

NATIONAL BOARD

*for Professional
Teaching Standards®*

Research and Policy Implications

Board Certification: A Proven Tool for Identifying Quality Teaching

Summary of Research

In February 2015, two separate groups of independent researchers released studies finding Board-certified teachers are more effective at advancing student learning than non-Board-certified teachers. These reports build on more than [a decade of research](#) finding similar results. Estimates of the impact of a student being taught by a Board-certified teacher range up to two months of additional learning gains.

Evidence from Washington State: Researchers Goldhaber and Cowan use seven years of statewide data to study the effectiveness of Board-certified teachers in Washington, a state that has not been the focus of prior research. The authors find that Board-certified teachers produce nearly six weeks of **additional learning gains** in middle school math classrooms and one to two weeks of additional learning gains in elementary classrooms and middle school reading classrooms. They also find that teachers who achieve Board certification on their first attempt produce four and a half weeks of additional learning gains compared to those teachers who pursue but never achieve Board certification. Finally, they find that the scale score a teacher receives on the assessment—in addition to whether or not a teacher achieves—is predictive of gains in student achievement. Read more at <http://cedr.us/papers/working/CEDR%20WP%202015-3 NBPTS%20Cert.pdf>.

Evidence from Kentucky and Chicago, IL: Lead researcher Cavalluzzo and her co-researchers extend the research base by studying the effects of Board-certified teachers in two locations – Chicago and Kentucky; by focusing on high schools as opposed to elementary and middle schools through the use of ACT and PLAN student tests; and incorporating science in addition to English and math. The researchers find that National Board Certification is an **effective “signal” of teacher quality** across locales, test types, and subject areas, while effect sizes varied. They also find that National Board Certification effectively “screens” applicants; in other words, that teachers who achieve Board certification produce larger student gains when compared to teachers who pursue but do not achieve board certification. Read more in their study at <http://www.cna.org/research/2014/national-board-certification>.

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

Did you know?

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](#)).

**Learn more by visiting
nbpts.org/policy**

Implications for Policymakers Aiming to Improve Teaching Quality:

Given this consistent and compelling evidence base, we must take advantage of Board certification as a vehicle to **systematically develop a high-quality, professional teaching workforce** so that every student is prepared to meet the demands of society and the global economy. Right now, even with more than 118,000 Board-certified teachers, only 3% of the teaching workforce is Board certified. This is true even though more than 80% of Americans believe that teachers should be Board-certified, in addition to being licensed.

This evidence base is a call to action—the teaching profession must come together in partnership with policymakers to create the conditions for accomplished teaching, as measured by Board certification, to become the norm, not the exception.

Policymakers can leverage Board certification to strengthen teaching through three [policy priorities](#):



1. Build the Pipeline to Accomplished Teaching and Board Certification



2. Raise Teaching Standards by Investing in Board Certification



3. Spread the Expertise of Board-Certified Teachers

Washington State provides a leading example of the pursuit of these strategies in their state through its integration of Board certification into its teaching culture, structures, and policies. The pipeline to accomplished teaching is anchored with the edTPA as an initial licensure assessment and, once successful on that performance-based exam, teachers progress into a statewide induction program. As educators approach the second stage of their teaching career, they can **achieve Board certification as a pathway for acquiring a professional teaching license**. Board-certified teachers are recognized for their experience with a \$5,000 salary stipend. To best serve the students who need great teaching the most, Board-certified teachers who teach in challenging schools receive an additional salary stipend of up to \$5,000. Teachers are supported in their pursuit through a statewide interest-free conditional loan program to pay certification fees and have access to a robust candidate support program coordinated by the state department and the state teachers union. As a result, although Washington has only the 15th largest population of K-12 students, it has the fourth most Board-certified teachers of any state and it produced the most new Board-certified teachers of any state this year. **Board-certified teachers increasingly serve in leadership roles, improving instruction and strengthening the teaching practices of their colleagues in a variety of roles.**

These strategies, while new to teaching, are what other professions have done to systematically elevate the quality of the workforce. The teaching profession must follow their lead, working in partnership with policymakers to make Board certification the expectation for all teachers. Through these efforts, **we can collectively ensure that accomplished teachers advance the learning of all students.**