

# Moving All Teachers Towards an Accomplished Teaching Workforce

## A Toolkit for School and System Leaders

### Introduction

#### Accomplished Teaching Is Not the Current Standard

Currently, there is no profession-wide expectation that all teachers continually improve their practice and no requirement that they achieve the standard of **accomplished teaching**. Why is that? What student doesn't deserve to be taught by an accomplished teacher? Other professions have tackled this challenge, strengthening a guarantee of accomplished practice by taking Board certification to scale compared to approximately 80 percent of medical practitioners.

Districts and states are responsible for managing teacher talent through all phases of the teaching continuum, including:

- ✓ Attracting and retaining a strong and diverse pool of teachers;
- ✓ Building teacher capacity towards a clear standard of excellence;
- ✓ Providing equitable access to high quality teaching for all students; and
- ✓ Identifying and growing teacher leaders.

In many ways, however, the teaching profession is not organized to help teachers develop their skills and expertise. Teachers work in isolated classrooms, without peer support, and many report feeling overwhelmed, making it less likely that they will remain in teaching and become proficient educators. At each point in the continuum there is opportunity to incorporate a clearer expectation that from day one all teachers should be working towards the standard of accomplished teaching.

Given the gaps in the current system, what high leverage strategies can you, as a leader of a district or school, employ to bring accomplished teaching to scale so that every student is assigned to an accomplished teacher?



## An Opportunity: ESSA Emphasizes More Relevant, Job-Embedded Professional Learning

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides an opportunity for states and districts to rethink how they structure teacher 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, one-day, or 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 work that is separate from teaching.

**Learn more at [www.nbpts.org/ESSA](http://www.nbpts.org/ESSA)**

## Benefits of Job-Embedded Professional Learning

Even before ESSA was signed, National Board Certified Teacher leaders across the country advocated for ways to bring accomplished teaching—and by extension, improved student learning—to scale using National Board Certification as a foundation for job-embedded, relevant, and engaging professional learning. These initiatives to improve and elevate teaching practices are impacting all aspects of the teaching continuum and growing the numbers of accomplished teachers. This work is critical to the long-term success of our schools.

On the following page, learn about two approaches in particular that have seen great success engaging teacher leaders, strengthening teacher practice through Board certification, and positively impacting student learning and school culture.

### What Does Accomplished Teaching Look Like?

The National Board’s **Five Core Propositions** for teaching underscore the accomplished teacher’s commitment to advancing student learning and achievement. Together, the propositions form the basis of all National Board standards and serve as the foundation for Board Certification.

*“The standards for accomplished teaching encompass both the ‘habits of mind’ needed by outstanding teachers—their knowledge, strategies, grasp of subject matter and understanding of developing kids—and also their skills, the technical ‘habits of practice’ that accomplished professionals in every field of practice have honed and developed.”<sup>1</sup>*

Created by teachers, for teachers, the profession’s mark of accomplished teaching incorporates the standards and the surrounding body of knowledge of what teachers should know and be able to do.

<sup>1</sup>National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (2016). What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do.

## Approach 1: School-Based Professional Learning That Strengthens Practice for All Teachers

Several districts across the U.S. have created their own National Board Professional Development Schools. In these schools, teams of teachers examine and strengthen their teaching practice while pursuing Board certification with the facilitation and support of a peer teacher who is already Board-Certified and has demonstrated instructional expertise. The benefit of a school-embedded approach is that the professional learning is aligned to school goals, which ensures a coherent approach towards accomplishment while directly impacting student performance.

With the support of a lead organization—whether it be a school district, local teachers association, or local university—a site-based leadership team consisting of a school administrator, teacher liaison, and Board-certified teacher facilitator collaborates to support the cohort of teachers, sustaining their professional growth efforts throughout the school year. The collaborative and connected nature of these cohorts not only helps teachers develop towards accomplished practice and Board certification, but also improves the school environment, creating a culture where teachers feel that their development is valued, guided, and purposeful.

## Approach 2: Putting Beginning Teachers on a Path Toward Accomplished Teaching

Several districts are actively working to bridge the gap from entry and initial induction supports through accomplished practice and Board certification. By embedding the National Board's Five Core Propositions for what teachers should know and be able to do into induction supports, beginning teachers develop a greater understanding of what accomplished teaching looks like and how they can deepen their practice to reach that target. They feel more engaged, working with colleagues to deepen their instructional capacity on a pathway towards accomplished teaching. Once Board-certified, those teachers can then assume leadership positions within their schools and districts to extend their reach to more students. These district-led programs, with support from key local partners, have been effective in creating environments where teachers are encouraged to collaborate and learn together.

### Benefits of Job-Embedded Professional Learning

**Collaboration** Teachers work together in a collaborative cohort to improve their teaching practices and address student needs (avoiding the likelihood that individuals struggle on their own, risking burnout).

**Growth** Teachers are encouraged to adopt a growth mindset, focused on continuous improvement of their practice.

**Culture** School cultures are improved as teachers are encouraged to share their practices, take risks, ask questions, look for evidence of effectiveness, and build trust with peers.

**Commitment** Professionally engaged teachers are more likely to be effective and stay in the teaching profession.

**Accomplishment** More teachers become Board-certified, providing schools with teacher leaders who can drive school improvement efforts.

## 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

## 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.

## Making the Case for Change

### Promising Practices: Four Case Studies to Consider

States and districts across the country are using the National Board's standards of accomplished teaching to provide a framework for school-based, collaborative professional learning. By blending the work of teaching with ways for teachers to engage and problem solve with like-minded peers schools can build a productive professional culture. Teachers lead and mentor both their peers and less experienced teachers, sharing their expertise to impact students and fellow teachers.

These districts and schools are taking action, using a systems approach to embed National Board Certification as a powerful, research-based professional learning experience for teachers. School-based models move away from individual isolated experiences. With support from administration, teachers receive mentoring from current Board-certified teachers or other accomplished teachers and are encouraged to work collaboratively with their peers.

This can make a big impact on a variety of levels:

- Teachers study effective practice and recognize what accomplished teaching looks like;
- Professional development is relevant, authentic, and presented in the context of students' instructional needs;
- Administrators help establish a positive working environment and school culture by ensuring teachers have time to work as teams, spread good practices, and model strong teaching for one another;
- Current Board-certified teachers serve as mentors to their peers, an opportunity that provides leadership experience, professional growth, and potential career advancement.

Ultimately, this systems approach changes the conversations in schools. In the process, the teaching profession becomes centered around the work of accomplished teaching, benefiting students, teachers, and schools.

The following case studies show how schools and districts across the country have used the National Board's Five Core Propositions for what teachers should know and be able to do, content-specific standards, certification process, and supporting resources to design teacher quality programs that result in improved outcomes for students and schools.

### Changes to Conversations in Schools

- Discussions center on professional practice and student learning.
- Teachers share vocabulary around standards and what good teaching looks like.
- Teachers work together to plan instruction and reflect on their effectiveness.
- Mentors work with teachers to help them reflect, practice, and improve.
- Work is immediately relevant and applicable to their jobs.



## 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. The combination of high teacher turnover, inadequate professional development, and a weak professional culture contributes 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.

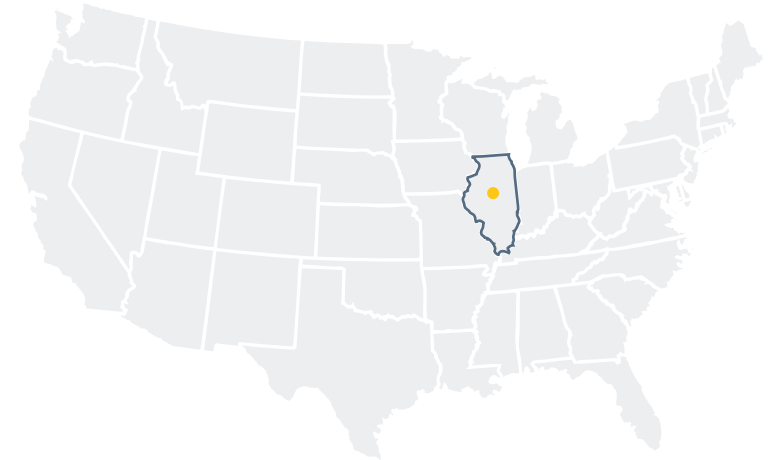
#### Illinois

Like in other states, teachers and principals in Illinois are under pressure to integrate more rigorous standards into their teaching practices and provide evidence of their effectiveness in raising student achievement. Implementation timelines are tight and many teachers feel they do not have the time to dig deep and digest the new standards and evaluation tools to understand how they fit together and can be used to help them improve their teaching practices and student learning.

The **National Board Resource Center (NBRC)** is helping districts and schools across Illinois integrate National Board's standards of accomplished teaching as a framing structure to support both individual teacher growth and build professional capacity in support of larger school and district goals. National Board Professional Development (NBPD) Schools support school-based professional learning communities of ten or more teachers at the same school who pursue Board certification together as a cohort. The work is aligned directly to common school goals to ensure impact on student performance, while providing those teachers with the support they need to earn Board certification in the context of those school goals. This embedded professional

#### Illinois

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development leverages the instructional expertise of Board-certified teacher trainers to advance the knowledge and instructional skills of the entire faculty.

As a starting point in 2014, NBRC did a detailed analysis to show how the National Board’s Five Core Propositions align with Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching that serves as the foundation for many state and district teacher evaluation rubrics. They also showed how the Five Core Propositions align with Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning, the edTPA teacher preparation assessment, and Ed Leadership Policy Standards (along with Illinois-specific teacher and student Common Core learning standards).

These alignment activities helped principals see the connections between the work in their schools and the goals of Board certification. By supporting teachers in improving their practice and moving them towards the standards of accomplished teaching, principals could give authentic learning opportunities with positive impact more broadly on teachers and students in the school.

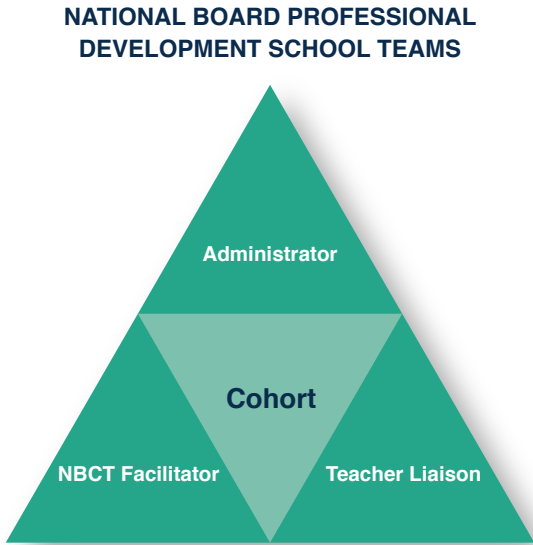
“We felt it was important to bring this work to the school site,” says Debbie Kasperski, NBCT, director of NBRC. “The school community needs to own the process and see the value of investing in professional learning in the context of student needs and challenges.” With strong principal support and the guidance of a local Board-certified teacher, school teams of 10 or more candidates pursue Board certification as part of a program of collaborative professional learning. Each teacher is expected to complete and submit two National Board components a year for two years with the help of job-embedded support from trained Board-certified teacher facilitators.

The facilitators encourage rich conversations among teachers and principals about student work, evidence of learning over time, and larger school improvement strategies that build from the classroom out. An administrator and a teacher liaison work with the facilitator to manage and sustain the cohort. This team keeps an eye on the big picture impact of the work of the teachers in driving improvements within the school in alignment with school and district goals.

To receive support from NBRC, schools and districts are required to submit an application demonstrating their commitment to the model. The NBRC has intentionally been selective, limiting the number of participating schools and districts to ensure that chosen sites were likely to see success. Illinois currently has 1,200 National Board Certification candidates and half of those teachers are in NBPD Schools. The NBPD school model has become so popular that demand has

### Common Challenge Being Addressed

Most states face the challenge of building a teacher talent system that provides every student access to strong teachers, especially in high-need schools. Part of addressing that challenge is strengthening how new teacher candidates are prepared and hired. However, it also means changing the way schools are organized so that accomplished teachers have greater roles with more opportunity to support their peers and developing school cultures that build in support and continuous opportunities for teachers to improve their practice.



exceeded what initial NBRC resources set out to provide, resulting in a growing number of schools and districts redirecting their professional development resources to provide the needed supports.

And Illinois has helped other states and districts replicate its successful model. At present, this model looks to be spreading in more than 20 states across the U.S. One of the most interesting and promising adaptations is happening in Clark County, Nevada.

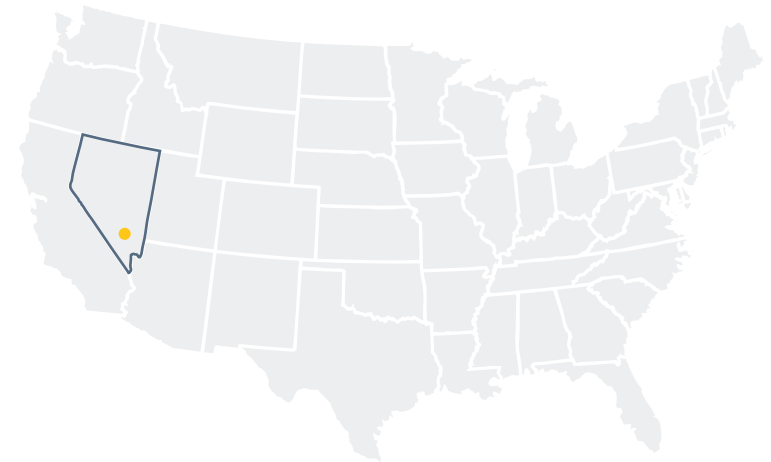
### Clark County, Nevada

Clark County, which encompasses the greater Las Vegas area, is the fifth-largest school district in the U.S. One of the effects of the region's rapid growth is that the district has difficulty staffing high-need schools with accomplished teachers. The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) convened a focus group of National Board Certified Teachers and other educational stakeholders to present solutions to staffing accomplished teachers and to inform the Nevada Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators. The 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 National Board Certified Teachers 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.

In response to the State Equity Plan and considering the impact of National Board Certification on student achievement, in 2015 the **Clark County Education Association (CCEA)**, in partnership with Clark County School District and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, applied for and received a Great Teaching and Leading grant for \$260,000 from the Nevada Department of Education to develop a National Board Professional Development (NBPD) School Program modeled after the Illinois example described above. Intentionally drawing on the insights and experience from leadership in Illinois, this grant funds CCEA to support school-based programs where cohorts of teachers work together in collaborative learning communities in Clark County's most struggling schools.

Similar to the Illinois model, groups of ten or more teachers come together for a yearlong program of collaborative learning organized around completing two of the four components of National

### Clark County, Nevada





Board Certification to strengthen their teaching practices in support of student learning. Board-certified teachers serve as facilitators of the cohort sessions where teacher teams engage in ongoing discussions about aligning instruction to school and district instructional and professional goals, and adapting instruction to meet the requirements of student standards and student growth goals. School administrators ensure teachers have the needed release time and are supported in their work. After Year One of this two-year professional development program, 99 percent of NBPD School administrators reported that completing the National Board process is helping their teachers to become more effective instructional leaders.

In Clark County's adaptation of NBPD Schools, teachers review videos from [ATLAS](#), National Board's video library that provides exemplars of accomplished teaching with commentaries that analyze and reflect upon lesson effectiveness. To support embedding the National Board's accomplished teaching body of knowledge across the career continuum, Clark County Education Association has also given ATLAS subscriptions to community partners including high school early teacher preparation programs, colleges and universities, alternative teacher preparation programs, school district mentors, coaches, and facilitators to make sure that teacher candidates and beginning teachers have the opportunity to see accomplished teaching modeled in classrooms. One notable partnership is the collaboration between the CCEA NBPD School Program and Nevada State College (NSC) to place the majority of their observations and student teachers with candidates and/or Board-certified teachers serving at NBPD Schools. This affords pre-service students with opportunities to observe research-based practices being modeled in face-to-face and virtual classrooms utilizing the accomplished teaching body of knowledge and ATLAS. Field observations and ATLAS case studies are also used to inform and support NSC instructors' course delivery.

The Nevada State Board of Education is continuing its partnership with CCEA to support teachers in strengthening their practice through National Board Certification by increasing the Great Teaching and Leading Grant to \$450,000. This funding was increased to support the estimated 400 percent growth in teachers pursuing Board certification in Year Two of this program. Much of this growth is due to the compelling evidence demonstrating improvements in teacher effectiveness and student outcomes in Year One of the NBPD School Program. The success of this research-based program laid the groundwork for CCEA and CCSD to negotiate a Professional Growth System that embedded National Board Certification into the salary scale, recognizing the successful completion of Board certification as an approximate \$5,000 raise.

# ATLAS

## ATLAS® (Accomplished Teaching, Learning and Schools)

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.

Clark County and the NDE know that implementation and utilization of ESSA funds is key to building capacity and sustainability of the NBPD School Program. CCEA worked closely with the State ESSA Work Groups and CCSD's Title Office to design a professional development compensation plan to financially compensate Board-certified teachers serving as facilitators at NBPD Schools using Title I and/or Title II funds.

"These partnerships show how well we are working together," says Betsy Giles, NBCT, Director of National Board Certification at CCEA. "I recommend that all states and districts gather their key education stakeholders together and collaborate. We built bridges and are in close alliance with bipartisan politicians. That is how we are achieving our goal of dramatic improvement so rapidly and effectively."

In Year One, ten cohorts of teachers participated in NBPD Schools, with 80 percent of the 121 candidates teaching in high-need schools. All but two of those teachers stayed in their high-need schools, the other two transferred to other high-need schools in the district. Enrollment quadrupled in Year Two with an estimated 600 teachers participating. Again, most of those teachers are in high-need schools.

Program participants are expected to take on leadership roles, enhancing instructional practice and collaboration in their schools. Teachers serve as "National Board Ambassadors," presenting to colleagues on the power of the NBPD School model. In addition, some participants hosted legislators to co-teach lessons in their classrooms as a way of building connections between education policymakers and school sites.

In order to continue and grow this model, Tonia Holmes-Sutton, NBCT, who leads the Network to Transform Teaching in Clark County, argues that NBPD Schools benefit "not only the teachers themselves who are empowered to take ownership of their learning but also the culture in the schools as teachers engage in deep conversations around effective instruction and ways to drive student achievement."<sup>4</sup>

Ninety-nine percent of participants agreed that the **NBPD School Program** improved collaboration, collegiality, and a culture of high expectations for student learning.

*"Because it is school-based, this professional development program provided opportunities for teachers to have cross-curricular interaction and collaboration. It gave me an opportunity to meet and discuss teaching practices with teachers I normally would not collaborate with; in other words, I was able to discuss curriculum and teaching practices with teachers in other departments."*<sup>2</sup>

*-NBPD School Program Teacher participant*

School administrators are supportive of their new teacher leaders.

*"The goal is for them to become leaders on campus and discuss the process with other teachers. We hope it will encourage other teachers to pursue National Board and we believe that they will help promote other teachers to become reflective practitioners through professional learning community discussions."*<sup>3</sup>

*-NBPD School Program Administrator*

<sup>2</sup> Great Teaching and Leading Fund Final Annual Report: National Board Professional Development Schools, 2015-16. Prepared for the Nevada Department of Education by Katrina Liu, University of Nevada Las Vegas, College of Education.

<sup>3</sup> Great Teaching and Leading Fund Final Annual Report: National Board Professional Development Schools, 2015-16. Prepared for the Nevada Department of Education by Katrina Liu, University of Nevada Las Vegas, College of Education.

<sup>4</sup> Tonia Holmes-Sutton's presentation at the National Board Academy in July 2016.

## Approach 2

### An Intentional Pipeline Moves Early Career Teachers Towards an Accomplished Teaching Standard

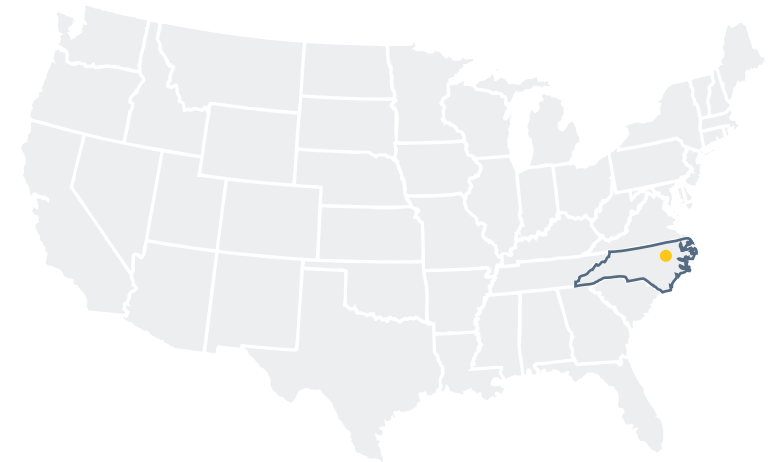
Both Wake County in North Carolina and Hillsborough in Florida have strengthened the professional learning that happens in their induction programs by drawing on the instructional expertise of district-based Board-certified teachers and by embedding the National Board's Five Core Propositions for what 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.

#### Wake County, North Carolina

In recent years, leadership in Wake County Public School System (Wake), like in many districts across the country, was concerned about a pattern of beginning teacher turnover—with many of them leaving just a few years into their careers. In response, Wake designed a program that would strengthen the continuum of effective practice from early career to accomplished practice. The district already had a new teacher induction program, but decided to include a program to serve as a bridge between novice experience and accomplished practice and Board certification, helping beginning teachers stay engaged with and excited about teaching and seizing opportunity for advancing in their careers.

In early 2015, drawing on the accomplished teaching body of knowledge and the expertise of the district's large number of Board-certified teachers, Wake created the ***Beginner to Board-Certified Program*** to introduce beginning teachers to more accomplished teaching through pursuing the National Board Certification process. In this program, beginning teachers in their third year of teaching are introduced to the National Board's Five Core Propositions and their alignment with the North Carolina Teaching Standards. During monthly sessions, teachers look at student work samples and data and discuss planning of instruction based on the needs of their students. Participants discuss accomplished teaching practices and review cases in **ATLAS**, National Board's library of accomplished teaching videos with corresponding written commentaries. After watching the videos, teachers engage in discussions about evidence of student learning and rationale for instructional decisions. These reflective activities help teachers to consider their own classrooms

#### Wake County, North Carolina



and how they manage and monitor student learning. Those who subsequently choose to become a candidate for Board certification return the next year to begin completing the component of the certification process that focuses on differentiated instruction. District-organized professional development sessions, led by Board-certified teachers, are intentionally designed to help early career teachers work together as a cohort to enhance instructional planning, deepen their understanding of how to set appropriate instructional goals for students, better understand how to implement effective instruction and assessment, and effectively analyze student work to inform instruction. Board-certified teachers serve as mentors throughout the year.

The program began with an inaugural class of 84 beginning teachers in the fall of 2015. In a survey, the vast majority of participants strongly agreed or agreed that the program made them feel more supported, made them more reflective, improved their planning of instruction, and they would recommend the program to others. As of fall 2016, well over 100 third-year teachers had registered to participate the Year 2 cohort.

The *Beginner to Board-Certified* program is now part of Wake's *Vision 2020 Strategic Plan*, which aims to retain high-performing beginning teachers by encouraging them to become Board certified, and then assume leadership roles and career advancement within the district. Dana King, principal of Millbrook High School shares, "The early career teachers at my school can't wait until they are eligible to apply for National Board Certification. A culture of support and expectation has developed over the years that sends an implied message that if you are in your third year of teaching you better get serious about Board certification. These young and newer teachers bring a professional excitement and collegiality that is contagious."

To hear more about the personal experiences of teachers and school administrators involved in this program, watch Wake County's video "**Beginner to Board Certification**".

### Common Challenge Being Addressed

In most districts, there is a disconnect between teacher preparation, new teacher induction experiences, and development towards accomplished practice. New teachers may feel supported in their first years on the job<sup>5</sup> when they are mentored to help them integrate into the school and gain confidence as teachers, but after induction ends, those same teachers may lose peer connections and access to facilitated conversations around quality teaching and learning. While the latest research studies provide conflicting evidence on early career teacher attrition rates—ranging from 17 percent to 40 or 50 percent leaving within their first five years on the job, the fact remains that beginning teachers often find themselves overwhelmed and exhausted, especially when they work in high-need schools.

<sup>5</sup>Brown, Emma. (April 30, 2015). Study: Far fewer new teachers are leaving the profession than previously thought. The Washington Post. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/local/wp/2015/04/30/study-new-teacher-attrition-is-lower-than-previously-thought/>

Hillsborough County, Florida

Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) in Florida has made significant investments in teacher quality initiatives, including targeted recruitment strategies, a two-year induction program with expert mentors, and job-embedded professional development. However, HCPS recognized that many of its young teachers were floundering with “what’s next” after their induction support ended. Teachers said they felt themselves drifting without clear professional learning goals or structured supports. The district knew it had to do more to keep teachers from leaving the profession.

To help teachers continue their professional learning and help schools grow their ranks of accomplished teachers, the district, with support and collaboration from key local partners, including the Center for Technology in Education, Hillsborough County Teachers Association, Hillsborough National Board Certified Teacher Council, and the Hillsborough Education Foundation, launched its **ASPIRE!** program. Hillsborough had evidence that Board-certified teachers in their district leverage better student achievement, so ASPIRE! was designed to draw on National Board’s accomplished teaching body of knowledge—largely the Five Core Propositions for what teachers should know and be able to do—to help teachers learn, grow, and excel at their craft. Through studying the Five Core Propositions and subsequently completing part of the Board certification process, participation in ASPIRE! gives a foundation for personalized professional learning and collaborative dialogue leading to improvements in teaching and student learning. Organized in cohorts of teachers—as opposed to an individual pursuit—school culture is enhanced as teachers collaborate and support each other to improve their craft. With Board-certified teachers serving as facilitators for ASPIRE! cohorts and with a growing number of teachers pursuing Board certification as they aim for a growing level of accomplished teaching, many groups of teachers in Hillsborough have increased career lattice opportunities. These enriching activities lead to improved practice and career diversification.

ASPIRE! program leaders devised a “shoulder tap” program where leaders from the district, school, union, and other community organizations are invited to select teachers they feel have instructional and leadership potential. The program is also open to any teachers who show interest. With the promise of personalized professional learning, engagement in professional networks at school sites and throughout the district, and earning of a professional learning badge and in-service points, ASPIRE! has attracted a growing number of teachers seeking professional

Hillsborough County, Florida



growth and career enhancement. Likewise, school leaders are encouraging participation as they see the value ASPIRE! offers in developing and retaining high quality teachers who contribute to a strong and vibrant school culture, and who have a positive impact on student learning and success.

There is strong agreement by the superintendent, school board members, district supervisors, union leadership and community members around the importance of growing accomplished teaching. At a recent school board meeting, HCPS Superintendent Jeff Eakins shared his belief that ASPIRE! and its connection to National Board Certification “will get more of our teachers across the district involved and going through the process. This will be a tremendous learning opportunity for them and they will grow professionally and in their craft...I don’t think there’s any parent who would ever not want to send their child to schools with classrooms filled with teachers who are Nationally Board Certified.”<sup>6</sup> Building on the success of the ASPIRE! program that is energizing teachers and facilitators, Hillsborough school leaders are exploring new ways to infuse the underlying concepts of accomplished teaching into teacher professional learning and growth expectations.

### Hillsborough Career Lattice Opportunities



<sup>6</sup> A slightly edited version of Jeff Eakin’s comments at the Hillsborough County School Board Meeting, May 10, 2016. Transcript retrieved from: <http://schoolboard.hcpswebcasts.com/text/hcsb2016-05-10.html>.

## Making the Case for Change in Your Community

Growing the ranks of accomplished teachers can take many different forms. Your task as principal or superintendent is to think about what approach makes sense in your community. We recommend identifying a system-level challenge that others agree needs to be addressed in order to give every student access to an accomplished teacher year after year.

### Common Challenges

The only way schools are going to improve and perform at a high level is if they are deliberate in their development of effective teachers for each and every student and classroom. The challenge is the profession is not currently organized around the standards of accomplished teaching with clear pathways for teachers to strengthen their skills over time and **working collaboratively with colleagues** to meet student needs.

Here are some examples of common challenges and potential responses:

#### Challenge: Teachers Lack a Guided Pathway Towards Accomplished Teaching

While more states and districts are now requiring induction supports for new teachers, not every teacher enters the profession with the help of an experienced mentor who can provide guidance and feedback on effective teaching practices. Even in places with strong induction programs, many teachers feel adrift after the mentoring period ends, unsure how to keep advancing their professional careers.

#### Response

There is a strong evidence base on **what teachers should know and be able to do** that can be used to demystify accomplished teaching practice. Developed by teachers, for teachers, National Board Standards specify the knowledge, skills and practices of an accomplished educator. To earn Board certification, teachers must immerse themselves in a core body of knowledge for accomplished teaching and demonstrate their ability to meet these standards and advance student learning. Schools and districts can intentionally and strategically incorporate these accomplished teaching standards into teacher professional learning from day one, with supports in place to help all teachers more effectively impact student learning on a daily basis.

# 81 percent

of Americans believe teachers should achieve **Board certification**, beyond licensure, as it is in other professions.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> 46th Annual PDK/Gallup Poll (October 2014). Retrieved from: [http://pdkintl.org/noindex/PDKGallupPoll\\_Oct2014.pdf](http://pdkintl.org/noindex/PDKGallupPoll_Oct2014.pdf)



### **Challenge: The Churn of Teacher Attrition Hurts School Cultures and Stymies Student Learning**

One-third of K-12 teachers leave the profession within their first three years on the job and almost half leave within the first five years.<sup>8</sup> This is particularly a challenge for high-need schools. These schools struggle to achieve stability in their teaching forces, which undermines any efforts to promote collaboration and sharing of knowledge among teacher colleagues.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Response**

Schools and districts can take action to promote healthy and collaborative working environments. By designing professional learning that is embedded in schools and led by experienced teachers, schools can help all teachers feel supported and working towards shared goals of improved teaching and learning. Teachers who believe they have the support and respect of school principals and colleagues are more likely to stay teaching in those schools.

### **Challenge: Teacher Professional Development Investments Are Not Always Productive**

School systems make massive investments in time and money to provide teacher professional development. While well intentioned, the fact is teacher professional learning is too often haphazard and uncoordinated with no common understanding of the goals of teacher improvement. In one recent study, the districts studied spent an average of nearly \$18,000 per teacher, per year on professional learning. Yet the same report concluded that these experiences were not helpful to teachers as professionals or to schools seeking better instruction.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Impact of Board-Certified Teachers on Student Learning**

Not only is working towards and achieving National Board Certification powerful, rewarding, and illuminating professional development for teachers, the research is clear that students taught by Board-certified teachers learn more than students taught by other teachers. Estimates of the increase in learning are on the order of an additional one to two months of instruction. The positive impact of having a Board-certified teacher is even greater for minority and low-income students.<sup>11</sup> In addition, Board-certified teachers achieve stronger results on leading measures of teacher effectiveness, including robust classroom observations and value-added scores. In fact, a recent study found that an effective teacher could have “spillover effects”—improving student learning across the entire grade, not just within one classroom. When an effective teacher joins a grade-level teaching team, student learning improves as other teachers in the grade improve<sup>12</sup>. The report even suggests that pairing ineffective teachers with more effective colleagues could be more impactful than district-led out-of-school professional development, which is often costly and has a limited effect on student achievement.

<sup>8</sup> Ingersoll, R. M. (2003). Is there really a teacher shortage? Seattle, WA: University of Washington, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy; Moir, E., Barlin, D., Gless, J., & Miles, J. (2010). New teacher mentoring: Hopes and promise for improving teacher effectiveness. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

<sup>9</sup> Sutter, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S.. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

<sup>10</sup> TNTP. (2015). The Mirage: Confronting the Hard Truth About Our Quest for Teacher Development. Retrieved from: [http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP-Mirage\\_2015.pdf](http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP-Mirage_2015.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Goldhaber, D. & Anthony E. (2007). Can teacher quality be effectively assessed? The Review of Economics and Statistics 89(1). 134-150; Cavalluzzo L.C. (2004) Is National Board Certification an effective signal of teacher quality? The CAN Corporation.

<sup>12</sup> Sun, M., Loeb, S. and Grissom, J.A. (August 2, 2016). Building Teacher Teams: Evidence of Positive Spillovers From More Effective Colleagues. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis. American Educational Research Association. Retrieved from: <http://epa.sagepub.com/content/early/2016/08/31/0162373716665698.abstract>; Jackson, C.K. and Bruegmann, E. (August 2009). Teaching Students and Teaching Each Other: The Importance of Peer Learning for Teachers. NBER Working Paper Series. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w15202.pdf>



## Response

We know what high quality professional learning looks like.<sup>13</sup> It aligns with school goals and other professional learning activities. It focuses on core content and modeling of teaching strategies for the content. It promotes active learning of new teaching strategies and the chance for teachers to collaborate. And it includes follow-up and continuous feedback. Schools and districts can consider their current investments in teacher professional development and reflect whether learning is in fact targeted toward the standards of accomplished teaching and designed to extend the reach of great teachers in the building.

## Challenge: Accomplished Teachers Are Not Empowered

Without clear career ladders in place, in most cases, accomplished teachers who have proven their abilities in the classroom are rarely empowered to lead colleagues in accelerated school improvement.

## Response

Schools and districts can think strategically about how to extend the reach of great teachers. Accomplished teachers can be given opportunities to coach, support and mentor peers, influencing a wider pool of students as a result.

## Finding a Solution

No matter which challenges your district or school is currently facing, devising a solution that incorporates the standards of accomplished teaching into school-based professional learning systems is a powerful way to strengthen teaching practices, improve school culture, and drive student learning.

How will you bring great teachers to every student?



<sup>13</sup> DeMonte, Jenny. (2013). High-Quality Professional Development for Teachers: Supporting Teacher Training to Improve Student Learning. Center for American Progress. Retrieved from: <https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/DeMonteLearning4Teachers-1.pdf>