once program leaders have decided what order to introduce the teacher cohort to the four components, they can organize the content in a way that provides the supports needed to help teachers move towards the standard of accomplished teaching.

Consideration for different target groups within a program model can promote participation. In the case of Hillsborough's ASPIRE! program, the model design considers how to transition beginning teachers who have completed an induction period automatically into thinking about National Board Certification. The program begins in the spring as induction draws to a close to help teachers see the benefits of continuing to work with their colleagues as certification candidates. As shown in the sidebar, the cohort sessions begin with an introduction of the Five Core Propositions for what teachers should know and be able to do, followed by a deeper dive into certificate-specific standards. Support then transitions to school-based professional learning within a cohort and time spent analyzing and reviewing evidence in candidate portfolios.

Timing of Key Elements in Hillsborough's ASPIRE! Program

ASPIRE! Academy (spring)

- Pre-candidacy learning to introduce the Five Core Propositions and provide an overview of the standards of accomplished teaching and the National Board Certification process

Cadre Camp (summer)

- Deep dive into the standards of accomplished teaching

Teacher Learning Communities/Cohorts (school year)

- Ongoing facilitation of professional learning (16 online sessions)

Saturday School (school year)

- Personalized support to help candidates reflect on evidence to ensure it demonstrates accomplishment in the targeted standards (monthly)

In Clark County and Illinois, teachers may have different levels of teaching experience but they form school-based professional learning communities to support their efforts to deepen their teaching knowledge and work towards Board certification. Cohort sessions are held throughout the school year with the topics addressing the focus of the selected component. Examples include:

- ✓ Foundations of evidence-based teaching
- ✓ Differentiation in instruction
- ✓ Knowing your students and developing your contextual and instructional context
- ✓ Setting learning goals
- ✓ Planning and instruction
- ✓ Analyzing student work
- ✓ Linking coherent instruction to students
- ✓ Reflecting on effectiveness
- ✓ Revising thinking

Wake County's Professional Development Sessions

- January: Overview of the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching and the Five Core Propositions with connections made to the book *Mindsets in the Classroom: Building a Growth Mindset Learning Community* by Mary Cay Ricci. Brainstorming activity about gaining knowledge of students to inform their planning of instruction
- February: Analysis of student work activity; ATLAS video and discussion of accomplished teaching practices; Mindsets book discussion
- March: Evaluating a lesson plan activity; Mindsets book discussion
- April: Introduction of National Board standards documents; connections between writing a professional development plan, the North Carolina Teachers Evaluation, and the National Board Certification process; ATLAS video and discussion, Mindsets book discussion
- Summer/Fall: Participants apply to complete Component 2: Differentiation of Instruction with targeted support (Components 1, 3 and 4 are completed in subsequent years)

Click below for online Tools for Implementation

■ Wake County Beginner to Board-Certified *Mindsets in the Classroom* book study discussion questions

■ Wake County Beginner to Board-Certified Knowledge of Student template

■ Wake County Beginner to Board-Certified Analysis of Student Work template

No matter how a program is organized, programs need to design or adapt materials for both the facilitators (NBCTs or other teacher leaders) and the participants. In some cases, programs incorporated ready-made resources, such as NEA's Jump Start curriculum that introduces National Board Certification <http://bit.ly/nea-nbct> or the ATLAS library www.nbpts.org/ATLAS. With the help of the ATLAS online library of videos showing National Board Certified Teachers at work in the classroom, Wake County helped its beginning teachers have rich discussions about accomplished teaching. In fact, survey results from third year teachers rated the use of ATLAS as the most meaningful part of participating in the Beginner to Board-Certified program. They also appreciated meeting with other teachers in like subject areas and grade levels to collaborate and discuss accomplished teaching practices.

School Site Selection

For districts planning to work in multiple schools, there may be an interest in focusing on high-needs schools to improve equitable access to accomplished teachers. This makes sense, of course, but model programs caution that it is also important to assess leadership capacity and ensure the school schedule can accommodate and support collaborative learning time. To assess readiness and commitment, the National Board Resource Center in Illinois developed a school administrator checklist. Principals are required to understand and sign off on several commitments regarding their support of the NBPD cohort as part of the application process. The teacher cohort creates a narrative explaining the group's learning goal and how they intend to impact student learning in an area of need in their school and/or district.



Click below for online Tools for Implementation

■ **Illinois NBPD School Application Administrator Checklist**

Teacher Recruitment

The planning team should consider the size of the school when establishing a desired cohort size. In Illinois, the NBPD School programs aim for a minimum cohort size of ten with a shared commonality. The commonality might be teachers pursuing the same certificate or working in the same department. One district created a cohort of ELL teachers from K-12 as a means of bringing teachers together to share and rethink the design of the ELL curriculum. Many schools and districts elect to have multiple cohorts of ten to spark teacher conversations across different areas. Ten is not a magic number, but it does protect the spirit of collaborative professional learning even if there is unanticipated attrition. Because Clark County School District has 18,000 teachers serving a range of extremely rural to large urban school sites, the size of the school and the goals of the professional learning community are taken into consideration when selecting schools to join the NBPD program.

There are different ways to identify teacher candidates. While some programs rely on self-selection, others note the power of targeted encouragement by colleagues and/or administrators to make the opportunity more special. Hillsborough's ASPIRE! program, for example, gives principals, teacher leaders, union representatives, school board members, and others a certain number of "shoulder tapping cards" that they can use to invite potential candidates. The selectivity generates interest and buy-in from both the "shoulder tappers" and those invited to participate. The ASPIRE! team also put together an infomercial to recruit both teacher participants and NBCT teacher leaders. <http://bit.ly/aspire-info>

In Clark County, each year the Superintendent of Instruction nominates 10 high needs schools with strong instructional principals and collaborative cultures. Other yearly nominations come directly from teachers. Wake County created both a flyer and a PowerPoint presentation to help teachers see the value of Board certification and how the Beginner to Board-Certified program connects to the district strategy of developing pathways to develop and retain teacher talent.



Program Facilitation and Support

Model programs also stress the importance of defining roles, responsibilities, and expectations upfront to make sure everyone is on the same page and committed to playing their part. Typically, each school cohort has a site-based leadership team that collaborates to ensure necessary supports are in place to assist candidates. Common roles in this leadership team include:

- **Administrator:** Connects cohort goals to district goals. Provides resources and assistance in problem solving as needed. Informs the district about the work and outcomes of the cohort.
- **NBCT Facilitator:** Leads the cohorts professional learning sessions, helping teachers analyze and reflect upon their practice. Keeps cohort focused on goals. Communicates regularly with Administrator and Teacher Liaison.
- **Teacher Liaison:** Active member of the cohort designated to provide the NBCT Facilitator feedback from cohort. Helps arrange materials, meeting space, and other logistics.

The Illinois program has found that having teachers, NBCT facilitators, and administrators sign an agreement results in greater clarity of expectations, which helps give the program a greater chance of taking off and sustaining itself. When a program first begins, it is important to have a strong communication plan in place to allow team members to problem solve and share on a regular basis.

Tip: Take Note of Short-Term Impacts

While much of the planning and preparation will be focused on getting to day one, it is important to consider upfront how to collect information to inform program improvements and gauge early success. Can you use quick surveys at the end of sessions to get teacher feedback? Can you interview principals and teachers to get quotes? While certainly there is a need for longer-term metrics such as completed National Board components, an increased number of NBCTs, and improved retention rates, for example, any immediate evidence of success can also help build support and commitment. Teachers and administrators in Clark County, for example, pointed to increased levels of support, trust, collaboration, and reflection among staff. They noted that the professional climate in the school shifted, helping all teachers feel more engaged and energized by the challenge of reaching each student. Capturing teacher and administrator responses can help others understand the power and immediate impact of cohort-based professional learning.

Click below for online Tools for Implementation

- [Wake County Beginner to Board-Certified flyer](#)
- [Wake County Beginner to Board-Certified PowerPoint](#)



In Clark County, the facilitators first meet with the candidate cohort at the beginning of the school year to help teachers feel comfortable and understand how the component tasks tie in with the goals of the cohort (which should tie in with the goals of the school), after which they meet with the cohort twice a month. Starting mid-year, this schedule might be revised to instead have once a month meetings or one-on-one coaching sessions. As the May deadline for component submission approaches, facilitators spend their time providing cognitive coaching to help deepen the teacher’s reflection and learning.

In Illinois, the National Board Resource Center offers podcasts, working agendas, handouts, and links to help facilitators plan their coaching activities. Facilitator guides, PowerPoints and materials to support the twelve two-hour professional learning sessions are available for all four of the National Board components. All Illinois facilitators are expected to attend a yearly two-day mentor/coach training.

Debbie Kasperski from the National Board Resource Center in Illinois says,

“Year one is messy by nature. The teams are figuring out the work. Even in the second year, we had some schools get stuck and they needed to revisit their Logic Model to problem solve and get back on track. Be patient. The work of shifting mindsets around the intent and purpose of professional development takes time.”

Illinois has designed a number of agreements and memoranda of understanding to clarify roles and responsibilities in NBPD Schools. These can serve as models and be adapted for your local program.

Click below for online Tools for Implementation

- Illinois NBPD School Teacher Agreement sample
- Illinois NPBD School PD Team Roles and Responsibilities
- Illinois NBPD School MOU Roles and Responsibilities
- Illinois NBPD School Team Planning Notes – Year 1
- Illinois NBPD School Teacher Liaison Communication Update



SUSTAINING MOMENTUM BEYOND YEAR ONE

This final section is designed to help programs take stock, continuously improve, and grow.

Year One Review

After completing the first year, the team should revisit the original goal. Was it achieved? What did the first cohort accomplish? If there were stumbling blocks, does the program design and/or timeline need adjustments? This review should be conducted to capture and celebrate the program's success, but also to inform modifications to the program's design before launching the second cohort.

Illinois provides one of the best examples here. Program leads in the state have been very focused on helping school teams put in place the necessary supports and planning to be successful from the start and to plan for growth after year one. Program leads require school leaders to plan upfront and demonstrate readiness to manage multiple cohorts of teachers simultaneously.

Illinois has designed a number of tools and templates that can serve as models and be adapted for your local program.



Click below for online Tools for Implementation

■ Illinois NBPD School Goal Setting
for Years 2 and 3

■ NBPD School Cohort Goal Setting
template

■ Illinois NBPD School Professional
Development Planning Notes
for Years 2 and 3

The NBRC in Illinois also created a document laying out the evolution of the NBP School cohort which specifies the various elements that come into play when establishing a NBP School—from participants and logistics to communication and the changed nature of professional development. The emphasis at the beginning is creating the climate and getting initial buy-in. By the end of the school year, the candidates, mentors, and administrative team have all built capacity and professional learning activities are highly collaborative and supported by the school system in terms of resources, policies and practices.

Clark County is using an external evaluator to evaluate the effectiveness of the cohort model in assisting teachers. At the end of the training sessions, teacher candidates and school administrators complete surveys designed to allow them to reflect on the learning outcomes. The participants rate their learning using a five-item Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, disagree, and not applicable).

Year Two Planning

For schools and districts that have had a successful year one cohort and are ready to take on another set of teachers either schoolwide or districtwide, the good news is that more school leaders and teachers should be aware of the model and interested in engaging. Program designers need to think through the logistics of having two cohorts running simultaneously. In some cases, new schools will come on board, but for schools with two cohorts of teachers, the work should deepen with a greater focus on evidence-based teaching and student impact. The more the program can be integrated into the “way things are done” in a school or district, the easier it will be to sustain. Incorporating the program into the school or district plan helps raise the status, build support, and secure funding.

School/District Support

Finally, the model programs stress the importance of having school and district administrator support. Debbie Kasperski of the NBRC in Illinois talks about the importance of having the principal value and support the program:

“The school community absolutely needs to own the process. So many professional learning efforts do not include the school administrator. The principal must view this work as a priority and support teachers in developing their skills and expertise.”

Click below for online Tools for Implementation

■ Illinois NBP School Evolution
of the Cohort

■ Clark County NBP School Evaluation
Sample Questions

Suggestions for Deepening Impact Over Time:

- Collect data on success and share widely with stakeholders including unions, parents, and school board members
- Plan for continuity of team members in future years
- Promote an improved school climate by instituting regular interaction between team members, cohort members and schools

Most importantly, schools and districts need to find ways to bring the habit of reflective practice, as outlined in the Five Core Propositions and demonstrated in the related Architecture of Accomplished Teaching, to other professional development in the district. The goal should be to build a system that supports teacher progress toward the standards of accomplished teaching and build aligned teacher leadership pathways to give teachers room to grow and have greater impact on student learning.

What is the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching?

The Architecture of Accomplished Teaching is a framework showing how effective teachers make teaching decisions based on evidence and through the application of analytical and reflective thinking:

- First, teachers know their students' level of progress and how they learn
- Second, they know how to set high goals for their students
- Third, teachers select, plan and implement instruction for students with diverse needs
- Fourth, they assess their students' understanding and identify any gaps in learning
- Fifth, teachers reflect on how their teaching decisions impacted student learning
- Finally, they identify new goals and repeat the process above

Model Program Results

The following summaries provide some early results from the four model programs profiled.

Taking National Board Professional Development Schools to Scale in Illinois

Illinois traditionally outpaces the nation with high numbers of National Board Certified Teachers, frequently ranking among the top five states with the most new NBCTs. There are currently 47 NBPD Schools with plans to add 25 schools/districts starting in the fall of 2017. Leaders of the program emphasize the importance of providing teachers with school-based learning communities that allow them to grow professionally on the job. Including the principal and administrative team in the training sessions has also been key to the program's success because school leaders then see the value of the training and the connection to school teaching and learning goals. As new teachers come on board, they are automatically incorporated into the professional conversations and the schools are able to grow their own National Board candidates.

Clark County NBPD Program Takes Root

Clark County's NBPD Schools program has experienced significant growth, expanding from 10 schools to 28 schools, with 10 more joining in 2017-18. More than 75 percent of participating schools are identified as high-need. According to surveys conducted by an external evaluator at the University of Nevada, 95 percent of candidates reported significant increase in job satisfaction from the program, particularly in terms of improved skills in reflection and planning, and deeper understanding of content area knowledge. A full 98 percent of participants agreed that the program improved collaboration, collegiality, and a culture of high expectations for student learning. School administrators were also surveyed, with 99 percent reporting that their teachers are becoming more effective instructional leaders.



At Stanford Elementary School, 65 percent of the staff are involved in some way in the NBPD model (as candidates, facilitators, NBCTs and administrators providing support). Teachers at Stanford value their collaborative professional conversations and are eager to “pay it forward” by supporting others. There is a palpable energy in the school as teachers proactively talk about what’s working and what’s not in their classrooms and share ideas.

“Pursuing my National Board Certification has helped me better understand what an accomplished teacher looks like, regardless of the subject we teach. As the only music teacher, I used to feel I had little in common with the other teachers in my school. I now realize that regardless of our content areas, we must know these students and their needs; their strengths and weaknesses; their interests and content they have yet to discover. The National Board process has helped me truly feel like a part of a community: working together to meet the needs of our students and challenging ourselves to become better teachers.”

Annie Douglas, Music Teacher and NBPTS Candidate, Stanford Elementary School, Las Vegas

Wake County Public Schools Sees the Beginner to Board-Certified Program as a Strategic Teacher Quality Lever

When its Beginner to Board-Certified program was first starting, Wake County focused on recruiting the strongest teachers to participate. But the district then shifted its approach, realizing that all third-year teachers would benefit from looking at student assessment data and making instructional decisions with their peers. The district now advertises broadly at district events that draw beginning teachers and mentor teachers. They use banners, brochures, and a direct email campaign to get the word out about this powerful professional learning opportunity. In the first year, there were 84 third year teachers participating. The second year, the numbers grew to 137 participants. With the program written into the district strategic plan, program leads expect more teachers to join each year, giving the district a mechanism for growing its accomplished teaching workforce.

A survey of the second cohort found that:

- 100 percent of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more supported by the district because of the Beginner to Board-Certified Program
- 97 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more reflective in their teaching practice
- 99 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend this opportunity to other beginning teachers
- 100 percent planned to complete the Certification process in either a one- or two-year period

On that same survey, teacher comments included:

"The Beginner to Board-Certified program made me excited and prepared to start my boards."

"This provided me great insight into what I need to aspire to during my boards process."

"ATLAS alleviated some fear of the unknown and made me feel more capable."

The Word is Out About ASPIRE! in Hillsborough

ASPIRE! leaders in Hillsborough report that the program is taking root and that community awareness and interest is growing. School administrators are raising their hand to support cohorts of teacher candidates at their schools. With support from a funding partner, the highest-need school in the district is now planning to support a teacher cadre in deepening their professional learning and moving towards Board certification. More NBCTs are stepping up to become trained Candidate Support Providers who can facilitate learning conversations with candidates and actively spread the word about how ASPIRE! promotes accomplished teaching. Kadie Scofield, an NBCT and ASPIRE! Candidate Support Provider, comments on how the program has sparked a renewed passion for teaching and her own professional growth. "The conversations I have been able to take part in through the ASPIRE! program have helped me to continue reflecting, growing, and planning engaging lessons for my students. I felt inspired and excited while working with teachers new to the National Board process and look forward to becoming more involved in the upcoming years."

