

USING COVID-RELIEF FUNDING TO EXPAND STUDENT ACCESS TO NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS

Students across the country have faced more than a year of tumult both in and out of school, with students of color and students in poverty often experiencing the harshest effects of the pandemic. To help students recover and meet their evolving needs, it is more important than ever that states and districts invest in building an experienced, accomplished, and diverse teaching workforce.

The three federal COVID-relief bills passed in the last year - the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) - each include funds for stabilizing schools through Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER I, II, and III). All three rounds of ESSER funds can be spent on the same activities,¹ which can include:

- **Any activity authorized by the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* or *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*** (such as initiatives to improve teacher effectiveness and retention including advanced certification, professional development, and mentoring programs),²
- Providing principals and other school leaders with resources to address individual school needs,³
- Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth, including outreach and service delivery,⁴ and
- Other activities necessary to maintain district operations and services.⁵

By using Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER I, II, and III) to expand students' access to National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs), state and district leaders can help our highest-need students recover from and flourish following the COVID-19 pandemic while stabilizing and diversifying the teacher workforce.

Expanding student access to National Board Certified Teachers is an evidence-based investment that builds capacity for the long-term.

National Board Certification is supported by research consistent with the highest tiers of evidence under ESSER. More than two decades of research have proven that National Board Certification has a significant and measurable impact on student learning, especially for students in high-need schools, as well as teacher practice, and teacher retention. Studies show that Board Certification supports:

- **Increased student learning and achievement.** Research shows NBCTs are, on average, more effective than non-Board Certified teachers, particularly as instructors of high-need students. NBCTs produce an additional six to eight weeks of student learning⁶ and students taught by NBCTs demonstrate deeper learning than students in other classrooms.⁷ In addition, NBCTs report being more reflective and adjusting their practice to meet individual student needs.⁸
- **Retention of high-quality teachers.** Research shows that NBCTs remain in the profession longer than their non-Board Certified colleagues, with one recent state analysis finding a turnover rate of just 3.6% for NBCTs, compared to 9% statewide in the 2018-2019 school year.⁹
- **Effective mentoring of novice teachers.** Recent research finds that new teachers that are mentored by NBCTs exhibit “positive and meaningful improvement” in instructional practices and generate six months of additional student learning compared to new teachers mentored by those who are not Board Certified.¹⁰
- **High-quality professional learning.** National surveys of NBCTs found that 96% of respondents viewed pursuing Board Certification as among the top three most impactful professional learning experiences for advancing their practice.¹¹

The U.S. Department of Education recognizes that retaining qualified and effective educators is an important part of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹²

Strategies highlighted by the Department include extending the reach of effective teachers, providing relevant, flexible professional learning, and developing a diverse educator pipeline.¹³

National Board Certification can play an important role in these strategies.

Supporting National Board Certification puts the most effective teachers in front of students and offers them deeper learning experiences. National Board Certification provides an unparalleled professional development opportunity for teachers and often leads to salary advancement, which helps retain a diverse and accomplished teaching workforce. Supporting teachers to achieve National Board Certification today will pay off in improved teaching and learning for years to come. In sum, allocating short-term resources to National Board Certification is a long-term investment in our students and teachers.

Strategies

1. Grow the number of National Board Certified Teachers.

To rapidly grow student access to Board Certified teachers, particularly in high-need schools, and encourage teachers' individualized professional development, states and districts should provide:

- Grants to teachers to defray the \$1,900 cost of National Board Certification.
- Funding to ensure teachers receive support as they navigate the Board Certification process. This could be a direct investment to expand local candidate support programming, or grants to teachers to cover participation costs for programs led by the district, teachers' association, local NBCT network, regional education service center, institution of higher education, and/or non-profit organization.
- Grants to defray the \$495 Maintenance of Certification fee.

This support can be targeted to teachers that would particularly benefit from pursuing and achieving National Board Certification, while addressing systemic priorities. Examples from around the country include supporting teachers in high-need schools, teachers of color, teachers in shortage areas, and teachers earlier in their career.

2. Help National Board Certified Teachers reach the students who need them most.

States and districts have an opportunity to address the immediate needs of students and support their access to accomplished teachers by:

- Strategically utilizing NBCTs for expanded learning time activities.
 - Provide incentives to attract NBCTs to expanded learning time roles. For example, North Carolina's Summer Learning Choice for NC Families Act directs local school boards to offer a signing bonus of \$1,200 to NBCTs who teach summer learning.
 - Offer incentives for NBCTs to mentor teachers leading expanded learning time activities, including summer enrichment activities.
 - Stipend teachers to observe NBCTs during expanded learning time activities, including summer enrichment activities.
 - Providing one-time or multiyear salary incentives for NBCTs
- Providing one-time or multiyear salary incentives for NBCTs to teach in schools with students facing the most severe consequences from the pandemic and associated education disruption.

3. Provide professional development based on National Board Standards.

States and districts can use the *Accomplished Teaching, Learning and Schools (ATLAS)* library as the foundation for department-, school-, or district-wide professional learning. The ATLAS library:

- Includes 1,000+ authentic video cases showing NBCTs at work in the classroom;
- Is indexed to standards and frameworks for teachers and students;
- Is searchable by educational settings so teachers can see video cases from classes that look like theirs.

An annual subscription includes facilitator guides for eight Professional Learning Conversations with recommended case studies.

Using Federal Funds to Support National Board Certification and Board-Related Resources

See endnotes for relevant federal statutory, regulatory, or guidance citations.

| Encouraging Teachers to Pursue, Achieve, and Maintain National Board Certification | | Federal Funding |
|---|--|---|
| Activity | Examples of Permissible Costs Related to the Activity | |
| Defraying the cost of Board fees ¹⁴ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration fee Component fees Certification maintenance fees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title I, Part A can only pay for teachers working with Title I eligible students in Title I schools. Title II, Part A can pay costs for any teacher in the district, but districts must generally prioritize lowest performing high-poverty schools. IDEA, Part B can only pay for costs when it will benefit students with disabilities, such as encouraging special education teachers to improve subject matter mastery by pursuing Board certification in a content area or encouraging any teacher to pursue Board certification as an exceptional needs specialist. |
| Additional compensation for teachers who achieve Board certification ¹⁵ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonus pay for Board certified teachers Step increases for Board certified teachers Differential pay for Board certified teachers | |
| Supporting Teachers Pursuing National Board Certification | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESSER can pay costs for any teacher in the district. ESSER spending should be consistent with the program's purpose of preventing, preparing. |
| Activity | Examples of Permissible Costs Related to the Activity | |
| Facilitate collaboration among teachers pursuing Board certification, such as a professional learning community (PLC) for a cohort of teachers ¹⁶ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stipends for participating teachers Substitute teachers to provide release time Related materials and supplies | |
| Provide mentoring to teachers pursuing Board certification ¹⁷ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensating mentors Substitute teachers to provide release time Skill training for mentors | |
| Provide instructional coaching or other professional development to teachers pursuing certification ¹⁸ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensating instructional coaches Substitute teachers to provide release time Registration and other fees for professional development courses | |
| Supporting Beginning Teachers with National Board Resources | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESSER can pay costs for any teacher in the district. ESSER spending should be consistent with the program's purpose of preventing, preparing. |
| Activity | Examples of Permissible Costs Related to the Activity | |
| Develop induction programs for new teachers led by experienced Board-certified teachers, which could include mentoring, observation and collaboration, and professional development ¹⁹ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation for Board certified teachers who offer induction supports Stipends for new teachers who participate in the induction program Substitute teachers to provide release time Fees for professional development courses Related materials and supplies | |
| Train existing mentor teachers to use National Board Standards to guide feedback and encourage mentor teachers to pursue Board certification ²⁰ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stipends to mentor teachers who participate in training about National Board Standards Substitute teachers to provide release time Fees for professional development aligned to National Board Standards Related materials and supplies | |
| Provide new teachers access to the National Board's ATLAS video library to improve their performance and effectiveness ²¹ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ATLAS subscription fee | |

¹U.S. Department of Education, Fact Sheet American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER) (2021), p. 5. (This will be referred to as ED 2021 ARP ESSER Fact Sheet for the rest of this document.)

²CARES, Sec. 18003(d)(1); CRRSA, Sec. 313(d)(1); ARP, Sec. 2001(e)(2)(A). Please note, if a district uses ESSER funds for an ESEA-authorized activity, it is not required to follow ESEA's program requirements. For example, initiatives to improve teacher effectiveness is an allowable Title II, Part A activity, but a district would not have to follow Title II, Part A requirements if spending ESSER funds on such initiatives. U.S. Department of Education, Frequently Asked Questions about the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund) (2020), Q&A 16.

³CARES, Sec. 18003(d)(3); CRRSA, Sec. 313(d)(3). Please note even though this activity is not specifically listed in the ARP law it is an allowable use of ARP ESSER funds. ED clarified that districts may use ARP ESSER funds for any activity listed in CARES and CRRSA. ED 2021 ARP ESSER Fact Sheet p. 5.

⁴CARES, Sec. 18003(d)(4); CRRSA, Sec. 313(d)(4); ARP, Sec. 2001(e)(2)(F).

⁵CARES, Sec. 18003(d)(12); CRRSA, Sec. 313(d)(15); ARP, Sec. 2001(e)(2)(R).

⁶Goldhaber, 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 CNA Corporation.

⁷Smith, T., Baker, W., Hattie, J., & Bond, L. (2008). "A Validity Study of the Certification System of the National Board for Professional Teaching

Standards" in *Assessing Teachers for Professional Certification: The First Decade of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards*.

Advances in Program Evaluation, Volume 11, 345-378.

⁸Manzeske, D., & Reese, K. (2017). NT3 pilot school teacher and administrator implementation survey results: May–July, 2017. American Institutes for Research. Report submitted to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

⁹Retaining SC Teachers Through National Board Certification (2020). Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement.

¹⁰Zhu, B., Gnedko-Berry, N., Borman, T., & Manzeske, D. (2019). Effects of National Board Certified instructional leaders on classroom practice and student achievement of novice teachers: A study report developed for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. American Institutes for Research.

¹¹Jacques, C., Behrstock-Sherratt, E., Parker, A., Bassett, K., Allen, M., Bosso, D., & Olson, D. (2017). Investing in what it takes to move from good to great: Exemplary educators identify their most important learning experiences. Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, American Institutes for Research.

¹²ED COVID-19 Handbook Vol. 2, p. 38.

¹³ED COVID-19 Handbook Vol. 2, pp. 38-41.

¹⁴Title I, Part A: 34 CFR § 200.77(g) (district-level spending), ESSA, Sec. 1114(b)(7)(A)(iii)(IV) (schoolwide spending), ESSA, Sec. 1115(b)(2)(D) (targeted assistance spending). Title II, Part A: ESSA, Sec. 2103(b)(3)(B). IDEA, Part B: U.S. Department of Education, Using ARRA Funds Provided Through Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to Drive School Reform and Improvement (2009), Section A, at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/idea-b-reform.pdf> (this guidance will be referred to as ED 2009 IDEA, Part B Reform Guidance from now on; please note while this guidance was developed to address spending the additional IDEA, Part B funds appropriated through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), it applies to regular IDEA, Part B funds as well). ESSER: CARES, Sec. 18003(d), CRRSA, Sec. 313(d), ARP, Sec. 2001(e). See also U.S. Department of Education, Frequently Asked Questions about the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund) (2020), at <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/05/ESSER-Fund-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf> (this will be referred to as ED 2020 ESSER I FAQs from now on), U.S. Department of Education, Fact Sheet Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund II Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (2021),

at https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/01/Final_ESSERII_Factsheet_1.5.21.pdf (this will be referred to as ED 2021 ESSER II Fact Sheet from now on), and U.S. Department of Education, Fact Sheet American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER), at https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/03/FINAL_ARP-ESSER-FACT-SHEET.pdf (this will be referred to as ED 2021 ARP ESSER Fact Sheet from now on). The U.S. Department of Education's COVID-19 Handbook Volume 2, p. 29, recognizes National Board Certification as a measure of student access to qualified and supported teachers, an important indicator of the opportunity to learn in light of the pandemic.

¹⁵Title I, Part A: 34 CFR § 200.77(g) (district-level spending), ESSA, Sec. 1114(b)(7)(A)(iii)(IV) (schoolwide spending), ESSA, Sec. 1115(b)(2)(D) (targeted assistance spending). Title II, Part A: ESSA, Sec. 2103(b)(3)(B). IDEA, Part B: ED 2009 IDEA, Part B Reform Guidance at Section A, p. 6 (noting compensation is a factor in supporting effective teachers). ED also noted districts have discretion over how best to recruit, retain, and develop teachers who provide services to students with disabilities in the Federal Register, at 71 Fed. Reg. 46,539 at 46,612 (Aug. 11, 2006)). ESSER: CARES, Sec. 18003(d), CRRSA, Sec. 313(d), ARP, Sec. 2001(e). See also ED 2020 ESSER I FAQs, ED 2021 ESSER II Fact Sheet, and ED 2021 ARP ESSER Fact Sheet.

¹⁶Title I, Part A: 34 CFR § 200.77(g) (district-level spending), ESSA, Sec. 1114(b)(7)(A)(iii)(IV) (schoolwide spending), ESSA, Sec. 1115(b)(2)(D) (targeted assistance spending). Title II, Part A: ESSA, Sec. 2103(b)(3)(B) & Sec. 2103(b)(3)(E) (please note personalized professional development supported under ESSA, Sec. 2103(b)(3)(E) must be evidence-based to the extent the relevant state educational agency, in consultation with its local educational agencies, determines such evidence is reasonably available – please see <https://www.nbpts.org/research/> for a summary of research supporting Board certification generally). IDEA, Part B: ED 2009 IDEA, Part B Reform Guidance at Section A. ESSER: CARES, Sec. 18003(d), CRRSA, Sec. 313(d), ARP, Sec. 2001(e). See also ED 2020 ESSER I FAQs, ED 2021 ESSER II Fact Sheet, and ED 2021 ARP ESSER Fact Sheet.

¹⁷Title I, Part A: 34 CFR § 200.77(g) (district-level spending), ESSA, Sec. 1114(b)(7)(A)(iii)(IV) (schoolwide spending), ESSA, Sec. 1115(b)(2)(D) (targeted assistance spending). Title II, Part A: ESSA, Sec. 2103(b)(3)(B), see also U.S. Department of Education, Non-Regulatory Guidance for Title II, Part A:

Building Systems of Support for Excellent Teaching and Leading (2016), pp. 9-10, at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleii-partaguidance.pdf> (this guidance will be referred to as ED 2016 Title II Guidance from now on). IDEA, Part B: ED 2009 IDEA Reform Guidance at Section A. ESSER: CARES, Sec. 18003(d), CRRSA, Sec. 313(d), ARP, Sec. 2001(e). See also ED 2020 ESSER I FAQs, ED 2021 ESSER II Fact Sheet, and ED 2021 ARP ESSER Fact Sheet.

¹⁸Title I, Part A: 34 CFR § 200.77(g) (district-level spending), ESSA, Sec. 1114(b)(7)(A)(iii)(IV) (schoolwide spending), ESSA, Sec. 1115(b)(2)(D) (targeted assistance spending). Title II, Part A: ESSA, Sec. 2103(b)(3)(E), (F), (G), (M) & (O), see also ED 2016 Title II Guidance at p. 14 (please note personalized professional development supported under ESSA, Sec. 2103(b)(3)(E) must be evidence-based to the extent the relevant state educational agency, in consultation with its local educational agencies, determines such evidence is reasonably available – please see <https://www.nbpts.org/research/> for a summary of research supporting Board certification generally). IDEA, Part B: ED 2009 IDEA, Part B Reform Guidance at Section A. ESSER: CARES, Sec. 18003(d), CRRSA, Sec. 313(d), ARP, Sec. 2001(e). See also ED 2020 ESSER I FAQs, ED 2021 ESSER II Fact Sheet, and ED 2021 ARP ESSER Fact Sheet.

¹⁹Title I, Part A: 34 CFR § 200.77(g) (district-level spending), ESSA, Sec. 1114(b)(7)(A)(iii)(IV) (schoolwide spending), ESSA, Sec. 1115(b)(2)(D) (targeted assistance spending). See also U.S. Department of Education, Using Title I, Part A ARRA Funds for Grants to Local Educational Agencies to Strengthen Education, Drive Reform, and Improve Results for Students (2009), Q&A E-4, at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/titlei-reform.pdf> (this guidance will be referred to as ED 2009 Title I Reform Guidance from now on; please note while this guidance addresses the additional Title I, Part A funds appropriated through ARRA it applies to regular Title I funds as well). Title II, Part A: ESSA, Sec. 2103(b)(3)(B)(iv)). See also ED 2016 Title II Guidance at pp. 9-11. IDEA, Part B: ED 2009 IDEA, Part B Reform Guidance at Section A. ESSER: CARES, Sec. 18003(d), CRRSA, Sec. 313(d), ARP, Sec. 2001(e). See also ED 2020 ESSER I FAQs, ED 2021 ESSER II Fact Sheet, and ED 2021 ARP ESSER Fact Sheet.

²⁰Title I, Part A: 34 CFR § 200.77(g) (district-level spending), ESSA, Sec. 1114(b)(7)(A)(iii)(IV) (schoolwide spending), ESSA, Sec. 1115(b)(2)(D) (targeted assistance spending). See also ED 2009 Title I Reform Guidance at Q&A E-4. Title II, Part A: ESSA, Sec. 2103(b)(3)(B)(iv)). See also ED 2016 Title II Guidance at pp. 9-11. IDEA, Part B: ED 2009 IDEA, Part B Reform Guidance at Section A. ESSER: CARES, Sec. 18003(d), CRRSA, Sec. 313(d), ARP, Sec. 2001(e). See also ED 2020 ESSER I FAQs, ED 2021 ESSER II Fact Sheet, and ED 2021 ARP ESSER Fact Sheet.

²¹Title I, Part A: 34 CFR § 200.77(g) (district-level spending), ESSA, Sec. 1114(b)(7)(A)(iii)(IV) (schoolwide spending), ESSA, Sec. 1115(b)(2)(D) (targeted assistance spending). See also ED 2009 Title I Reform Guidance at Section E. Title II, Part A: ESSA, Sec. 2103(b)(3)(E), (F), (G), (H), (M) & (O) (please note personalized professional development supported under ESSA, Sec. 2103(b)(3)(E) must be evidence-based to the extent the relevant state educational agency, in consultation with its local educational agencies, determines such evidence is reasonably available – please see <https://www.nbpts.org/wp-content/uploads/ATLAS-One-Pager.pdf> for a summary of research supporting ATLAS). IDEA, Part B: ED 2009 IDEA, Part B Reform Guidance at Section A. ESSER: CARES, Sec. 18003(d), CRRSA, Sec. 313(d), ARP, Sec. 2001(e). See also ED 2020 ESSER I FAQs, ED 2021 ESSER II Fact Sheet, and ED 2021 ARP ESSER Fact Sheet.