

NATIONAL BOARD

for Professional Teaching Standards®

Policy Priorities: State Equity Plans

Integrating National Board Certification into State Equity Plans

Across the nation, states and districts are grappling with the challenge of staffing high-need schools with high-quality teachers. In these schools, teacher turnover can be high, professional culture weak, and student achievement persistently low.¹ While there are many variables involved in student success, research has proven that teachers are the single most important school-based factor.

Unfortunately, poor and minority students are less likely than their peers to have access to high-quality teachers.⁴ [More than a decade of rigorous research](#) in states and cities across the country show that students taught by Board-certified teachers learn more than their peers.² Furthermore, research suggests that **Board-certified teachers produce larger learning gains for students receiving free or reduced-price lunch.**³ Given this evidence, it is critical that state equity plans increase access to Board-certified teachers for high-need schools and students.

Analyze the number and distribution of Board-certified teachers

- As one indicator of teacher quality, collect data on the distribution of Board-certified teachers across the state and within schools.

Engage the expertise of Board-certified teachers

- Include Board-certified teachers as a stakeholder group when developing equity strategies.
- Engage Board-certified teachers in raising awareness of equity gaps and setting priorities for taking action to address these gaps.

Ensure Board-certified teachers reach the students that need them the most

- A number of states, including Washington, Colorado, Maryland, Wisconsin, and Hawaii, offer an additional stipend to Board-certified teachers in high-need schools on top of the base stipend that all Board-certified teachers in the state receive.
- Three years after Washington began offering a \$5,000 stipend to Board-certified teachers in schools with high levels of poverty, the total number of Board-certified teachers in high-poverty schools increased from 79 to 746; the proportion of Board-certified teachers in these schools increased from about 12% to almost 20%; and almost 60% of high-poverty schools had at least one Board-certified teacher, compared to only 20% three years earlier.⁵

National Board Certification is a voluntary advanced professional certification for PreK-12 educators that identifies teaching expertise through a performance-based, peer-reviewed assessment.

81% of Americans across the political spectrum believe teachers should achieve Board certification, beyond licensure, as it is in other professions (2014 PDK/Gallup poll).⁵

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Build a culture of professional learning and growth through Board certification

- The [increased flexibility](#) of permitting candidates three years to complete Board certification presents schools with the opportunity to build professional development around the National Board process. For example, Illinois is launching National Board [developing schools](#), a school-based candidate support model that guides groups of 10 or more interested teachers in a school or district through the National Board Certification process. Over a three-year period these school-based cohorts will complete all four National Board Certification components. Principals across the state have responded enthusiastically to this opportunity.
- [Montgomery County, MD leveraged National Board Certification to improve teacher capacity](#) as a strategy to address achievement gaps and promote college- and career-ready standards. In addition to financial incentives, the district embeds the National Board's Five Core Propositions—the framework for what teachers should know and be able to do—into professional development, hiring, and evaluation. As a result, some 40 percent of the Board-certified teachers teach in the district's 30 Title I schools. These efforts helped narrow the achievement gap in the district.

Strengthen the continuum for teaching quality statewide, with a focus on high-need students

- In addition to targeted interventions to address the equitable distribution of teaching quality, states can accelerate and focus their work on [strengthening the teaching continuum](#), with an emphasis on those teaching high-need students. For example, in strengthening induction supports for new teachers, states can target resources and attention to high-need schools.



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¹ Borman, G. D., & Kimball, S. M. (2005). Teacher quality and educational equality: Do teachers with higher standards-based evaluation ratings close student achievement gaps? *The Elementary School Journal*, 106(1), 3-20; Ferguson, R. F. (1998). Can schools narrow the black-white test score gap? in C. Jencks & M. Phillips (Eds.), *The Black-White test score gap* (pp. 318-374). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution; Jacob, A., Vidyarthi, E., & Carroll, K. (2012). The irreplaceables: Understanding the real retention crisis in America's urban schools. TNTP. http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP_irreplaceables_2012.pdf; Kain, J. F., & Singleton, K. (1996). Equality of education opportunity revisited. *New England Economic Review*, (May/June), 87-114.

² See, e.g., Strategic Data Project (2012). SDP Human Capital Diagnostic: Los Angeles Unified School District. Center for Education Policy Research, Harvard University; Strategic Data Project (2012a). Learning about Teacher Effectiveness: SDP Human Capital Diagnostic: Gwinnett County Public Schools, Ga. Center for Education Policy Research, Harvard University; Goldhaber, D., & Anthony, E. (2007). Can teacher quality be effectively assessed? *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 89(1), 134-150.

³ Goldhaber, D., & Anthony, E. (2007). Can teacher quality be effectively assessed? *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 89(1), 134-150.

⁴ Humphrey, D., Koppich, J., & Hough, H. (2005). Sharing the Wealth: National Board Certified Teachers and the Students Who Need Them Most. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives* 13(18).

⁵ Plecki, M. et al. (2010). Study of the Incentive Program for Washington's National Board Certified Teachers, Prepared for Washington State Board of Education. The Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy at the University of Washington & The Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession.