

**Resources for Reform:
The Role of Board-Certified Teachers in
Improving the Quality of Teaching**

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of the Graduate School of Education of Harvard University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

2007

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Dedication

To my husband, Erik
Who inspires, nourishes and balances me

To my children, Althea and Maceo
Who always remind me of what is important

To my principal, Lynn Stuart
Who first set me off on this wild and wonderful journey

To God
Whose grace astounds me

Acknowledgements

This journey began ten years ago, when Lynn Stuart, principal of the Cambridgeport School, innocently suggested to me, a seventh grade teacher, that I consider pursuing National Board Certification. I do not know if she knew that the experience would cause me to question the purpose of education and what it means to be a teacher, that it would drive me out of the classroom in search for answers, or that it would lead one day to a dissertation. I still do not have all of the answers I seek, but to Lynn Stuart I am deeply indebted and grateful.

This study is richly informed by my ten years of participation in events of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) such as the annual conferences, the Facilitators' Institutes, the Renewal scoring pilot and the 2001 NBPTS Invitational Research Conference, and by conversations with colleagues I have met at these events. Paramount among these colleagues is Jim Kelly, founding president of the NBPTS, who has been both an influential mentor and a caring friend.

This work is also informed by my experience as the 2006 Edward J. Meade Fellow through the Institute for Educational Leadership. This fellowship experience, masterfully orchestrated by Betty Hale, enabled me to meet with founding members or early supporters of the NBPTS as well as additional leaders of national organizations concerned with teaching quality to discuss the topic of National Board Certification. During two weeks in the summer of 2006 I met with: Joan Baratz-Snowden, Mary Dilworth, Mary Futrell, Milt Goldberg, David Mandel, Bella Rosenberg, Michael D. Usdan, Jerry Sroufe, Art Wise, Joe Aguerrebere, Anne Bryant, Gillian Cohen-Boyer, Carol Edwards, Kathleen Fulton, Paul Houston, J.D. La Rock, Bill Miles, Frank B. Murray, Marty Orland, Heather G. Peske, Karabelle Pizzigati, Roberto Rodriguez, Dave Saba, Elizabeth Ann Witt, Peggi Zelinko and Claus von Zastrow. My conversations with these individuals were enlightening, thrilling, enjoyable, sometimes concerning, and always thought-provoking. They helped me to understand what might be interesting and important about this dissertation topic.

I could never have written this without several faculty members at the Harvard Graduate School of Education who pushed my thinking, introduced me to important new ideas and helped to strengthen my research skills. I am grateful to Susan Moore Johnson, my advisor, who taught me how to begin to make sense of the complexity of schools and teachers' work. She coached me to figure out what my questions were and kept me focused in my search for answers. Kitty Boles inspired me to keep my research close to schools and buoyed me in tough times with her enthusiasm. Richard Elmore, Steve Seidel and Bob Kegan also helped me to challenge my own assumptions in important ways.

I am especially grateful for the support of Morgaen Donaldson, my colleague on the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, who paddled with me in a canoe to the middle of Ponkapoag Pond and agreed not to come back until this study proposal was done. She, together with my other colleagues on the project, challenged me with questions, broadened my mind to new perspectives, helped me to navigate the labyrinth of graduate school, and made me laugh along the way.

I feel lucky to have many good friends who served as proofreaders (Erik Berg, Tom Berg, Sonia Caus-Gleason, Cara Hill, Bruce Grover, and Kate Digby) and cheerleaders (Su Henry, Kelly Cannard, Victor Milner, Angela Bermudez, Karen Clay, Stina Hals, Gail Ritchie, Misty Sato, and Maria Hyler among others). Their helpfulness and encouragement were more important than they will ever know.

I would like to be able to thank the many individuals I met at Blue Hill Academy, Red River Pilot School and Green Valley Elementary School by name, but due to our agreement of confidentiality, I cannot. I am overwhelmed with gratitude as I recall the way they welcomed me into their school communities, shared their valuable time, accommodated my requests, and opened themselves up to offer the very personal stories inside their professional experiences. I pray that they feel this study does justice to their good work.

And my family! The powerful examples of my grandparents, Catherine and Herman Huff and Frances Pittman, my parents, Roger and Marylyn Harrison, and my sister, Rhonda Harrison-Tang, motivate me to continue learning and growing. The unwavering love of my husband, Erik, my daughter, Althea, and my son, Maceo, inspires me to try to make the world a better place. I am thankful for their encouragement and grateful for their patience as I worked to craft this little piece of new knowledge in the service of education.

*The Great Being saith:
Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value.
Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures,
and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.*

(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 259)

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Abstract

While experts agree that teaching quality is the most important school-level influence on student learning, they do not necessarily agree on what quality teaching is or how to improve it. In 1986 the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession proposed that leading members of the teaching profession come together to agree on what constitutes a professional level of practice in teaching and to establish a system for identifying teachers who meet it. This would, they believed, make it possible to reward teachers for practicing at this level and to restructure schools so that the benefits of these teachers' expertise might be felt throughout their schools.

One year later, a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was established. It set a standard for quality, or "accomplished," teaching and, as of 2007, has certified over 55,000 teachers who meet it. Many of these board-certified teachers receive rewards for their achievement, but few work in schools that have been restructured to make effective and efficient use of their expertise.

This qualitative study reports on data from three schools in which key leaders viewed board-certified teachers as resources for their local reform plans. I examined these purposively-selected schools and teachers' experiences within them using data from interviews, focus groups, sociograms, observations, and documents collected during multi-day site visits to understand how board-certified teachers were strategically employed in these settings, to identify the ways in which these teachers were assets for improving teaching practice and to analyze how context mattered in whether these schools and districts were making efficient use of board-certified human resources.

The data from this study reveal that while board-certified teachers were reported to have a positive influence on the standard of teaching practice in these settings, conditions within their contexts were important in supporting them to be willing and able to be resources and to be effective in their formal and informal reform roles.

These unique cases offer insights into how schools might capitalize on the investments education leaders have made in board-certified teachers and hint at how the Board's new professional standard could stimulate improvement throughout U.S. schools.

Chapter One

Introduction

In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* drew national attention to what it called the “mediocre” state of our education system (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). An uncompetitive workforce, it warned, was a potential “threat” to our nation’s security and prosperity. The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy responded by convening a task force of education, business and government leaders charged to propose a policy solution. After considering the requirements of American democracy, the demands of our increasingly globalized economy and trends in the teacher workforce, the group concluded: “The key to success lies in creating a profession equal to the task” (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986, p. 2).

The first step of their policy proposal was to establish a professional standards board that could define a clear, high and rigorous standard for professional practice in teaching and develop a system to identify teachers who met it. The task force envisioned that as teachers demonstrated that their ability to practice at this level, they could then be employed in ways that would capitalize on their knowledge, skills and experience to help raise the standard of practice throughout their schools. In fact, it was further believed that as schools restructured to support this new, professional standard of practice, teaching would be seen as a more attractive option to those seeking professional careers.

A National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was established in 1987, and twenty years later more than 55,000 teachers, representing over two percent of America's teachers, have voluntarily pursued and achieved National Board Certification (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2007b). While many states, districts and schools have responded by providing recognition and monetary rewards to National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs), few have considered how the professional expertise of these teachers might be strategically employed as resources for reforming the standard of teaching practice in their schools.

For this study I identified three contexts where school or district leaders believed board-certified teachers would be useful resources or agents for improving teaching and attempted to make strategic and efficient use of these teachers as assets within their reform plans. I examined qualitative data from these schools to identify what value board-certified teachers added to these local reform plans, if any, and to understand the conditions that affected how board-certified teachers influenced the standard of teaching practice in their contexts.

Establishing a New Standard of Professional Practice

National Board Certification was conceived as the necessary first step of a complex solution to the challenging task facing today's schools. Inspired by *A Nation at Risk*, the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy noted that a wider diversity of students are expected to reach higher-levels of learning than previous decades, while the teacher workforce is less competitive and less committed to teaching as a long-term career (Johnson et al., 2005). Concerned about the impact of this predicament on the

U.S. economy, the Carnegie Forum invited education, business and government leaders to participate in a Task Force on Teaching as a Profession and charged the group with proposing education policy that would defend the nation from this potential economic threat.

The task force analyzed education as though it were an industry in the business of producing a product called “student learning.” It reasoned that while businesses can usually increase productivity by increasing inputs or improving efficiency, education has no clear consensus about what inputs cause productivity, limited resources for providing incentives for increased inputs, and no market forces to encourage efficiency. Teachers are prepared, licensed, evaluated and developed in accordance with loosely or variously-defined standards, but ultimately operate under their own beliefs about which inputs are important for student learning.¹ The task force noted, “Educators work in a highly regulated industry that often penalizes efficiency and provides mixed incentives, at best, for improving quality” (p. 89).

The Carnegie task force recommended that education leaders come to agree about the inputs that contribute to student learning. It looked to the example of other professions.

[In] virtually every occupation regarded by the public as a true profession,... the leading members of the profession decide what professionals in that area need to know and be able to do. They capture that knowledge in an assessment or examination and administer that examination to people who want a certificate saying they passed the assessment.... The certificate means the profession itself pronounces the certificate holder fully competent to perform at a high professional standard. (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986, p. 65)

¹ It should be noted that there is also no clear consensus in education about what “student learning” is. A movement to create student learning standards was also underway at this time.

Expanding on an idea that had been proposed earlier by Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, the task force claimed that a professional standards board was needed in education. If leading members of the teaching profession could agree on “what standard of practice can be considered fully professional” (p. 66) and could issue certificates to teachers who meet those standards, schools could be organized to ensure that these teachers’ professional knowledge and skills were contributing to greater effectiveness throughout their schools. They believed: “The professionalization of the teacher work force is the key. Professionalization promises much greater returns on our investment [in education] by reorienting policy to enhance the productivity of teachers” (p. 107).

Immediately after *A Nation Prepared* was issued, the Carnegie Forum began to consider the question of how to assemble “the leading members of the profession” for a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. This was an important decision. The founding members of this new Board would be responsible for determining what standard of teaching practice could be considered fully professional. Whereas education research had little to offer at that time, the Board would rely heavily on the collective practical experience of its members to set this standard. The Forum recognized that a professional standards board must belong to its members and recommended that at least half the Board’s membership be practicing teachers. In a field that historically had not been led by practicing members, there were many who were not classroom teachers who were considered to be “leading members of the profession” as well. The result was an exceptionally large board of 63 members.² The non-teacher members were selected to

² After 19 years with a 63-member board, the NBPTS board membership was reduced to 27 in 2006.

include the executive heads of leading education organizations such as teachers unions and discipline-based organizations; other education leaders such as state education officials, teacher preparation faculty members, education researchers, and school, district or state administrators; and others including governors, state legislators, and corporate executives. (A list of the founding members of NBPTS is included in Appendix A.)

The founding members of the NBPTS came together in 1987 and spent their first two years in heated debate about what standard of practice could be considered fully professional in teaching. In 1989 they came to agreement, not on what best practices or performances constitute good teaching, but on what they believed should be valued in teaching. This is explained in the NBPTS's central policy statement, *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do* (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1999b). (See Appendix B) The "Five Core Propositions" outlined in this statement have formed the basis of all subsequent standards and assessment development work. It is worthwhile, therefore, to consider each of these propositions.

The first is: "Teachers are committed to students and their learning." Professional educators, according to the NBPTS, demonstrate a commitment to knowing every student as an individual and have knowledge of child development in general, which they use to motivate, engage, and educate all of their students. They hold themselves accountable for student improvement by constantly considering the impact of their teaching on their students' learning.

The second and third Core Propositions relate to classroom practice. They are: "Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students," and "Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning." The NBPTS

expects professional teachers to be experts in content, curriculum, instruction, assessment and classroom management. Their extensive knowledge and vast repertoires in these areas allow them to create a safe and equitable learning environment for all students, to guide students in making connections and thinking critically across subjects, and to communicate with students and parents about learning and behavior in ways that give students appropriate ownership.

The fourth core proposition is: “Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.” Teachers who practice at a professional level have extensive knowledge of the science of teaching, which they apply artfully as informed by their experience. This requires them to reflect systematically on their practice and constantly consider not just whether, but how, why and when their teaching is—or is not— influencing their students’ learning. In this way they model for their students and peers important habits of lifelong learners including perspective-taking, risk-taking, and problem-solving.

The fifth core proposition is: “Teachers are members of learning communities.” The Board believes that professional teachers should be both producers and consumers of professional knowledge. They should be collaborative and resourceful in working with parents and community members to build their knowledge of students and to support them. In the NBPTS view, professional teachers are always learning, always contributing and always collaborating with others in the interest of their students’ learning.

The process of coming to consensus on what underlies professional or “accomplished” teaching, as the Board calls it, was a powerful exercise for those involved. Never before had such a diverse group of leading members of the education

profession—officials and practicing teachers alike—engaged in such substantive conversations about teaching and learning. Yet this was meant to be more than a theoretical exercise. It was meant to set a new, high bar of professional practice toward which teachers might aspire, through which teacher preparation and development might be strengthened, and in support of which schools might be redesigned. In order for the concept of an “accomplished teacher” to have this kind of an impact, or any practical meaning at all, the Board would have to be able to identify accomplished teachers in U.S. schools with validity and people would have to believe that board certification represented a useful distinction.

Since the practice of teaching is shaped by the subjects and developmental levels being taught, the first step toward identifying teachers who embody the Core Propositions was to define certificate fields and to establish standards for each. Standards committees, comprised predominately of practicing teachers,³ were charged with examining the Five Core Propositions and elaborating the critical aspects and the observable actions of an “accomplished” level of practice for their field. Recognizing that these aspects and actions of teaching may change over time in response to new developments in research and practice, the NBPTS ensures that the standards documents are routinely revisited, presented for public comment, and revised. As of 2007, NBPTS Standards are available in 24 certificate areas, covering the subject areas in which roughly 95% of teachers teach. (See Appendix C for a sample summary of the standards.)

The next challenge before the National Board was to create an assessment system that could identify “accomplished teachers,” teachers who are able to practice at the level

³ Standards committees also included academics in the relevant fields, researchers, and teacher educators.

of the NBPTS Standards. Guided by a technical advisory group, the National Board set out to assess the complex performance of teaching in a way that would be “administratively feasible, professionally credible, publicly acceptable, legally defensible, and economically affordable” (Baratz-Snowden, 1993). This task required the use of multiple measures and new technologies as well as the collaboration of university-based assessment-development laboratories, independent research institutions, psychometricians, lawyers, researchers, and discipline-based teacher associations in addition to other teachers (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1990). The assessment development process took over eight years, but resulted in a first-of-its-kind performance assessment that has been judged to be valid, reliable, credible, dependable and fair (Bond & Crocker, 1996; Bond & Linn, 1996; Haertel & Traub, 1996; Hattie, 1996; Hattie & Clinton, 2001; Jaeger, 1996; Phillips, 2005), and is one of the only credentialing assessments in any professional field that has never been challenged in a law suit (Aguerreberre, 2007; Kelly, 2002).

The first task of the Board’s two-part assessment system requires teachers to compile a portfolio of evidence demonstrating how they meet the NBPTS Standards for their particular certificate area. Teachers tend to spend at least 200 hours, during as little as four months or over as many as three years, producing written descriptions, analyses and reflections of their teaching practice and gathering supporting evidence such as videotaped teaching events, student work and other artifacts to submit with the portfolio. The second task is for teachers to complete a four-hour assessment of their knowledge of

the content related to their certificate area. (A more detailed description of the portfolio and assessment center test requirements is provided in Appendix D.)⁴

The four portfolio entries and six assessment center responses are each scored separately by teams of practicing teachers who have been trained to use the publicly-available scoring guide. Candidates whose composite score falls below the Board's established cut score for certification can choose to save their high scores from individual components of the assessment and replace low scores by repeating those components within two years. In fact, the NBPTS has reported that only about 40% of teachers who pursue board certification achieve the credential in their first year (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2007a). Those who demonstrate that they are able to practice at the level of the NBPTS Standards receive a credential from the NBPTS that is renewable after ten years.⁵

National Board Certification is determined through assessment of teaching practice, not student learning outcomes. This important element of the assessment's design is a result of its purpose. The Carnegie task force believed that simply identifying and rewarding accomplished teachers could not possibly address the threat posed to our nation's security and prosperity by an undereducated populace. In order to see the kind of unprecedented, large-scale improvement that is necessary, they believed education would have to be restructured to enable all students to benefit from the expertise of accomplished teachers and to support all teachers to operate within this standard of

⁴ The NBPTS Standards, portfolio instructions, assessment center exercise information, and scoring guide for each certificate are publicly-available at http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/certificate_areas1.

⁵ The renewal process, introduced in 2005, requires NBCTs to complete a four-part portfolio in which they provide evidence of continued professional growth that is connected to student learning and aligned with the NBPTS Standards in the NBCT's original certificate area. The renewed certificate is also valid for ten years.

practice. It further assumed that such reorganization would not be possible without a clear, common idea of what accomplished practice is. By using a clear standard of professional practice to identify effective teachers, the NBPTS expected to make it possible for schools and teachers to align their efforts to support that standard of practice.

It is important, then, to ascertain the extent to which the new standard for accomplished teaching set by the NBPTS can be accepted to represent effective teaching. Accomplished teaching is expected to lead to increased student learning,⁶ and studies do consistently confirm that teachers whose practice is aligned to the NBPTS Standards show higher student learning gains than those whose practice does not (that is, than who pursued and did not achieve board certification) (Bond et al., 2000; Cavalluzzo, 2004; Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004). In the first of these, Bond and his colleagues analyzed student work samples from 65 teachers who had been applicants in the board-certification process and determined that National Board Certification was “a distinction that mattered” (Bond et al., 2000). They determined that the teachers who successfully achieved board certification had higher scores on all 13 tested dimensions of teaching than teachers who did not achieve the credential. Although the study did not control for student or school differences, it reported that eleven of these differences were statistically significant. Four years later two additional studies were released that corroborated the earlier claim. They pursued the question using student test scores from two different states and controlling for important differences. Goldhaber and Anthony reported that the difference in test scores of board-certified and unsuccessful board-certification

⁶ The NBPTS literature does not provide a definition of “student learning,” but its vision of student learning clearly embraces two key assumptions: 1) It involves more than basic skills, and 2) it involves goals that vary depending on the student and the context. (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1994, 2006)

candidates was significant at the one percent level. Cavalluzzo found similar results and concluded, “These initial results support the view that NBC teachers are doing things that result in higher average gains for students” than teachers who apply and do not achieve board certification. Whereas teachers whose practice was aligned to the NBPTS Standards consistently had higher outcomes than those teachers whose practice was not, these few studies do validate the Core Propositions and NBPTS Standards on which the assessment is based. They suggest that the National Board’s standard of accomplished teaching does represent effective teaching and that alignment to this new standard for professional practice would be a worthwhile goal.

Raising the Standard of Professional Practice in the U.S.

National Board Certification was expected to be of benefit to more than just the students in NBCTs’ classrooms. The existence of a clear, shared, high and worthwhile professional standard was intended to be a catalyst for schools to be restructured in ways that make them more efficient and more effective at educating students. The National Board explained:

America’s schools can, without doubt, greatly improve their performance.... But the schools cannot realistically expect that all 2.3 million teachers will be the best and the brightest the country has to offer. Education, like other professions, will have to structure itself so that it can make the very best use of a distribution of talent. That means reorganization, because the current “eggcrate” organization does not permit efficient shared use of highly skilled people, support services and equipment. (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986, p. 41)

In a sense, then, while the NBPTS offered a new definition of teaching, it also suggested a new definition of teachers’ work in which teachers are more flexibly assigned and employed. Its vision of accomplished teaching takes the position that

teachers are, first and foremost, members of a profession, not managers of a particular classroom or even employees of a particular school. From this perspective, the NBPTS expected that schools and districts who employ board-certified teachers might ask themselves, “Is instruction organized to take best advantage of the staff’s particular expertise?”(National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1994) Nat LaCour, a founding member of the NBPTS and the executive vice president of the American Federation of Teachers, said, “Once a teacher achieved National Board Certification, we felt that the state and local school district would look for ways to utilize their skills by having them work more with their peers, assist with evaluations, and serve as mentors. However, we wanted most of these individuals to remain in the classroom” (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2005a). If state and local school district leaders were to respond in this way, they would have two options. They could either find a way for teachers to take on extra work on top of or in between their full-time classroom responsibilities or they could begin to think more flexibly about the structure of teachers’ work. The first option, the most common resolution of this dilemma, is possible but may not be sustainable in the long run (Hargreaves, 2005).

The NBPTS envisioned that as education leaders began to recognize teachers as people with particular expertise “fluid and open models of schooling would emerge” (p.16). School and district administrators might work with teachers to invent new, more efficient arrangements in which, for example, a teacher who is adept at mentoring or modeling instructional practices might assume more of these responsibilities and a teacher with particular content expertise might work with several groups of students in that area. The NBPTS believed that “with a modicum of imagination, a variety of

organizational staffing arrangements can be identified that would be distinct improvements on the current lock-step approach” (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1994, p. 16).

The traditional lock-step approach, however, has deep roots. Layers of tradition, cultural norms, and politics have combined to create the structure we see in many conventional schools today. For over a century these schools have maintained the flat structure which they inherited from the one-room schoolhouses that served a pre-industrial society (Tyack, 1974). Within them, teachers have worked in physically- and socially-isolated classrooms with limited opportunities to interact with colleagues (Lortie, 1975). When teachers did interact, cultural norms guarded against discussions about instructional practice and protected the individual autonomy they enjoyed in their classrooms (Little, 1982). In such schools, teachers have only been able to have an influence in education beyond their classrooms by engaging in outside professional activities after the school day or by leaving the classroom for administrative roles. These customs and structures, which keep professional knowledge and work apart from classroom teaching, inhibit the organizational learning that needs to occur for schools to meet today’s challenge of educating all students to higher levels. These customs and structures have been difficult to change because they were protected by the long-standing assumption that teaching is not highly-skilled work.

In fact, teaching has not traditionally been perceived to require highly-skilled workers. Johnson’s review of the history of teaching as a profession (2005) notes that teaching was itinerant work for men in colonial times and short-term work for unmarried women until the middle of the last century. When women began to hold their teaching

positions longer, the public began to view teaching as child care. Even today, people from fresh college graduates to career-changers expect to begin teaching without extensive training or a long-term commitment (Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004). This workforce pattern has not been improved by licensing regulations, which were non-existent in some states until 1950, and until very recently did not prohibit anyone who wanted to teach from teaching. If teaching were highly-skilled work, it would require an investment in specialized training that would only be undertaken by people who are committed to long-term careers. But what would that specialized training look like? For centuries, teachers were required only to know the content of the subjects they taught. Not until recent decades has there been an effort to understand pedagogy, to conduct systematic research on teaching, to identify what it is that teachers know that is not easily acquired or widely held, and to codify this knowledge base in a way that can be used to prepare teachers or organize schools.

While it is true that there are many highly-skilled teachers in U.S. schools, teaching has until recently not required highly-skilled workers. That is, neither the regulatory authorities nor the requirements of the day had demanded it. The authors of *A Nation Prepared* argued in 1986 that the educational needs of the times require teaching to be redefined as highly-skilled work and our education system to be redesigned to support the work that needs to be done. They warned:

If our standard of living is to be maintained, if the growth of a permanent underclass is to be averted, if democracy is to function effectively into the next century, our schools must graduate the vast majority of their students with achievement levels long thought possible for only the privileged few. The American mass education system, designed in the early part of the century for a mass-production economy, will not succeed unless it not only raises but redefines

the essential standards of excellence and strives to make quality and equality of opportunity compatible with each other.

The NBPTS was established to lay the groundwork necessary to redesign the American mass education system with attention to the kind of teaching that it believes needs to be occurring in schools.

Inspired in part by the same movement that spurred the establishment of the NBPTS and fueled more recently by the demands of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, some schools have begun to move away from lock-step structures and traditional assumptions. Some schools have, for example, reorganized into teaching teams or small learning communities, some school leaders have increased teachers' opportunities to interact with their colleagues, and some teachers have taken on instructional leadership roles.

Given this recent willingness to deviate from traditional assumptions and experiment with new organizational structures, it seemed that education leaders who had already invested local resources in increasing the number of board-certified teachers in their contexts might have considered the question of how to organize teachers' work to best take advantage of these teachers' expertise. This study examines three of them.

Examining the Role of Board-Certified Teachers as Resources for Reform

This study is based on data from three sites where key leaders believed board-certified teachers would be a positive influence on the standard of teaching practice in their schools and/or districts. These leaders attempted to use National Board Certification to help them identify the human resources required for their reform plans.

In each case, key features of their contexts influenced how effectively and efficiently board-certified teachers served as resources for reform.

The following research questions guided this study:

In each of the three contexts studied...

1. What was the plan for improving the quality of teaching and in what ways were board-certified teachers intended to be a strategic part of that plan?

And across these contexts...

2. In what ways were board-certified teachers resources for influencing the standard of teaching in these schools or districts?

3. How did contextual factors affect how board-certified teachers in these sites were supported or limited in influencing the local reform plans and the standard of teaching in their schools?

I collected data about the three contexts of this study and the professional activities of teachers within them during a five-day visit to each of three purposively-selected schools. (For a more detailed description of study methods, see Appendix E.) During those five days I conducted interviews, led a focus group, observed professional activities of teachers, and reviewed relevant documents. I also asked teachers to complete a sociogram activity. Table 1 provides an overview of the data I collected.

All interviews were conducted using semi-structured protocols in private settings and lasted 30 to 90 minutes. The teachers whom I interviewed were selected through consultation with the principal. We identified both teachers who had achieved board certification and those who had not. Some of the non-board-certified teachers I spoke with were active candidates or had been unsuccessful candidates in the past. I also

collected data from a range of teachers, including veterans and novices, teachers who were new to the school but not to teaching, teachers at different grade levels, itinerant teachers, teachers who played key roles on school-based committees and a representative of the union or local professional association.

Table 1: Data Collection Overview

| | Principal Interviews | NBCT Interviews | Non-NBCT Interviews | Additional Interviews | Sociograms | Focus Group Participants | Observations | Documents Reviewed |
|---|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------------------|---|--|
| Blue Hill Academy | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 ^a | 13 | 8 | four team meetings, staff development session | school improvement team binder, interdisciplinary team meeting binders, team meeting notes |
| Red River Pilot School | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 ^b | 17 | 8 | vertical team meeting, faculty meeting, faculty professional development session, intern workshop | faculty handbook, mentor binder, team meeting notes |
| Green View School | 3 | 8 | 6 | 1 ^c | 19 | 20 | two team meetings, school improvement team meeting, parent workshop, staff development session | school improvement team binder, team and content committee notes, teacher/student /parent surveys, school-wide assistance team documents |
| TOTALS | 45 | | | | 49 | 36 | 14 | -- |
| a Former superintendent, district-level program administrator, assistant principal b Founding/ former principal, teacher training program administrator c Assistant principal | | | | | | | | |

Between 14 and 41 percent of the instructional staff at each site agreed to participate in a 60-minute focus group in which we discussed the range of formal and informal professional interactions that occur within the school. In addition, between 23 and 61 percent of teachers in each site completed a sociogram activity that informed me of the patterns of interaction among the faculty. I observed several professional meetings

in each site and examined relevant documents. These enabled me to triangulate the data collected through interviews, the focus group and sociograms, and to round out the descriptions I had collected about teachers' professional interactions and activities.

The sociograms and focus group notes were analyzed in the sites so that I could follow up on emerging patterns during interviews. I used analytic field notes created in the sites to create thematic summaries for each site and to identify patterns across sites. Working with both transcripts and digital audio files, I then examined the raw data systematically to seek explanations for the emerging patterns and to identify new patterns and themes.

I was aware that as a board-certified teacher I came to the study with insights and beliefs about the salient themes that might arise in this research and I attempted to reduce the threat of theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I used the tools within ATLAS qualitative analysis software to look systematically for discrepant data and I presented my data analysis matrices and interpretations to my colleagues for peer review. In order that study participants would take part in the study with objectivity and with assurance of the confidentiality of their statements, I took care to explain that the study was not evaluative and I safeguarded both the interview data and the identities of people and places in the study. Pseudonyms are used throughout this study.

To identify sites for this study, I solicited recommendations via personal and professional contacts from across the U.S. during a six-month period. I identified nine potential schools in which board certification was not an end in itself, but part of a systematic plan to improve the quality of teaching practice throughout the school or district. [A detailed description of the sampling method is provided in Appendix E.] I

narrowed the pool to three schools by examining their characteristics and attempting to hold some aspects constant while seeking variation in the features of the context that might matter most.

The schools I selected were all mid-sized public elementary schools in which several members of the instructional staff (9-27%) had achieved board certification. The schools were located in three different regions of the U.S., and in different types of communities: one urban, one suburban, and one rural. In addition, one was located in a collective bargaining state. Most importantly, leaders in each of these three contexts had a different reason and strategy for capitalizing on the expertise of board-certified teachers. (See Table 2)

| Table 2: Schools Overview | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| School¹ | Blue Hill Academy (K-6) | Red River Pilot School (K-8) | Green View School (preK-8) |
| Staffing | 58 faculty members 5 NBCTs 3 starting NBC 2 in NBC process | 30 faculty members 6 NBCTs 2 starting NBC 1 in NBC process | 41 faculty members 15 NBCTs (incl. principal) 6 starting NBC 2 in NBC process |
| Students² | 450 students 63% FRLP 32% LEP 16% white | 570 students 52% FRLP 9% LEP 48% white | 540 students 30% FRLP 2% LEP 95% white |
| Location | Metropolitan East Coast suburb | Urban Midwest | Rural South |
| Achievement² | 70% math 60% ELA (advanced or proficient) | 82% Math 72% ELA (advanced or proficient) | >95% at or above proficient in Math and ELA |
| NBC supports and incentives³ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Candidate support: district-based program available providing salary-increment credits ▪Fee: paid in full by district and state ▪Reward: \$8500 first year, \$6000 annually for nine years ▪Other: full credit awarded for state licensure renewal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Candidate support: two district-based program options available ▪Fee: paid in full by teachers union and/or district ▪Reward: \$5500 annually, plus salary increment credits, plus additional \$1000-3000 for mentoring ▪Other: automatic state licensure renewal for ten years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Candidate support: school-based, district-sponsored program available ▪Fee: paid in full by state ▪Reward: annual 12% salary differential on the base pay ▪Other: three release days and state licensure renewal |
| <p>1- pseudonyms have been used throughout this paper 2- based on state tests as reported in 2005-2006 School Report Cards 3- as provided in 2006</p> | | | |

Description of the Sites

Blue Hill Academy

Blue Hill Academy was a K-6 neighborhood school in an East Coast suburban district. Its 450 students were mostly students of color. Sixteen percent were white. About one-third of students were English language learners, and two-thirds received free or reduced-price lunch. In 1998 Blue Hill had been one of the lowest-performing schools in its large district with only about 20% of students achieving at proficient levels on local standardized tests. However, by 2006, student achievement scores showed that nearly two-thirds of students were performing at proficient levels. A multi-faceted strategy had been used to renew this school.

The story began in 1998 when, in an effort to address the great disparity between the very high-achieving schools and sorely underperforming schools in this district, the superintendent initiated a plan to infuse the lowest performing schools with substantially more resources. Within a year or two, all but a few of the targeted schools showed significant growth. These few schools that failed to improve drew the superintendent's attention. He spent time in each, spoke with teachers and administrators, and determined that in these schools "teachers were not committed to the kids' learning." Years without success had led them to feel defeated and they were in the habit of looking for blame instead of looking at how they could improve their professional practices to meet students' needs.

At about the same time, the Blue Hill school district had begun to invest resources to provide supports and incentives for teachers to pursue National Board Certification, and a small group of the district's teachers successfully achieved this distinction. In

2000, a team of board-certified teachers had requested to meet with the Superintendent to discuss how their knowledge and skills could be of use to the district. Impressed with their sense of commitment to students and confidence in their craft, the superintendent proposed that these teachers consider helping renew a struggling school.

The superintendent agreed to continue to provide the extra resources that had been allocated to the school for increasing learning time, improving curriculum, and ensuring accountability. He would also work to renew the reputation of the school by appointing new leadership, assigning a new name, and establishing a new partnership with a local university. But he had already sensed that one of the root causes of low achievement was the pervasive feeling of defeat among the faculty. Therefore, the key to his plan was to transfer to the school four board-certified teachers, who he felt would help foster a professional culture focused on problem-solving instead of blaming. He proposed that these four teachers job-share two classroom positions so that each would have plenty of time to serve as a “master teacher” for her colleagues, engaging them in conversations about instruction and supporting these teachers to also pursue board certification. The superintendent hoped that over time, as the professional culture and student achievement improved and as the numbers of board-certified teachers grew at Blue Hill, some board-certified teachers might be willing to transfer to other needy schools and help extend this renewal strategy throughout the school district.

This reform plan initiated tremendous turmoil among the faculty and had a very rocky start. However, after many years of being recognized as one of the worst schools in the district, Blue Hill’s reputation did turn around. By 2006 school safety and parent satisfaction had improved and it became a school that began to attract high quality

teacher candidates. Student achievement scores in the school had risen to 81% proficient in English and 68% in Math, which approached the district average. In addition, over a dozen teachers achieved board certification while working at the school, about half of whom subsequently moved into other needy schools or leadership roles in the district.

Red River Pilot School

The Red River Pilot School was a new experimental school located in a working-class neighborhood of a large urban district. In five years it had grown to serve over 550 students in nine grades, from kindergarten to 8th grade. The student population, drawn largely from the school's neighborhood, included 48% white students, 9% students with limited English proficiency, and 52% receiving free or reduced lunch. In 2006, student achievement was well above average for the district, with about three-quarters of students achieving at or above the proficient level on state tests, compared with 45% in other district schools.

In addition to providing an excellent educational experience for the neighborhood's students, this school had been established in 2001 to be a pilot site for teacher-training internships for a new program, which was designed to prepare "the next generation of exceptional teachers" to work in the district's lowest-performing and hardest-to-staff schools.

The program's founders did not underestimate the challenge of preparing teachers for the city's toughest schools. They understood the reasons for high turnover, and they created a multi-faceted plan to ensure that candidates who came intent on teaching in these challenging schools would gain all the knowledge and skills they would need to

succeed there. In addition to completing traditional coursework conducted by a local university at the school site, interns engaged in special workshops that were designed by program directors to prepare them for the known challenges of their future workplaces. After their training year, they would be hired in teams by principals of the district's neediest schools, and for five more years these teachers would continue to receive support through the program's coaches, workshops, and on-going activities with their cohort such as study groups.

From the beginning of this plan, the founders of The Red River Pilot School recognized that training "exceptional teachers" required exceptional mentors. They needed the year-long internships to be guided by teachers who were not only effective teachers themselves but could also explain their teaching practice to their interns. The founders resolved to strategically recruit board-certified teachers and local teachers-of-the-year, and provide them additional compensation for the extra time they would spend with the teaching interns.

After five years, not only were student achievement scores at the Red River Pilot School well above those of other schools with comparable populations in the district, but the school's teacher training program boasted that nearly all of its graduates were working in low-performing schools within the district. In fact, the pilot program had expanded to include two additional training schools, and had begun to participate in restructuring some of the hard-to-staff schools where the program's recent graduates would be placed. In addition, in 2006 a group of the program's first graduates began pursuing board certification together.

Green View Elementary School

The Green View Elementary School was located in a small university town in the rural south. It was one of about a dozen K-8 schools in this large, sprawling district. The school served approximately 500 children with two classes per grade in ten grade levels from pre-kindergarten to eighth grade on a spacious, well-kept campus.

Student assignment to this school was based primarily on neighborhood proximity and the school benefited from a core population of wealthy families with money and time to spend on the school. About one-quarter of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and about a dozen students were English language learners. Ninety-five percent of students were white. According to state school report cards, all of the schools in this county had met the targets set by the *No Child Left Behind Act* for adequate yearly progress and all had over 90% of students performing at grade level.

Green View had always been a school where most students were achieving at high levels and teachers were collegial, but in 2001 one teacher moved from her classroom to the front office and began devising a plan to make her good school great by attempting to create a more professional workplace. She believed a greater emphasis on teacher reflection and professional collaboration would create a richer experience for both students and teachers.

From her new position as assistant principal, and later as principal, she applied her knowledge of the professional literature to experiment with various organizational strategies, introduce new resources and alter several of the school's routines to facilitate greater reflection and collaboration. She believed, however, that these structural changes would only become meaningful if teachers felt compelled to reflect and collaborate

among themselves. Informed by her own experience as a candidate for National Board Certification in 1994, she was convinced that encouraging teachers to pursue board certification would support her goal. The board-certification process, she explained, would help her teachers develop the habit of reflection and feel driven to collaborate, and she would be able to rely on these teachers to help her create a whole-school culture that supported reflection and collaboration. Her goal was “creating an atmosphere where everybody pulls for everybody else and the children.”

Five years later there was little change in test results because the school continued to score at the top on state tests. However, school pride, parent involvement, fundraising records and teacher commitment were all said to be higher than ever. Teacher position vacancies were rare, and when they occurred the principal was flooded with applicants who had heard about the rich professional culture. Nearly all of the teachers with school-aged children had arranged to have their own children attend the school. Notably, three teachers attributed the recent spike in housing prices and development in the region to the burgeoning reputation of the Green View School. By all accounts, the school truly seemed to have gone from good to great.

Preview of the Findings

Key leaders in each of these sites believed that National Board Certification could help them to identify or develop the human resources they needed for improving the quality of teaching practice in their schools or districts. One aimed to renew a low-performing school, one aimed to improve new teacher training and retention in the district, and one aimed to improve the professional culture in a high-performing school.

These leaders devised plans in which board-certified teachers were able to bring the necessary human capital (knowledge and skills), cultural capital (valued interactive styles or dispositions), and/or social capital (social networks and external influence) to their reform plans. Further, their contexts benefited from the fact that board-certified teachers had a clear and shared way of thinking about teaching practice, due to their common experience with the board-certification process.

Context was important. The physical and organizational structures that school leaders created, the sociological and political conditions they inspired, the economic incentives they offered, and the cultural and psychological climates they encouraged all affected the extent to which these teachers were willing to be resources for reform and were perceived as effective for influencing the quality of teaching practice in their schools and districts. When these leaders held a vision of quality teaching that was aligned with the NBPTS vision of accomplished teaching, they viewed board-certified teachers' influence on the standard of teaching practice to be effective for improving the quality of teaching practice.

Structure of the Paper

This paper is structured in the following way: This introductory chapter is followed by a discussion of the market for National Board Certification based on an analysis of trends and relevant literature in Chapter Two. It identifies what policymakers and teachers expect and receive when they invest their money or time in board certification. In Chapter Three, I recount the stories of leaders in this study's three sites, all of whom believed that their investments in board certification would help them

improve the quality of teaching practice in their schools or districts. This chapter includes a description of their reform plans and the strategic part that board-certified teachers were intended to play within it. In Chapter Four, I discuss the characteristic features demonstrated by board-certified teachers across these sites. I illustrate the ways in which these features were perceived by teachers and other school leaders to serve as resources, as human, cultural and social capital. The extent to which these forms of capital were available or effective for supporting the reform strategies depended upon various factors within the local context that are discussed in Chapter Five. In this chapter, I identify specific workplace features that were important influences in whether and how their schools benefited from the capital brought by board-certified teachers. I also discuss the importance of alignment in leaders' visions of good teaching. In the final chapter, Chapter Six, I discuss the implications of this study for schools and districts that employ board-certified teachers and I make a case for how board certification could be a catalyst for better teaching and learning across U.S. schools.

Chapter Two

Investing in the Promise of National Board Certification

The national investment in the promise of National Board Certification to influence the quality of teaching is fast approaching a billion dollars. Federal grants and private sources have funded the cost of developing the assessment system⁷, operating the NBPTS, and supporting ongoing research on the impact of National Board Certification.⁸ Schools, districts, states and corporations have paid millions of dollars to provide incentives, supports and rewards for teachers to achieve this distinction and have already promised millions more each year for the foreseeable future. [See Appendix F] Teachers themselves may spend their own money to cover the assessment fee⁹ in addition to spending hundreds of hours preparing their portfolios. This section explores the kind of returns education policymakers and teachers believe they might receive on their investment. It uses relevant literature and an analysis of policy trends to discuss why they might have such beliefs and to discuss the extent to which they feel they are getting the return they expect on their investment.

⁷ Estimated to be approximately \$200 million dollars.

⁸ The NBPTS reports that through September 2005, NBPTS has been appropriated federal funds of \$149.1 million, and approximately \$261 million from non-federal sources. State and local commitments of incentives and supports for board-certified teachers put the total investment in the promise of National Board Certification at well over half a billion dollars.

⁹ Currently \$2500 per candidate.

The return on policymakers' investments

Today all 50 states and over 700 districts offer some supports and incentives for board-certified teachers. Their investment may take many forms: They may contribute part or all of the assessment fee; they may pay NBCTs or local agencies to provide support programs for candidates as they go through the board-certification process; and they often provide supplies or resources needed for portfolio development including video cameras, videotapes, laptops, photocopying, or release time from classroom responsibilities. The rewards they promise to those who successfully achieve board certification may include monetary bonuses, salary increments or parity with a designated lane on the salary schedule, graduate credits, and hassle-free state recertification. Unions and local education funds often contribute toward these support and incentives packages as well, making the total investment of local education money substantial. But what do principals, superintendents, school committee members and state legislatures believe they are buying? From a policy perspective, why might schools and districts want their teachers to pursue and achieve National Board Certification?

The membership of the NBPTS has included leaders from education groups as well as public officials from the beginning, and was endorsed early on by nearly every national organization concerned with education policy. However, public support has been strengthened in the past decade along with the movement to improve teacher quality. In 1996 the National Commission for Teaching and America's Future published a report which made the compelling case that the single most important influence on student learning that schools can control is teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 1996).

As national attention was drawn to the questions of how to define, identify and improve teacher quality, public officials throughout the U.S. began to feel pressure to explain what they were doing about teacher quality in their respective jurisdictions. Many of them had nothing significant to say. In 1997 Education Week's *Quality Counts* editors gave states an average grade of 'C' for their mediocre efforts to influence teacher quality through licensing and training. These editors concluded, "There is much work to be done" (Quality Counts, 1997). In this context, which followed the Board's announcement of the first list of board-certified teachers in 1994, many state and local public officials began to support and advocate for National Board Certification. By September of 1999 thirty-eight states and 138 school districts offered incentives or supports (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1999a) for teachers to achieve board certification.

Another new wave of support came after the NBPTS released a research study that concluded National Board Certification was "a distinction that matters" (Bond et al., 2000). Bond and his colleagues studied 65 teachers from three regions of the U.S., all of whom had pursued board certification and about half of whom had achieved it. After measuring work samples of their students against "13 dimensions of teaching expertise," these researchers found that board-certified teachers were more effective on all 13 measures, and on 11 of them the difference was statistically significant. NBPTS seized the moment. Armed with this report, it solicited the support of education leaders and organized board-certified teachers to lobby state and local officials with the idea that providing incentives and supports for teachers to pursue board certification would be an ideal way to demonstrate their commitment to teacher quality.

When the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized in 2002 and rallied the nation to “leave no child behind” by ensuring they have “highly-qualified teachers,” the teacher quality conversation gathered new momentum and took a new tack. Despite a “history of failed efforts” to change the structure of teacher compensation over the past century (Odden & Kelley, 2002, p. xii), policymakers revisited the recurring and politically very popular idea of merit pay. Providing differentiated compensation for teachers has traditionally posed several problems. In addition to the methodological issues of attributing performance gains to individual teachers and to the lack of evidence about what credentials or experiences help teachers perform better, there was no consensus on what level of performance would warrant additional pay and who could be trusted to make such judgments. When state and district policymakers learned, therefore, of NBPTS’s effort to define an accomplished level of performance and identify teachers who demonstrated it, several more were convinced to provide pay increases to board-certified teachers. By May of 2002, the number of states and districts supporting board certification rose to 47 states and nearly 400 localities (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2002).

In 2004, five years after most U.S. states had already made a major investment in National Board Certification, three large-scale studies were published that for the first time specifically addressed the impact of board-certified teachers on student achievement test scores. Goldhaber and Anthony (2004) examined multiple years of student achievement data from 600,000 third, fourth and fifth graders in North Carolina. As mentioned previously, they found that students of teachers with board certification performed better on average than students whose teachers pursued but did not achieve

board-certification. In addition, board-certified teachers also outperformed on average their colleagues who had never pursued certification. Finding similarly positive results, Cavalluzzo (2004) analyzed high school math data from over 100,000 Florida students using methodology which controlled for a range of other factors that influence students' achievement. She found that board certification had a large, statistically significant effect size (0.12) while the coefficient for teachers who had pursued but not achieved certification was small, negative and statistically insignificant. She also found that special needs and minority students in this large, urban district benefited the most in board-certified teachers' classrooms. In the same year, Vandervoort, Amrein-Beardsley and Berliner (2004) examined Stanford-9 data collected over four years from five grade levels in 14 Arizona districts. Without distinguishing between non-board-certified teachers who had and had not attempted the assessment, the study found a positive effect of board certification and further concluded that the difference board-certified teachers make in their students' learning is equivalent to attending an additional 25 days of school.

These three studies initiated a new wave of support for board certification, so that by 2004 the number of localities pledging support for board certification had risen to include all 50 states and over 700 districts (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2004). At the same time, in many localities the funding structure in support of board certification moved from an annually elected allocation or stipend to a permanent line item in the budget or teachers' contract.

Interestingly, these studies also appear to have initiated a change in policymakers' rhetoric. These studies strongly suggested that the board-certification process (which examines teachers' practice) was associated with teacher effectiveness (as measured by

student outcomes), a logical connection that few had reason to doubt. As a result, however, policymakers began to view the compensation increases they provided to teachers as performance-based pay rather than pay for the knowledge and skills that teachers brought to their schools. This shift in perspective heavily influenced what policymakers began to believe they were getting from their investment in board certification. They came to expect the board-certification process to identify teachers whose students had higher gain scores than their peers, despite the fact that the Board's definition of an accomplished teacher had little to do with students' test scores and nothing to do with the relative performance of peers. They also overlooked the idea that the board-certification credential might help them to identify inputs or expertise that already exists in schools but could be used more efficiently. This proved to be a real political problem for the NBPTS because the next series of studies revealed less distinction between the student test scores of NBCTs and their colleagues.

In an effort to have enough data to produce strong results, these studies used data from the states with the highest numbers of board-certified teachers. Harris and Sass (2007) investigated five years of Florida data and found generally positive results of the impact of board-certified teachers on their students' test scores, but outcomes varied depending on subject and grade level and on whether low-stakes or high-stakes exams were used. McColskey and colleagues (2005) examined two years of student test scores from 307 fifth-grade teachers in three North Carolina districts and found no effects of board certification on students' math and reading achievement scores, although board-certified teachers' students had a narrower range of performance than their non-certified peers. Another study from the same year, however, challenged this latter finding.

Sanders and his colleagues (2005), analyzed four years of year-end math and reading scores from fourth through eighth graders in two large North Carolina districts and found great variability among the test scores of students who had been taught by board-certified teachers. The authors concluded that “a student randomly-assigned to an NBCT is no more likely to get an ‘effective’ (or an ‘ineffective’) teacher than a student assigned to a non-NBCT” (p.4).

This last study is interesting for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that the NBPTS was accused by some of withholding the results, thus arousing suspicion about both the NBPTS and the board-certification credential it had created (Keller, 2006c; Klein, 2006; Rotherham, 2006). The cost-effectiveness of NBPTS’s work was called into question (Boyd & Reese, 2006), the value of the credential was debated (Abramson, 2006; Keller, 2006a, 2006b; Scott, 2006), and policymakers in one state began to reconsider their decision to provide “merit pay” to these teachers (Honawar, 2007). Sanders et al.’s methodology also elicited critiques from independent peer reviewers as well as various other blogs and bulletins (Guzman, 2006; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2005b; National Council on Teacher Quality, 2006). Taken in context, however, this study creates interesting possibilities for a new line of questioning about the purpose and impact of board certification. It suggests that more research is needed to examine the potential effects of board-certified teachers, not only on their students’ performance, but also on the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and performance of their colleagues.

Sanders’ study used data from North Carolina, one of the earliest states to adopt board certification as part of its policies to enhance teacher quality, and specifically from

the two districts in that state with the highest total numbers of NBCTs by far (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2006). In 2006, these large districts had over 800 board-certified teachers each, approximately 10% of their total teaching force. In addition, the North Carolina State Board of Education reported in that same year that 26 of Wake County's 976 NBCTs and 29 of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's 826 NBCTs had left the classroom (leaving their salary bonuses behind) and assumed various other positions of influence throughout their districts (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2006).

North Carolina is not a state in which teachers tend to work in isolation. The North Carolina Teaching Standards Commission upholds the expectation that teachers should be collaborating, teaming, learning, encouraging and sharing practices with one another (North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission, 2006), and the Department of Public Instruction has supported that expectation by endorsing routines such as common planning time and teacher assistance teams. According to state report cards (North Carolina Public Schools, 2007), these two large districts showed steady student achievement progress over the same four years as the Sanders study, and in 2006 this state was recognized to have larger gains than any other on the National Assessment of Educational Progress over the past decade (Barnes & Aguerreberre, 2006). To be sure, many factors contributed to these steady gains, however one wonders what was happening inside these schools. And one wonders what kind of patterns we should expect to see in states like North Carolina or Florida that have so many board-certified teachers.

Policymakers who view the increased compensation that board-certified teachers receive as performance-based pay expect to see a distinction between the performance of

board-certified teachers and their peers. If, however, they viewed the pay increases as compensation for the knowledge and skills NBCTs bring to their schools, they might expect to see teachers collaborating, teaming, learning, encouraging, sharing practices and even leading their peers, so that they would see overall improvement instead of a sharp distinction between teachers. They might even begin to think more strategically about how to organize schools to maximize that overall improvement, as have the three schools featured in this paper.

Through their investment in the promise of National Board Certification, policymakers have purchased something politically important: a simple way to demonstrate their commitment to quality teaching. They have been able to appear on public access TV handing out checks to excellent teachers and they have been able to boast about the many dollars they have devoted to improving teacher quality. Many have begun to include the number of board-certified teachers on school and district report cards. Recently, some policymakers have also begun to use board certification to manipulate the distribution of teacher quality within their districts by providing bonuses to board-certified teachers who work in low-performing schools (Humphries et al., 2005). In almost every case their endgame appears to be having as many teachers as possible achieve this advanced certification so that more students will be taught by these effective teachers. The success of this strategy is necessarily limited by the proportion of teachers who will choose to pursue and are able to achieve board certification, as well as whether these teachers remain in classroom teaching. The strategies being implemented in the schools in this study are distinctly different.

The return on teachers' investments

National Board Certification is voluntary and the cost to teachers is not insignificant, no matter how much support they receive. Many teachers do manage to secure assistance in paying the assessment fee, which rose in 2006 from \$2300 to \$2700. Some teachers also receive assistance with the monetary costs associated with portfolio development such as videotaping and photocopying. But the largest cost to teachers in pursuing board certification may be time, a commodity in short supply for teachers during the school year. Cohen and Rice (2005) have estimated the value of the time teachers spend in the process to be about \$12,500, if they were paid at the same rate as they are for participating in district-based professional development. Teachers report that they spend between 200 and 400 hours developing their portfolios and preparing for the content knowledge assessment test (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2007b), requiring most prospective candidates to consider the personal and professional sacrifices they might have to make in applying. Indeed, time is a popular reason eligible teachers have given for not pursuing board certification.

As they weigh the pros and cons of pursuing board certification, teachers find a variety of reasons to become a candidate. Many who have financial incentives available to them find these incentives to be extremely attractive, but teachers report even more widely that they believe board certification will be a powerful professional development experience. In addition, many teachers hope to receive formal validation for the quality of their professional practice and believe that their achievement may lead to new opportunities for career advancement. The section that follows discusses these benefits

that teachers hope to receive in return for their investment in National Board Certification and summarizes research on what they feel they actually have received.

Professional compensation

Compensation is an important concern of many teachers (Johnson et al., 2005). The American Federation of Teachers recently claimed that “teacher pay [is] insufficient to meet rising debt, housing costs in many areas” (American Federation of Teachers, 2007) and research from the National Education Association notes that in the past decade 15 states saw average teacher salaries decline (National Education Association, 2005). While some are concerned that teacher salaries are low, others have questioned why they are not higher. Teachers earn substantially less than comparably educated people (Henke et al., 2000; Olson, 2000) and than workers in comparable professions (Allegretto et al., 2004; Loeb & Reininger, 2004). Therefore, whether seeking to make ends meet or to receive validation for their knowledge and skills, many teachers are drawn to the potential to earn increased compensation through National Board Certification.

In 2004 increased financial compensation was available to board-certified teachers in about two-thirds of the 50 states. Many local districts and education funds offer salary increments and bonuses as well. Since localities that offer increased compensation also tended to have the highest numbers of board-certified teachers, it is reasonable to assume that the promise of increased financial compensation is one reason some of these teachers had pursued board certification.

There are no studies that draw firm conclusions about the importance of increased financial compensation to teachers considering National Board Certification or that

indicate how large a financial incentive is needed to convince a teacher to pursue it. It would be quite complicated to study this since what policymakers offer and how they offer it varies widely. Some offer a one-time stipend; others offer an annual salary bonus; some move teachers to a new lane on the salary scale; others add an increment to the salary base; and still others tie increased compensation to teachers' specialized roles. All of this must be weighed against what else is at play, such as whether the money will be taxed or whether it will affect a teacher's retirement rate. These incentives not only vary from state to state, but from district to district and from year to year. In fact, teachers in the same state may receive vastly different compensation packages due to the additional bonuses that may be offered by a local district or education fund. [See Appendix F for examples.] Therefore, surveys which attempt to assess or compare the reasons teachers pursue board certification must be interpreted with caution.

For example, in a study of the factors that influence who applies for board certification in North Carolina (2004), Goldhaber and his colleagues found that board-certification candidates were more likely to teach in districts that offered financial incentives. However, since districts that offered such incentives were qualitatively different than those that did not, they concluded, "It is premature to assume that the higher application rates we observe are causally related to the incentive itself" (p. 270). Similarly, a recent survey of over 1,000 board-certified teachers in Ohio and South Carolina asked these teachers to rate the importance of six factors in their decision to pursue board-certification (McCrary & Cannata, 2006; Sykes et al., 2006). In South Carolina, where 97% of NBCTs received a salary increase, financial compensation received the highest rating of the six choices provided. In Ohio, where 64% of board-

certified teachers received a salary increase, financial compensation was second to professional development. However, since survey participants were board-certified teachers who earned certification over a span of nine years, we do not know what percent of the sample achieved certification before any financial compensation was offered, how the compensation packages differed between the states and across districts in those states, or why some teachers did not receive increases that seemed to be available to them.

States that offer financial compensation have more board-certified teachers and states that do not offer such compensation have fewer board-certified teachers. (See Table 3) When Massachusetts dropped its financial compensation, the number of candidates dropped dramatically. While there are no firm conclusions about the actual relationship between financial incentives and teachers’ decisions to apply for board certification, it appears that financial incentives influence many teachers’ decisions.

| Table 3: Top Five and Bottom Five States by Total NBCTs and Financial Incentives Offered as of 2007 | | |
|---|--------------|---|
| Top Five | Total | Financial Incentives |
| North Carolina | 11327 | 12% annual salary differential on base salary |
| Florida | 9236 | 10% annual salary bonus + 10% for mentoring |
| South Carolina | 5076 | \$7,500 annual salary supplement |
| California | 3656 | \$20,000 over four years in a high-priority school |
| Ohio | 2629 | \$2,500 annual stipend (before 2004; \$1000 after 2004) |
| Bottom Five | | |
| South Dakota | 59 | \$2,000 for at least five years |
| Montana | 58 | \$3,000 one time stipend |
| Nebraska | 48 | -- |
| North Dakota | 25 | \$1500 for four years for mentoring |
| New Hampshire | 17 | -- |
| <i>Note: NBCTs in these states may be eligible for additional financial incentives from local districts or other local sources.</i> | | |

Professional development

The National Board Certification system has two main components: a portfolio and a test of content knowledge. Three of the portfolio's four entries require teachers to describe a teaching event or series of events, to analyze all of the choices they made before and during the event, and to reflect on both the impact on student learning and implications for future teaching. The fourth entry requires teachers to provide evidence of their disposition for learning and ability to collaborate with colleagues, parents and community partners. The assessment center test requires that teachers demonstrate mastery of the range of their content knowledge. While teachers may approach this series of tasks as a multi-staged test, many find that by taking their time and working alongside colleagues to prepare the components of the portfolio and study for the test, the board-certification process can be a valuable professional development experience.

Accordingly, many teachers report that they pursued board certification in search of a rich professional development experience. In the recent study of South Carolina and Ohio NBCTs mentioned above (Sykes et al., 2006), where teachers rated six factors¹⁰ in their decisions to pursue certification, both 'professional development' and 'financial compensation' were top choices with an average rating of three or more out of four. Teachers in Ohio rated professional development slightly higher than financial compensation. In addition, this study found that professional development was as important to teachers who achieved board certification in the early years—before many financial incentives were in place—as it was to teachers who achieved board certification during the more recent context of incentives. The authors concluded that, “the presence

¹⁰ The other four factors were: leadership, prestige, career/credential enhancement, and encouragement of school administration.

of financial compensation can be an important reason for seeking NB certification, but that does not detract from the perception of the process as a professional development opportunity” (p. 20).

Several states have conducted their own surveys to help policymakers understand and assess their investment in light of local goals. These studies support the notion that professional learning is a priority for board-certification candidates. In 2001, the Massachusetts Department of Education commissioned one such survey of the 265 teachers who had applied for board certification through its Master Teacher program (Center for Education Policy, 2003). Eighty-two percent of the 153 respondents reported that “professional development in teaching methods” was a significant or very significant factor in their decisions to pursue board certification. In comparison, 76% reported that the Master Teacher monetary bonus was significant or very significant. Similarly, in survey results from 398 of the nearly 900 board-certified teachers in Washington state, more board-certified teachers indicated that the “professional development opportunity to strengthen my teaching” was a strong reason for pursuing board certification (69% of respondents) than “the potential for increased compensation” (47% of respondents) (Loeb et al., 2006). A California report based on survey responses of 68% of the board-certified teachers in that state (n=519) in 2001 concluded, “The individuals who pursue certification are driven by the potential they see for their own personal and professional growth” (Belden Russonello & Stewart, 2002, p. 2). Eighty-four percent were seeking a personal challenge and 79% sought a professional development opportunity, while only 54% were seeking the potential for additional compensation.

Given that so many teachers report entering the board certification process with professional learning in mind, it is important to consider the extent to which teachers feel they are actually learning from the process. The state surveys mentioned above, in fact, all report that upon completion of the process teachers largely agree that the board-certification process is an excellent professional learning opportunity. The Washington report shows that while only 69% of teachers sought board certification as a professional learning opportunity, a higher percentage, 75%, reported that they felt professional learning was an outcome of the process. In California, a strong majority agreed: 67% of teachers rated the process as “excellent” professional development and an additional 26% rated it as “good.” The Massachusetts survey did not ask this question directly, although 89% of survey respondents gave the board certification process an overall rating of good or excellent, and many commented on “its value as a professional development exercise or praising its rigor and validity” (p. 118).

In the NBPTS’s own survey of candidates (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2001a), 92% of 5,641 respondents reported that the experience of completing the board-certification process had helped them to become better teachers. In the same year the NBPTS also mailed a survey to 600 randomly-selected board-certified teachers from the complete pool of NBCTs who had achieved certification from 1994-1999. Of the 41% who responded (235 NBCTs), 80% indicated that “the National Board Certification process is an excellent professional development experience” and 91% said that “National Board Certification has positively affected their teaching practices.”

Teachers in this survey also reported specific ways in which the experience had affected their teaching practice, including that they felt it reinforced current teaching

practices (37%), they planned lessons more thoughtfully (33%), they used more student-focused instruction (31%), and they applied performance standards to teaching (25%). Another more recent study that focused on high school science teachers quantified the effect of board-certification candidacy on teachers' "understanding of knowledge associated with science teaching" and reported an effect size of 0.47 (Lustick & Sykes, 2006). And one additional study involving 25 teacher interviews identified an impact beyond classroom practice. In addition to reporting stronger reflection and assessment practices, teachers reported a greater sense of professionalism (Tracz et al., 2005).

It must be noted that, while the majority of teachers in these state and national surveys reported that the board-certification process was a powerful professional development experience, a handful in each reported that it was not. One interview study captured a few reasons from teachers who reported it was not: it did not give them ways to improve instruction, they did not agree with "the direction" it was going, and they already were reflective (Rotberg et al., 1998). Furthermore, with survey response rates near 50% on many of these surveys, it is reasonable to consider that candidates who did not find the process to be a rewarding learning experience might have been less likely to respond. Nevertheless, researchers appear to have accepted the notion that the board-certification process *can* be a form of professional development and have recently focused on the tasks of identifying what it is within the assessment that makes the board-certification process effective as professional development, and what teachers are learning from the process. Such research is useful to school or district leaders who want to understand how teachers' pursuit of board certification may or may not be aligned to

local goals, but it may also be important to leaders who want to encourage teachers to pursue board certification as a professional learning opportunity.

One such study, which aimed to examine and assess the value of the “National Board Certification model of professional development” (Cohen & Rice, 2005), focused on candidate support programs, since the literature suggests that peer learning opportunities are important in the board certification process (Berg, 2003; Sato, 2000). By examining qualitative data from eight candidate support programs, the researchers confirmed that these programs were aligned with the same commonly-accepted features of high-quality professional development that districts routinely sought for their teachers (Garet et al., 2001; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997), and identified the elements of the assessment that provide learning opportunities. These include: 1) study of the NBPTS Standards, which helps teachers to recognize and talk about quality teaching, 2) developing the portfolio, which helps teachers to develop reflection skills, 3) documenting their accomplishments, which inspires many to initiate new activities, and 4) taking the assessment center test, which motivates many teachers to review and fill any gaps in their content knowledge.

This study also found that the total cost per teacher associated with these programs was comparable to other forms of professional development, and less expensive than the costs of a master’s degree program. This fact may lead some teachers to choose to pursue board certification rather than return to school for an advanced degree, especially when these achievements are recognized equally on the salary scale. It may also influence education leaders’ decisions about professional development spending. In fact, the authors of this study go so far as to recommend, “Policymakers should consider

NBC as a way to spend professional development dollars and salary rewards that may be more cost-effective than other alternatives” (p. 111).

The fact is, however, that while board certification may be more cost-effective than other professional development options, its association with teacher improvement is even more elusive. Just as research has consistently shown no positive association between teachers having master’s degrees and their students’ achievement, studies that have examined the association of NBCT status and student achievement do not suggest that board certification helps teachers *become* more effective teachers. On the contrary, studies by Harris and Sass (2007) and Goldhaber and Anthony (2004) both reported that in some years and subjects board-certified teachers were found to be *less* effective at increasing student achievement scores during and/or after pursuing board certification than they were before they pursued it.

It is puzzling why so many board-certified teachers insist that they have become better teachers while their students’ scores consistently show little progress or even regression. Theories abound, and at a minimum this pattern raises questions about the relationship between what teachers might be learning and what student achievement tests might be testing. Nonetheless, since candidates for board certification are more likely to hear about the rewarding learning experiences reported by their peers than they are to read these scholarly studies, a rewarding professional learning experience remains to be one of the returns teachers expect as they invest in board certification.

Professional validation

Teachers have traditionally measured the success of their work through their classrooms (Huberman, 1993; McLaughlin & Yee, 1988) relying upon their own observations and the formal and informal feedback they may receive from administrators, colleagues, parents or students. Teachers value highly the psychic rewards of their work (Lortie, 1975), and their sense of efficacy is reported to affect their career decisions (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). The opportunity that board certification offers to learn how one's practice measures up to a national standard, established and set high by leading members of the profession, is very appealing to some teachers.

Therefore, in addition to seeking financial compensation or a professional learning experience, many teachers have reported that they were seeking professional validation of their knowledge and skills when they pursued board certification (Center for Education Policy, 2003; Loeb et al., 2006; Rinne, 2002). Some believed that receiving board certification would help them feel better about remaining in their classrooms. Other teachers hoped that it would lead to new opportunities to use their expertise outside their classrooms. In a career that has traditionally offered teachers little status or input in the decisions that affect their work, many who pursued board certification also believed they would finally be able to buy some respect and earn a voice within their schools.

Forty-three percent of board-certified teachers surveyed by NBPTS in 2001 believed that they had received "increased recognition and respect" since achieving board certification, and 23% said they were "more often sought out for their ideas and opinions" (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2001b, p. 5). However, the recognition that teachers receive and how they feel about it appear to depend largely

on whether those in the local community are familiar with board certification. In Massachusetts, for example, where there was little public recognition or familiarity with board certification, fewer than 10% of survey respondents commented that receiving board certification helped them find validation for their knowledge and skills. In contrast, Washington had built an infrastructure of support throughout the state, and in this context 25% of board-certified teachers reported that they had experienced validation after achieving board certification.

Teachers who pursue board certification in search of recognition and validation of their expertise may be aware that an impressive number of board-certified teachers have been recognized for their teaching expertise by national award programs. The NBPTS website boasts,

National Board Certified Teachers represent 20 percent of the 2006 State Teachers of the Year. Three of the last six National Teachers of the Year, including the recipient for 2006, are National Board Certified. Forty percent of the honorees in the National Teachers Hall of Fame are National Board Certified Teachers.... Thirty-seven percent of the 2005 recipients [of the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching] are National Board Certified Teachers. National Board Certified Teachers represent 18 percent of the 2006 recipients of the Disney Teacher Award and have been awarded other prestigious national awards, including the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award, USA Today All-USA Teacher Team Award and others. (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2007b)

One might expect these types of distinctions to co-occur since they all aim to recognize good teaching. However there may be other factors at play. The professional networking circles of board-certified teachers or esteem of their credential may increase their visibility for awards such as these. In addition, the sense of validation some teachers experience from achieving the board certification credential may increase their

confidence to apply for or accept nomination for these teaching awards. To the extent that teachers appreciate the validation and recognition they receive from them, these awards may also have an impact on teachers' satisfaction, productivity and/or retention, but the organizational benefits of such recognition are limited and not guaranteed.

Another way to validate teachers' knowledge and skills, which is arguably more meaningful to teachers and more useful to schools, is to put them to use. Board-certified teachers experience a greater sense of validation from being asked to offer their opinions about critical education issues, for example, than when they receive an apple-shaped paperweight. And in the process, their organizations benefit from their expertise.

One of the earliest surveys to address the question of how board-certified teachers are using their knowledge and skills was a leadership survey sponsored by NBPTS (Yankelovich Partners, 2001) in which nearly half of the 4800 NBCTs who had achieved board certification prior to 2000 responded. A remarkable 99.6% of those responding indicated that they were involved in some kind of leadership activity, though many had initiated their involvement in these activities before their candidacy. In addition, 90% of respondents agreed with the statement, "My status as an NBCT gives me more credibility in the education profession," and 81% agreed that board certification had "opened new leadership opportunities" for them.

Recognition and leadership opportunities can be given and they can be sought. Achieving board certification brought new external validation, attention and opportunities to some teachers, but it also seems to have provided a degree of internal validation to many teachers, helping them become confident to pursue new opportunities for recognition and advancement. Board-certified teachers in several studies have reported

an increase in self-confidence and in feeling empowered or rejuvenated (Berg, 2005; Berg & Dixon, 2003; Rinne, 2002; Yankelovich Partners, 2001). In a recent study they were also found to be more likely to offer assistance to their peers (Sykes et al., 2006). Therefore, while these teachers might have been more likely to receive recognition or be asked to assume new roles and responsibilities, they were also more likely to have the confidence to consider themselves eligible to receive teaching awards, to bid on educational consulting work, to apply for leadership roles, to seek out other opportunities for advancement, or to volunteer help to colleagues.

Several studies have reported on the types of new roles and activities NBCTs have assumed since achieving board certification (Belden Russonello & Stewart, 2002; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2001b; Owens et al., 2004; Sykes et al., 2006; Yankelovich Partners, 2001). These include mentoring, serving on committees, developing programs or materials, applying for grants, providing professional development, presenting at conferences, working as an adjunct instructor in a university, and advocating for National Board Certification. Interestingly, these roles are commonly initiated by teachers and frequently enacted outside their schools or districts. This is not entirely surprising since most schools today are not organized to involve board-certified teachers in contributing their expertise toward improved teaching and learning at the school level. In fact, where teachers are engaged in professional activities beyond their schools and districts, local leaders may be unaware that their teachers are using their capabilities elsewhere.

In a unique attempt to be more strategic about the investment in board certification, an initiative was created in Washington state in 2001 to increase the number

of board-certified teachers and to support them in connecting with teacher leadership roles so that they could become an “infrastructure for improvement” throughout the state (Stokes et al., 2004). In this initiative, jointly conceived by the office of the state superintendent, the state professional association and the state university system, board-certified teachers throughout the state were provided opportunities for networking, training and grant money so that they could initiate their own local reform projects, such as starting study groups, leading a team in lesson study, or devising new assessments. The board-certified teachers in the network reported feeling validated and energized as they worked with “like-minded colleagues” through the network. Their principals testified that they appreciated these teachers’ special projects and vowed to support them in the roles they had taken on. At the same time, a more recent survey of these teachers indicated that they felt they could be contributing even more (Loeb et al., 2006).

While this initiative has created an infrastructure for improvement by training teacher leaders positioned in schools throughout the state, it has done so by supporting individual teachers to create and negotiate their own unique roles instead of supporting coordinated, systemic improvement. The program evaluation reported in 2004 that school administrators and higher education partners did not yet seem to know how to “tap teachers’ leadership capacities in ways that can amplify NBCTs’ contributions to their schools and districts” (Stokes et al., 2004, p.19). This study addresses this important issue.

Investing in reform

While the National Board's mission focuses on establishing professional standards and certifying teachers who meet them, its purpose goes far beyond that. Its purpose is to stimulate changes in education that will reform teaching and improve learning throughout U.S. schools. The authors of *A Nation Prepared* wrote:

The National Board cannot single-handedly transform the schools. But the National Board can be a catalyst for lasting change. It can redefine teaching as a career by stimulating new incentive structures, staffing patterns and organizational arrangements. It can bolster reform in teacher education by casting the knowledge base in a richer light. Most importantly, as these related changes both increase the flow of first-rate people into the field and stem the tide of those departing, and as teachers' roles and responsibilities are more sensibly structured, National Board Certification can become a pathway to improved student learning. (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1994)

The existence of professional standards and a system for identifying teachers who meet them was intended to initiate a series of reactions that would make education more effective and efficient. For example, according to *A Nation Prepared*:

- With clear standards for professional practice and teachers who have been identified to meet them, schools could be restructured “to make the best use of teaching talent” and be reorganized to enable teachers to “help their colleagues uphold the high standards of the profession.”
- With the security of knowing that teachers meet the high standards of the profession, policymakers might be willing to free teachers “to decide how to best meet state and local goals,” to support teachers in “tak[ing] a lead role in guiding the activities of others,” and to create “compensation systems that reflect the value of board certification.”

- With increased prospects for teachers to receive more autonomy, new career opportunities and increased pay, teaching would attract “highly-qualified people who would otherwise take up other professional careers.”
- With more competitive individuals who have a commitment to a professional standard upon entering the workforce, more and more teachers would hold each other to a higher, more professional level of practice and the quality of teaching and learning would improve in U.S. schools.

The extent to which the NBPTS will succeed in being the kind of catalyst it was created to be depends on how education stakeholders respond to this new standard of professional practice and to teachers certified to meet it. So far, many policymakers have responded by providing recognition or monetary rewards to teachers who achieve board certification and a small but growing number of teachers have been drawn to pursue it. As the authors of *A Nation Prepared* indicated in 1986, the next step is school restructuring. In order to educate all students in today’s schools to higher levels, they wrote, “Education, like other professions, will have to structure itself so that it can make the very best use of a distribution of talent. That means reorganization, because the current ‘eggcrate’ organization does not permit efficient shared use of highly skilled people, support services and equipment.”

Finding little evidence that many school or district leaders had considered the question of how to make “efficient shared use” of board-certified human resources, I located and investigated three of them. I sought to understand more about the ways and conditions under which board-certified teachers might be resources for reforming education.

Chapter Three

Strategic Uses of Board-Certified Teachers: Three Cases

At the beginning of this decade, as the number of teachers achieving board certification began doubling annually and the amount of money being paid to reward these teachers increased accordingly, education leaders in a few schools and districts across the nation began to think strategically about how board-certified teachers could strengthen their schools in ways beyond providing good instruction to their own students.

The notion that board-certified teachers, who have been recognized for the quality of their teaching, might be resources or agents for improving the quality of teaching practice school-wide is logical and important, but is in itself too vague to build a plan around it. What was unique in the sites of this study was that key leaders were familiar enough with National Board Certification or board-certified teachers to have specific ideas about how these teachers might be a resource within a larger school-wide or district-wide reform plan.

Blue Hill Academy

The Context

The Blue Hill suburban school district was one of the largest in the country, serving over 160,000 students in more than 200 schools. The district included wealthy suburbs, industrial areas, working-class neighborhoods and housing projects. In the aggregate, student achievement for the district was above the state average in 1997. But according to David Dart, the newly-appointed superintendent at that time, disaggregated scores told a different story. There were many very high-achieving schools, but there were also several dozen schools that were not making measurable progress with their students.

Dart noted, “It was not surprising when you looked at the demographics to define where those [underperforming] schools were. They were in the communities that had the lowest socio-economic index and highest minorities, highest mobility, and greatest number of kids on free and reduced lunch.” He believed that when students came to school encumbered with factors that have been predicted to work against their academic success, their schools had a responsibility to give them more. So, in 1999 he took the risk of “robbing Peter to pay Paul,” reallocating funds so that twenty schools (identified by students’ achievement scores, free-and-reduced lunch status and mobility rates) would each receive, on average, an extra one million dollars. Blue Hill Elementary School was one of them.

In these twenty schools, the school days were extended by starting earlier, staying later, or reorganizing time that had traditionally been set aside for professional development. Faculty members at each school were asked to select and agree upon a

program of instruction for improving student achievement. Also, new accountability measures were initiated that provided financial rewards for schools and teachers who achieved statistically significant improvement on standardized tests from year to year. Within one year, most of these twenty schools were “blowing the roof off in terms of achievement gains,” according to Dart. Blue Hill Elementary was not.

The Problem

“With [Blue Hill], it was a tough go from the very beginning,” said Dart. “It was a school that was really having difficulty and at first they were not making the gains that other schools in the area were making. So we began to look at well, perhaps there is something else.”

Dart arranged his schedule to spend time in each of the schools where the additional financial resources were not making a difference. He recalled, “The impression that I had in talking to the staff was that they felt defeated. They felt that there was no way they could possibly make an impact on these kids, often blaming the kids, themselves, and blaming the parents, and blaming everybody.” He believed that the root causes of the problem lay not only in the attitudes of low efficacy and blame held by the teachers, but in the leadership and culture that seemed to support that attitude. As a result of the poor performance of students and defeatist sentiments of the faculty, the school had earned itself an unsavory reputation throughout the community, making the job of improvement even more of a seemingly impossible task.

He decided that he needed to bolster his commitment of financial resources with new human resources, which he expected would improve the attitudes, abilities and professional culture in these schools.

The Plan

This complex problem required a multi-faceted strategy. Dart recognized that the school needed teachers who “were excited about the fact that they would have an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of kids, not teachers that were just jaded and felt that with all these kids there is nothing I can do with them, and have a defeated attitude that suggested that nothing was going to change.” The school also needed carefully-chosen leaders because “a lot of [the culture] had to do with the principal and her attitude relative to what could be done or not done.” In addition, the school needed an extreme makeover of its reputation to assist in attracting the teachers and leaders needed to do this work and to inspire families with a new sense of hope.

The conditions were just right in the spring of 2000 for a plan to come together. A group of board-certified teachers from the district approached Dart, saying that they wanted to do more to contribute to the school system. They brought ideas about what board-certified teachers could do and presented a proposal for growing a larger cadre of board-certified teachers. Dart said, “I was so impressed by the teachers who came in to see me and said, ‘Look, look at the amount of energy and time—additional time—on our own that we have invested to become better teachers. And now that we have it,’ they said, ‘we want to do more with it.’ And that impressed me.” He began to recognize that these teachers had something Blue Hill needed. He recalled,

I said we have something here because what we have is a cadre of individuals who are truly committed to kids and truly committed to teaching and are willing to go above and beyond. And that is the kind of people I want in these schools. That is the kind of people I want with these kids because that is what they need for us to be able to make significant improvement.

Dart was already a supporter of National Board Certification. He had been involved in NBPTS committee work and had initiated some of the district-based incentives and supports that earlier inspired many of these teachers to pursue board certification. He said, “We made a significant commitment to that program, my sense being that we needed these master teachers in our schools, particularly our lower performing schools.” After meeting with these teachers, he began to envision how they could become assets within a strategic plan for renewing the Blue Hill School.

The plan had several important elements. One, which will be discussed further below, was to introduce a unique staffing structure. He invited four board-certified teachers to transfer to Blue Hill and share responsibility for two classrooms. He hoped that by keeping them in part-time classroom teaching positions they would be able to have a direct impact on the achievement of their own students, while also working part-time with colleagues to have an indirect impact on student achievement throughout the school.

Dart was keenly aware that the right leadership would be necessary to turn this school around. The work would not be easy and, in fact, the first principal he picked left abruptly before the start of her second year. It was reported that this past principal-of-the-year from the district had been stymied by conditions of the context that made this kind of major change hard. On his second try, he picked a rookie leader with three successful years as an assistant principal at a neighboring school and a passion for

learning. From the time she arrived in 2001 through my visit in 2006, the principal focused on assessing the learning needs of students, teachers and herself and then procuring resources to meet them.

Dart believed that the underperformance at Blue Hill was largely a human resource issue, and he determined that there would have to be significant changes in the teaching staff. He recalled,

For me, frankly, I recognized that there would eventually have to be significant turnovers in that staff because of the people that were there. Some of the outstanding people could be saved and would eventually be contributors to the success of the school, but in many cases, you know, these teachers just had to go. The turnover in those schools was fairly dramatic over a short period of time, but I think that led to the improvements we saw down the road.

Some teachers were transferred to schools where students were more likely to come to school ready to learn. Other teachers moved voluntarily. And some were eventually counseled out of teaching. Every teacher who left was replaced by a teacher who had been given a realistic preview of the work that would be required at this new school. In fact, in order to communicate the school's expectation that Blue Hill teachers were committed to students' learning and to their own learning the principal asked applicants to the school if achieving board certification was in their professional plans.

In addition, Dart had been engaged for some time in conversations with the dean of the education department at a local university about forming a partnership and doing more with board-certified teachers. Now, he recognized, he had a project that could use the support of a higher education partnership. A partnership board was established involving school of education faculty members, school and district leadership,

representatives from the local education association and Blue Hill teachers. They were to serve as a think tank in support of the school's transition.

This complex renewal plan was initiated due to the superintendent's assessment of the district's assets and opportunities, one of which was the available expertise and experience of board-certified teachers. The role of board-certified teachers within Dart's larger plan is highlighted below. It involved increasing the number of board-certified teachers and strategically using the assets they had to offer.

- *Increasing the number of board-certified teachers*

Dart's plan depended upon identifying four board-certified teachers who would be willing to transfer to this very low-performing school, and he turned to the board-certified teachers who had stimulated his thinking in the first place. He recounted, "I went back to them and I said, 'Okay, it is time to put your money where your mouth is.'" As an added incentive, he offered an extra stipend of \$3500 per year if they would make the switch. Four teachers came forward and paired up to share responsibility for two classrooms.

The first task for these initial four board-certified teachers was to "grow" more board-certified teachers. Although National Board Certification is designed to be voluntary, the superintendent announced that eventually all Blue Hill teachers should expect to pursue it. The NBCTs' special staffing arrangement was meant to allow them ample time to meet with those colleagues who stepped forward to become candidates. They assisted with videotaping lessons, supported them as they wrote about their practice for the portfolio and helped them to prepare for the test of content knowledge.

Dart's vision extended well beyond the school. He explained, "The intent would be that other teachers within [Blue Hill] would then go through the training and that in a

short period of time there was almost this geometric progression of board-certified teachers that would be trained at [Blue Hill], and then from [Blue Hill] would go onto other places.”

At the same time, support for board certification was growing throughout the district and in 2002 the financial incentive was extended. All teachers who achieved board certification became eligible for an annual \$1750 stipend, and an opportunity to double that bonus to \$3500 either by working in a low-performing school or taking on a leadership activity approved by the district. These financial incentives helped to further increase the number of board-certified teachers.

- *Using board-certified teachers*

Dart believed that board-certified teachers would benefit the school renewal process in several specific ways: as classroom teachers, as instructional leaders for their colleagues, as reformers of the professional culture, and as catalysts for improving the public reputation of the school.

The four board-certified teachers at Blue Hill shared teaching responsibilities for two classrooms. As part-time classroom teachers who had been recognized for their accomplished teaching practices, they were expected to have a direct, positive impact on student achievement. This was important for students who had been making negligible achievement gains for years, but it was also essential to ensure community support for the reform. Over-staffing a school by two teaching positions was expensive. He hoped to justify this decision with a measurable difference in student achievement scores.

When they were not teaching in their classrooms, each board-certified teacher was available to work directly with other teachers: supporting their colleagues’ instructional

practice, leading team meetings, and coaching them through the process of pursuing National Board Certification. They were strategically placed—two shared a classroom at the primary level and two at an upper grade level—so that every teacher in the school would interact regularly with one of them during team meetings. In addition, their special schedules gave them the flexibility to be able to model, co-teach or observe in colleagues' classrooms and to meet with them during planning periods as needed.

Dart also believed these teachers could “bring about a significant change in the school, beginning with the culture of the school.” He had been impressed by the spirit of the board-certified teachers he had met and asked them to focus on building relationships with their colleagues. He believed that through the increased professional interaction made possible by their special schedule, their positive dispositions would help shift the professional culture from one of defeat to one of commitment, from one of blaming to one of learning.

Recognizing that the school's issues with low performance were compounded by its poor reputation, Dart also expected that NBCTs would bring social capital that could improve the reputation of this school. One of the first questions asked by the new higher education partnership was: “How do we take a school with a bad reputation and give it a good reputation?” and, according to Dart, they agreed: “A very quick way to do that is to convert it into this academy with these wonderful board certified teachers and make it an incubator for additional training.” At that time, momentum had been building locally around National Board Certification. More teachers were achieving this distinction, more schools were providing public recognition to these teachers, and more district leaders were accepting the claim that National Board Certification denoted accomplished

teaching. Many in the partnership realized that this publicly-accepted credential might help to re-brand the school. They proposed that Blue Hill School become “Blue Hill Academy,” an academy capable of employing award-winning board-certified teachers, helping to prepare pre-service teachers, and generating more board-certified teachers for other district schools.

Progress

Dart introduced his plan for renewal in September 2000. Six years later, the school was a much better place for students to learn and teachers to teach. The school’s student achievement scores (81% proficient in English and 68% in Math) were approaching the district average (89% in English and 82% in Math), and the teacher hiring pool had become stronger as the school’s reputation as a positive workplace for professionals grew. However, the plan had not quite proceeded as intended.

Introducing board-certified teachers at the Blue Hill School did help increase the number of board-certified teachers in the district. In their first year, the four original board-certified teachers supported eight teachers through the board-certification process, several of whom achieved and in turn helped others, who helped others and so on. The number of NBCTs did not increase in a “geometric progression” as expected by Dart because the massive staffing turnover brought many younger teachers to Blue Hill who wanted to work on a Master’s degree first. By 2006 over a dozen teachers had achieved board certification at the school, but the majority had moved on to teach in other needy schools or work in leadership roles in the district. In that year five board-certified

teachers were employed at Blue Hill Academy, only one of whom was part of the original cohort, and five teachers were in the process of pursuing board certification.

Dart's plan to use board-certified teachers to change the professional culture of the school also succeeded, but not according to plan. Several teachers and administrators at Blue Hill did report that they believed board-certified teachers and the values they embodied had been contributing factors to establishing a collaborative learning culture at the school. One veteran of the school said, "They planted a seed." It is important to note, however, that change was not accomplished primarily by reforming Blue Hill teachers. This initiative stimulated high teacher attrition, and departing teachers were replaced by those who were aligned to the new professional standards.

The biggest challenge that confronted the four original board-certified teachers in this plan was carrying out the expectation of "master teacher" among their colleagues. Having this formal title but no clear job description guidelines or established routines for connecting with colleagues proved to be a tremendous challenge. Many teachers at Blue Hill, not surprisingly, were not initially inclined to spend time with the four "master teachers" who they felt had been sent in to "save" them. More than one person described that first year as an "us against them" situation and one of them added, "Things were a mess." Dart recalled,

There was some resentment of those four [NBCTs] initially for their being there and being perceived and certainly portrayed by me as master teachers who were going to teach the others how to teach. So there was some of that, but frankly it was necessary because the proof was that the children in that school were not getting the kind of quality education that they were entitled to. And something had to be done to bring that about.

A majority of Blue Hill teachers left with anger and resentment, insulted by Dart's suggestion that the school was not a good school and that they might need the help of master teachers. Three of the four board-certified teachers also left, reportedly due to the turmoil created by the fact that neither they nor the other teachers at Blue Hill had been prepared for what was to happen. In fact, only about 10% of teachers who worked at Blue Hill in 2000 were still there six years later. Not all of those who stayed accepted NBCTs as "master teachers," but they tended to be those who were willing to engage in dialogue about what good teaching is and to think systematically about their teaching practice. Several eventually became candidates for National Board Certification.

As a result of the wholesale rejection of the formal "master teacher" role, the practice of board-certified teachers sharing a classroom and providing instructional coaching for half of each day was short lived. Over time, it appeared to make more sense for instructional coaches to be selected and supported through existing district-wide programs aligned to local goals, rather than to have these board-certified teachers try to solicit teachers to help and devise their own strategies to assist them. Some board-certified teachers applied for and attained these full-time coaching positions and others preferred to have their own classrooms. The school was still overstaffed by two positions and the extra human resources were employed based on need. In some years they provided an extra full-time coaching position and in others they were used to reduce class size.

One of the teachers who had survived the rocky start of this reform plan at Blue Hill described how those original four board-certified teachers had "planted a seed." They had supported eight teachers to go through the board-certification process and had

opened their colleagues' eyes to the idea that teaching is not just whatever they might want it to be, but rather it is highly-skilled work with standards of practice. As the number of teachers achieving board-certification grew, they held each other to this new professional standard of practice and began to see how it was related to other district reform initiatives. Teachers throughout the school began thinking like board-certified teachers and building relationships that supported one another to practice as accomplished teachers.

The impact was felt beyond the school. David Dart recalled that quite quickly Blue Hill went from a school “where a lot of parents wanted their kids out and making transfers, to a school where all of a sudden, parents who were moving into the community wanted their kids in that school.”

The changes that occurred led to others that contributed to the school's improved effectiveness. As the reputation of the school improved, community support for the school grew and parental involvement increased. Soon after, the district began to commit new money for long-needed physical plant renovations. As the schools' appearance began to improve, prospective teachers considered it a more viable place to work. And thus, a cycle of improvement was underway. The school continued to serve the same population of neighborhood students, but served them with a much greater chance of success.

The Red River Pilot School

The Context

In 2001 leaders in the Red River school district decided that they would no longer accept the high attrition rate of teachers in its lowest-performing schools and they resolved to address this problem. This urban district created its own teacher training program to prepare the teachers it needed to work in its hardest-to-staff schools, and created a new school to host the program.

The Red River Pilot School, serving pre-K to eighth grade, was located in a large, renovated school building on a busy road in a residential neighborhood. Nearly all of the school's 20 classrooms had a full-time student teaching intern. Interns observed and co-taught all day, then stayed beyond the traditional school day to confer with their mentors about their teaching practice. For this 20% increase in their work day, mentor teachers received a 20% increase in their salaries.

Teachers enjoyed a sense of professionalism working in this environment that tapped their instructional expertise. They spoke with pride about contributing to the noble mission of preparing teachers to work with the students who needed them most. They also saw this work as career advancement and appreciated the extra money that accompanied it.

Student teaching interns were equally enthusiastic about their work. Having received candid information about why teacher turnover was so high in these schools as well as promises of ongoing support, the new teachers worked eagerly to prepare for the challenging and important work ahead.

The racially-diverse, working class community enthusiastically supported the school, which accepted neighborhood students using a lottery and maintained a long waiting list. Most waited in vain, however, since school district policies to integrate the schools required that students of color who wanted to attend the school had priority even if they were from outside the neighborhood.

With the mentor teachers so full of pride, the student teachers so full of hope, and the community so full of enthusiasm for the new school in their community, the Red River Pilot School was viewed as a promising solution to a serious problem.

The Problem

School performance varied widely in the large, urban district where the Red River Pilot School had been established. While a few schools regularly met the benchmarks for adequate yearly progress under the *No Child Left Behind* law, many more fell short and needed significant support. Committing scarce resources to establish new programs of instruction or to provide professional development for teachers in these underperforming schools had proven to be a poor investment because teacher turnover was exceedingly high. It was clear to district leaders that they needed to stem teacher attrition before other investments would pay off.

District leaders believed that one of the root causes of teacher attrition in these schools was inadequate preparation. The only prior classroom experience many of them had was a 14-week practicum, and thus they were still struggling to learn the craft of teaching while negotiating the cultural, logistical and social issues that the district's toughest schools presented. District leaders recognized that working conditions in these

schools had to change, but they also believed that if new teachers could be better-prepared to be successful in their schools, they might stay and become potential allies for reform from within those schools.

The Plan

The idea for the new Red River school had originated with a team of local and national education and business leaders who convened in 2001 to find a solution to the problem of teacher attrition in this district's lowest-performing schools. They believed the best way to prepare teachers to meet the challenges of these schools was to prepare them within the district's schools.

They recognized that, although they did want to prepare “the next generation of exceptional teachers” to work in the district's lowest-performing and hardest-to-staff schools, they could not effectively train teachers in dysfunctional conditions. Therefore, their strategy was to start this new school, a public school that would have unionized teachers and would have all of the same conditions as other public schools with respect to budget, student assignment, schedule, curriculum, instruction and assessment, but would be able to hire its own leadership and expand teachers' roles to include work with teaching interns. They found a site in a lower-middle income neighborhood with a diverse population and selected Frank Feldman as principal. In addition to launching the new school, Feldman was to work collaboratively with staff of the on-site teacher training program to support the dual mission of the school—teaching students and training teachers.

The plan was comprehensive. The new program partnered with a local university so that prospective teachers could earn licensure and a master's degree in 15 months. University courses were offered at the school site to accommodate the interns' long work days. The program staff also developed their own series of workshops to specifically prepare interns for the job of working in underperforming schools. In addition to learning about pedagogy and classroom management, prospective teachers received training in understanding poverty, raising expectations, teaching responsible behavior, and being a change agent among colleagues.

Recognizing that it takes several years to develop competence in teaching, the program's directors did not end their support after candidates received teaching licensure. The program partnered with principals of hard-to-staff schools who agreed to hire these new teachers in teams. In addition, program alumni continued to receive support for five years through coaching, workshops, and study groups.

One of the most important and distinctive pieces of this teacher training model was that it included a full-year internship in which prospective teachers worked as apprentices alongside "master mentors," meeting with them regularly to discuss their developing practice. While the state required only a short student teaching placement for licensure, Red River leaders believed the longer training period was necessary to help interns develop a strong sense of confidence about their classroom practice before moving into underperforming schools.

The program's mission to prepare "exceptional teachers" required exceptional mentors. An essential component to the program's success, therefore, was identifying

master mentors who could model and discuss exemplary classroom practice with the teaching interns. Principal Feldman explained,

I think the strategy is most individuals initially learn by watching, so you want someone who can demonstrate effective instruction.... I'm concerned about making sure that one can demonstrate and make transparent and show by doing what it takes to run an effective instructional program in the city classroom.

Feldman, and his successor Gabriel Gomez, knew that running an effective instructional program involves a complex array of skills. They needed mentors who not only knew their subjects and how to teach them, but knew how to create a productive, engaging, safe, and equitable learning environment for students as well as the teaching intern. In addition, the mentors had to be experienced public school teachers from the district. As Frank Feldman explained, they felt they needed to use “the rank-and-file to train the rank-and-file.” In order to identify teachers with this range of skills and experience, they invited all teachers with a master’s degree and at least five years of experience to apply to work at the school, but heavily recruited and gave preference to teachers whose classroom practice already had a stamp of approval, such as certification from the NBPTS. Swayed by research indicating that board certification is a “distinction that matters,” and by conversations with Betty Castor, president of NBPTS at that time, the planning team had decided hiring board-certified teachers would be one good way to “increase the probability” of having mentors with the knowledge and skills they needed, Feldman recalled.

Every classroom at Red River was to have an intern, so every classroom had to be staffed by a master mentor. The school, therefore, had its own special staffing concern: attracting enough high-quality candidates to ensure that every classroom

would be covered by an exceptional teacher. Board certification was an important part of their strategy to accomplish this. Both principals, Feldman and Gomez, described their strategies for recruiting board-certified teachers to work at the school and using board-certified teachers as mentors.

- *Recruiting board-certified teachers to the school*

Feldman and Gomez engaged in a variety of recruiting strategies that specifically targeted board-certified teachers as well as teachers-of-the-year. According to Feldman, each Red River job posting clearly stated: “We look for accomplished teachers with at least five years of experience and a Master’s Degree. Preference will be given to National Board Certified Teachers and or [Teacher of the Year] Fellows.” These distinctions were a useful screen when a job fair might yield hundreds of applications at one time. Gomez explained that he saved time by having teams of people go through them to sort out all of the board-certified teachers and teachers-of-the-year.

The school annually procured a list of all board-certified teachers in the district from the teachers’ union and sent a copy of the posting directly to each of them. They also tried to bring the teachers they wanted to recruit into the building for other purposes. For example, Gomez offered use of space in the building for meetings of board-certification candidates and set up special tours of the school for the district’s award-winning teachers every year.

One of the most effective recruiting tools was to encourage NBCTs to recruit more NBCTs by asking them to tap their professional networks. Gomez explained that he let the staff know as soon as he is aware of a vacancy, realizing that the “circles they keep” might lead to good candidates. He said he would tell them, “We’re going to be

looking. If you know something, see me in private and recommend them.” He counted on board-certified teachers to have this kind of social capital, and it had worked successfully on several occasions. He recalled, “I had a National Board Certified Teacher that helped me recruit other National Board Certified Teachers that were great; and it made the difference between them going to another school or coming here.” Since many of the district’s experienced teachers who were eligible to work at Red River were not necessarily planning to leave their current position, the school also used board-certified teachers as informal headhunters to benefit from their extended social networks.

Notably, this school’s strategy involved increasing the number of board-certified teachers through recruiting, not necessarily by growing their own board-certified teachers, as Blue Hill Academy did. Board certification was primarily viewed as a tool for hiring, therefore school leaders did not initially see a need to support teachers who had already been hired to pursue board certification, a process that would require considerable time and energy and possibly detract from teachers’ work with their interns. When teachers on the faculty did pursue board certification at the encouragement of their certified peers, Feldman and Gomez supported them with release time and fee assistance because they felt it was important to support teachers’ own goals as professionals.

- *Using board-certified teachers as mentor teachers*

All teachers at the Red River Pilot School understood that they were hired to serve the dual mission of the school, educating all students and preparing new teachers. The school depended on mentors to model effective practice, to analyze and reflect on instructional practice with interns, and to establish a relationship with their interns that would support adult learning. According to Feldman, recruiting board-certified teachers

was “one way to increase the probability,” that mentors would be able to meet these needs.

Interns observed their master mentors in all aspects of their practice. They arrived before the start of the school year and joined planning meetings. They observed their mentors establishing routines and building classroom community with students at the beginning of the year. They attended faculty meetings and professional development sessions, they helped plan assemblies at team meetings, and they were on hand during meetings with parents. Many even adopted their mentors’ strategies for managing paperwork.

Mentors also played an important role in helping interns analyze and reflect on what they observed or experienced in the classroom. While mentors were compensated to stay late after school to meet with interns, mentors reported that the reflective conversation went on all day—before school, during instruction, during lunch, as well as long after the school day was over. Most conversations were guided by interns’ and mentors’ observations and needs. Twice a week each pair was also scheduled to have a structured conversation guided by a protocol about one of the intern’s specific learning goals. Through formal meetings or informal modeling, mentors were expected to be an important source of knowledge for the program’s interns. At the same time, their frequent interaction was intended to help the interns adopt professional habits and dispositions from their mentors.

Progress

After five years, not only were student achievement scores at the Red River Pilot School well above those of other schools with comparable populations in the district, but the school's training program boasted that 95% of its graduates were working in low-performing schools within the district. In addition, in 2006 a group of the program's first graduates were pursuing board certification together.

The strategy of recruiting board-certified teachers as mentors had been successful and was a source of great pride for Gomez. In fact, he boasted that in the recent year all of his new hires had held board certification. The non-board-certified teachers I spoke with on the faculty were aware of this hiring pattern, but it did not seem to create tension for them. One confessed that she felt she would not have been offered her job if she had applied today, but she added with confidence, "The caliber is so high, it feels like a privilege to work here." Gomez and Feldman were both consistent in acting on their belief that all teachers on the faculty were exceptional teachers and teachers reported that no teacher was treated differently or preferentially due to the various awards or distinctions she or he may have held.

The teacher preparation program was perceived to be such a success that it expanded in its third year to include two additional training schools modeled on the Red River Pilot School. As the number of interns working in the district's neediest schools grew, however, the program's administrators perceived a new problem. The standard of professional practice modeled by the mentors and supported by the training schools conflicted with what these new teachers experienced in their new positions. In response, the program expanded beyond teacher training to become involved in restructuring the

failing schools they had planned to staff, hand-picking school administrators and tinkering with staffing structures to create workplaces designed for teachers to teach as professionals.

Gomez was quite proud of the school and program's shared accomplishment of preparing exceptional new teachers for the schools that need them most. He said,

I've talked to some principals at other schools that say, "You know what? Those teachers that came from your school—they're superstar teachers. They're our best." Hearing that kind of feedback just helps energize our staff and our mentors.

The Green View Elementary School

The Context

The Green View School was nestled in a shallow valley with a view of the mountains on almost every side. Teachers were happy to work in this school with its close-knit community and well-resourced, spacious facility. Parent engagement was high; in fact, in a recent year parents' fundraising efforts brought almost \$60,000 to support teachers' work. Local businesses were also proud partners of the school: the main hallway featured photos and certificates recalling services schoolchildren had performed for the community and resources the community had given to the school. In addition, student achievement in this K-8 school was so high—over 94-97% proficient on state tests—that the school earned a commendation from the state annually.

The Problem

In 1994, Joanne James, a middle school English teacher at Green View, began to wonder if she was doing all she could to be an excellent teacher. In that year, she pursued and achieved National Board Certification, and decided that there *was* more to being an excellent teacher. She said, “the reflection that happened during that process... transformed me not only as a teacher, but in some ways as a person.” As she raised her expectations of herself and started collaborating with colleagues to improve her practice, she began to believe that the school was not organized for the professional practice of teaching. James recalled, “I think we just were all little individual entities to ourselves. Because when I look at my years in the classroom I think I did a good job with my students but I don’t think I had the venues for sharing and talking about what we were doing.” She saw this as a problem and decided to do something about it.

James became somewhat of an expert on the topic of creating professional workplaces. She researched the topic and began giving workshops throughout the state while collaborating with her principal to introduce some new routines at her school. No one was surprised, therefore, when James was asked to become the assistant principal of her school in 2001. She accepted the position and moved into the principalship two years later.

James was committed to creating stronger norms of reflective practice and collaboration at Green View. From her new vantage point as administrator, she could see that this was not just an issue of improving teacher satisfaction, but believed it would address a problem that had been caused by high achievement. Given the accolades their school regularly received, teachers had little motivation to stop and reflect on the

effectiveness of their teaching and consider how they might do more for their students. Nor did the district's professional development workshops inspire them to do more, because they tended to address challenges Green View did not face, such as the achievement gap. James felt that teachers would need to take their professional growth into their own hands and would need a reason to do so. She believed that if she could establish norms of reflective practice and collaboration, teachers would hold each other accountable for the quality of their teaching practice and enable the teachers on her staff to serve as each other's professional developers.

The changes James wanted to make required a real culture shift in her school. She wanted to extend teachers' well-established social congeniality to professional collegiality and to "create an atmosphere where everybody pulls for everybody else and the children." James wanted to change teachers' dispositions and patterns of interaction to create a place where "we're all in this together and if something works for me, one of the first things I want to do is let somebody else know about it." One teacher recalled: "When I first got here, it was a feeling of, 'Everything's fine, let's just keep doing it.' When [James] came she was like, 'This is good, let's make it great.' She just took this boat and you had to get on."

The Plan

James's plan for transforming the professional culture of her school drew upon all that she knew about creating professional workplaces. She initiated new structures to involve teachers in decision-making, foster team-building and establish transparency about school policy. Such changes supported the staff to work together and build the

relational trust they would need to take the risk of opening their teaching practice to one another. Protocols for meetings, routines for reporting back, and conventions for ongoing communication were all key parts of her system. Above all, James provided teachers with feedback and gratitude for their professional work.

The systems embedded in James's plan provided structural supports for reflective practice and collaboration, but teachers still needed the skills and inclination to reflect on their practice and to collaborate. Her belief that her teachers could build these by going through the National Board Certification process was based on her reflections on her own experience:

Flowing throughout the process is earnest reflection—taking that hard, long look at what you do, why you do it, how it is effective or not, and how you would do it differently.... While we would all like to be self-disciplined enough to formally reflect upon our teaching practice regularly, there's just not time in the lives of typical educators. This process forced the issue.

As she reflected on all she had learned about her teaching practice and all she had gained from the new relationships she had built with colleagues during the process, she recalled, "That is when I said everybody needs to do this because there is no way any teacher is going to do that kind of self-discovery without a process to go through."

James knew that influencing the professional norms of a faculty—especially one that had been together for a long time—would be challenging. She knew that as principal she could orchestrate organizational and physical changes but that true cultural changes would rest with her teachers. For this she counted on the influence of National Board Certification. The sections that follow detail James's efforts to increase the number of board-certified teachers in her school and to strategically support board-

certified teachers in using what they knew and believed to play an informal role in helping to establish a culture of reflection and collaboration throughout the school.

- *Increasing the number of board-certified teachers*

James encouraged teachers to pursue board certification. She told me, “I’ve let people know that that’s one of my major strategies, to have as many teachers to go through this process as possible, because in itself it brings about such positive change in the way you approach teaching and the way you talk about it with others.” No teacher I spoke with perceived her encouragement to be heavy-handed. Experienced teachers—both board-certified and non-board-certified—reported that she had suggested that they consider it but had not pressured them. Newer hires did say that they felt they were expected to pursue board certification at some point, but had been advised that they should choose the right time, personally and professionally. There was no sense of urgency, but some teachers described a bandwagon effect due in large part to James’s deliberate efforts to provide opportunities for candidates to talk about all they were gaining from the process. The more teachers achieved board certification, they said, the more others wanted to because of all they had heard from their peers about how the process changed them. They knew it would be a tremendous amount of work, but James made sure each teacher had a realistic preview of what the process entailed and what could be gained in terms of professional learning.

James made sure her candidates had convenient access to a candidate support program with an experienced facilitator. She also freed them from some school-level professional activities during their candidacy. She made sure that all of the resources needed for portfolio preparation were available so they could focus on learning from the

process, and she covered classes for teachers who needed time to collaborate with colleagues on their portfolio development.

Beyond professional learning, teachers were drawn to board certification by additional strong incentives. The state paid their assessment fee (\$2000 to \$2300 at that time) and provided a large salary increase if they achieved board certification. Although teachers I spoke with agreed that board-certified teachers received no preferential treatment at the school, some teachers felt that board-certified teachers did have a special kind of relationship with each other and that the credential was treated with esteem by those outside the school. One candidate admitted, “I am doing it this year, and the fact that so many people have it makes me feel that I can do it, but I guess I feel like I want to be part of that too, that National Boards Club. There’s more respect.”

While the board certification process may have increased the professional learning, monetary compensation and public esteem of individual teachers, James was relying on the board certification process to help her school meet a specific organizational goal: changing the professional culture of the school.

- *Using board-certified teachers*

As an active member of the profession, Joanne James was up-to-date on the latest trends and “best practices” in education. The literature was full of tips for supporting reflective practice and creating professional learning communities, and indeed she employed many of them. But she also recognized that 1) these terms mean different things to different people and 2) the habits of reflection and collaboration could not effectively be mandated. Handing out reflection journals and assigning everyone to a committee would not be enough. She had observed that board

certification brought “positive changes in the way [teachers] approach teaching and the way [they] talk about it with others.” Her strategy, therefore, was to count on board certified teachers to play a powerful but informal role in helping other teachers gain a common understanding of what is meant by “reflection” and “collaboration” and in helping them *want* to reflect and collaborate.

At Green View, board-certified teachers were used deliberately, but informally, simply by increasing their interaction with other teachers. Preparation periods were creatively aligned, and teachers who needed to work closely together had adjacent classrooms. Everyone was on a grade-level and curriculum team; everyone also rotated in and out of various school- or district-level committees. Members of this faculty were in frequent communication with one another. While board-certified teachers participated in these teams and may have chaired some of the committees, they were no more likely to do so than non-board-certified teachers. There were no special roles or responsibilities reserved for board-certified teachers, but James hoped that in their everyday interaction with colleagues they would model reflective practice and collaboration and initiate these practices among their peers. James explained that when teachers have been engaged together in the guided reflection process of board certification, their shared experience carried over to other work and the work of their colleagues as well. She said, “That’s probably the most magical thing, to see how it happens on that daily basis. People help each other discover themselves.” This is how she believed these teachers would help “creat[e] an atmosphere where everybody pulls for everybody else and the children, and we’re all in this together.”

The peer-review component of the teacher evaluation process also influenced the culture in their school. James explained that, “the concept of reflection is a part of all teacher evaluations.” She supported teachers to use authentic data sources to identify their own learning goals, sometimes using the NBPTS Standards as a resource to help teachers identify areas for growth. Then, a peer review system guided teachers in assisting one another to establish, revisit, and reflect on progress toward those goals. She assembled pairs of teachers who she knew would support each other’s reflection and checked in with teachers’ progress at mid-year and the end of the year.

Joanne James did not rely solely on board-certified teachers to help her establish and uphold this new standard of reflection and collaboration. Indeed, many of the other teachers at Green View were also accomplished in these skills. In addition, a careful hiring process helped her to hire teachers who could “come fit right in with us.” Her strategy ultimately was to expect all teachers to engage in reflection and collaboration, and she was confident that she had enough teachers on the faculty who understood what this goal meant that they could all achieve it. She said,

I think knowing that we are all what the National Board calls accomplished teachers, whether we have that credential or not, shooting for that in all our daily behaviors, is what we go for here. Working hand in hand, I can’t tell you that our NBCTs are the better teachers, but I do know they influence widely who’s working side-by-side with them. Going through the process and having done that kind of reflection of their own process comes across in every conversation they have, every teacher at every level, so it just brings the quality of what we do every day up a notch.

Progress

While there had been little change in test results—the school continued to score at the top on state tests—school pride, parent involvement, fundraising records and teacher

commitment were all higher than ever. Nearly all of the teachers at the school with school-aged children had arranged to have them attend the school. Teaching vacancies were rare, and when they occurred the principal was flooded with applicants who had heard about the rich professional culture. During interviews, three teachers attributed the recent spike in housing prices and development in the region to the burgeoning reputation of the Green View School. One veteran who witnessed the changes described it this way:

We've always had a close family-type atmosphere, but the professionalism we have now is really an element that makes our school stand out.... We've always had Christmas dinners, and a lot of people go to church together, but now we're driven to motivate each other and ourselves and we're seeing the benefits in parent interaction. We get more and more parents in the school, people coming here because they want to be at [Green View], both parents and teachers, people actually moving here for this school.

James's strategy proceeded nearly according to plan. She had a clear idea of what she wanted to do and how the board certification process could help her with it. Having been through the board-certification process herself, she recognized that the credential was not an end in itself, but represented a standard of professional practice that she wanted to try to uphold among the entire faculty. The board certification process had helped her to build the capacity within her faculty to do that.

The strategic plans described here were designed to improve the quality of teaching practice in these contexts by addressing specific local needs. Each was enhanced by the tactical use of board-certified teachers.

Chapter Four

Characteristics and Capital of Board-Certified Teachers

The strategic plans described in Chapter Three were initiated by school and district leaders who had believed board-certified teachers could benefit their schools in ways that extend beyond the work they do in their own classrooms. Some of these leaders believed this because they had followed the development of the NBPTS, others had been familiar with the NBPTS Standards and several had worked alongside board-certified teachers. These experiences led them to presume that board-certified teachers had characteristic features that would be useful within their plans to improve the quality of teaching in their schools and districts. By discussing these features of board-certified teachers as capital, this chapter identifies the ways in which these teachers were potential assets to their schools.

Characteristics and Capital

Leaders in this study had various expectations about board-certified teachers. At Blue Hill, Dart felt that he could count on them to influence their colleagues to share their commitment to students and student learning, and their knowledge about content and classroom practice. He was also confident that these teachers' credential would give them clout to attract resources and improve the reputation of Blue Hill. At Red River, the

education and business leaders who designed the teacher training program believed board-certified teachers were knowledgeable about their content area and classroom practice. Gomez, the principal, also recognized that their credential might attract resources. At Green View, James' reform plan relied principally upon board-certified teachers to be models of reflective practice and collaboration among their colleagues. Importantly, none of these leaders suggested that they believed these desirable characteristics would *only* be found in board-certified teachers. But for the purpose of their reform plans, they needed a reliable way to identify the assets within their organizations, and therefore they relied upon board certification to help them identify teachers who had these characteristics. These leaders expected these distinctive features to be characteristic of board-certified teachers in general, not just of the individual teachers they knew who held board certification, and therefore felt confident to build board-certified teachers into their reform plans as a key asset, a resource, or capital.

Identifying the characteristic features of board-certified teachers as capital helps clarify what these teachers had to offer their schools.¹¹ When board-certified teachers demonstrated and shared their knowledge about content and classroom practice, they contributed their *human capital*, that is, their knowledge, skills and expertise, to their schools. Schools benefited from these teachers' *cultural capital* when their ways of being, such as their commitment to students, to reflective practice or to collaboration, influenced their colleagues in valued ways. NBCTs' credential also brought to these teachers' schools *social capital*, that is, esteem or influence, which could attract money, partnerships and other resources to their schools.

¹¹ The framework of teachers' capital is based on the work of Spillane et al., (2003).

This study finds that board-certified teachers did influence the standard of teaching practice in their schools and districts in expected ways. But since board-certified teachers across all three sites were found to have all three forms of capital to offer their schools, they also influenced the standard of teaching practice in ways that were unexpected and sometimes undetected by formal school and district leaders.

Data from these schools further suggest that the knowledge, skills and experience of these teachers were useful to their schools as capital because their knowledge, skills and experience were aligned with each other. That is, the formal and informal influence board-certified teachers had on the standard of teaching practice in their schools was coordinated by the shared understanding of accomplished teaching practice they developed during the board-certification process.

In the following section I describe the three forms of capital that board-certified teachers brought to their schools, and present data from across the three schools to illustrate the ways in which NBCTs' capital was a resource for reform in their schools. I use teachers' own accounts of how the process helped shape and sometimes strengthen those forms of capital.

Human capital

Board-certified teachers were perceived to be knowledgeable about content and classroom practice and skilled in talking about teaching and learning. These two kinds of expertise represented human capital that influenced the standard of teaching practice in these teachers' schools. Many of them believed that the board-certification process had strengthened and shaped their knowledge and skills.

Knowledgeable about content and classroom practice

When the Red River school district decided to create its own teacher training program to prepare the teachers it needed for its hardest-to-staff schools, school officials sought teachers who could model exemplary classroom practice. Leaders considered board certification to be a useful hiring tool because they believed, as Feldman recalled, it was “one way to increase the probability” that they would hire someone who was knowledgeable about content and classroom practice.

The evidence suggests that the board-certified teachers at Red River were knowledgeable about content and classroom practice. Student test scores and parent feedback to the school indicated that they were effective with their students. Reports from principals who had hired Red River interns suggested that their mentors had prepared them well for classroom practice. Board-certified teachers were also highly-respected by their colleagues for their knowledge, as were most of the carefully-selected mentor teachers at Red River.

With five years of experience interviewing both board-certified teachers and other accomplished teachers, Principal Gomez told me, “I have been very pleased with the candidates who I interviewed who were National Board certified,” and he noted that his latest round of hires had been all board-certified teachers. He acknowledged that board-certified teachers, like all new hires, needed training to work with adult learners. Yet he maintained that focusing his recruitment efforts on board-certified teachers had helped him to staff his school with skilled and knowledgeable mentors.

Board-certified teachers' knowledge about content and classroom practice was also an asset at Blue Hill and Green View. Several teachers at these schools described ways in which they valued their NBCT colleagues as knowledgeable resources. One non-board-certified teacher at Green View commented,

The teachers that have gone through the board certification are very strong teachers. They're involved in a lot of different things within the school, and you see a lot of things that they do that you're going, "Oh wow, that's a neat idea," or "I like the way they're doing that..." As far as the way they teach kids and approach learning, it's a lot more hands-on sorts of things, reflective sorts of things that they would do.

Expecting board-certified teachers to be an informal influence on their colleagues' knowledge and skills, school leaders at these two schools deliberately created opportunities for this type of influence to happen. They arranged work schedules to accommodate frequent team meetings, required school-wide committee work and encouraged informal encounters. The special arrangement implemented at Blue Hill from 2000-2003, which gave board-certified teachers half of each school day to mentor colleagues, had been one innovative strategy within Dart's plan. While many teachers spurned the offer of help from their board-certified colleagues, one Blue Hill teacher described how important their assistance had been when he first came to the school as a novice teacher. He recalled, "In the past, one of the NBCTs spent part of the day supporting us and modeling in our rooms... similar to coaches today. I had NBCTs come into my room and help me out. It was especially helpful getting started." He later achieved board-certification himself and his classroom became a model for others in the district.

As a result of their recognized knowledge and skills, some board-certified teachers in these schools had also assumed special roles. At Green View, for example, most team chairs were board-certified teachers. In the special case of Blue Hill, Dart had been willing to accept the board-certification credential as a proxy for expertise, but Blue Hill's teachers had not and they rejected the formal roles he created. Board-certified teachers had to prove themselves to their colleagues before they would be accepted in special roles. Upon my visit in 2006, however, all board-certified teachers at Blue Hill had special roles earned through demonstrated expertise, from committee chair to district-level advisory work and three were full-time instructional coaches.

Dart not only expected board-certified teachers to bring human capital to his comprehensive plan, but he also saw the board-certification process as a resource for *building* human capital. To encourage teachers to pursue board certification, he made sure their candidate fees were covered, arranged school-based candidate support, and offered a financial incentive for achieving the credential. Many teachers did choose to pursue board certification and several described how measuring their practice against the Board's standards had helped them to recognize areas in which they needed to seek new knowledge. One Blue Hill veteran declared that Dart's strategy to use the board-certification process to strengthen teaching practice among Blue Hill teachers had been a success: "The more teachers who have gone through the process, getting that experience and that knowledge about national standards and what the expectations are, of course the school is going to get better because you have more teachers who really understand that now."

While Red River leaders had not counted on the board-certification process to help teachers build human capital, teachers at this school gave rich examples of how the board-certification process had helped them to develop deeper knowledge and more effective skills. One Red River teacher, for example, had entered into the board-certification process with specific learning goals in mind for himself. He recalled, “There were certain things that gave me the heebie-jeebies. You know, I was like, ‘I’ve never really been able to figure out assessment,’ or ‘I’m not really good at concluding discussion at the end of class....’” These are important aspects of practice that an intern would be expected to learn from his mentor. This teacher explained that the board-certification process forced him to get over his “heebie-jeebies.” He said, “I spent a lot of time thinking about [these practices] because they very specifically asked about them in the portfolio, those things that I was concerned with. I definitely improved.” Viewing the board-certification process as an important resource for strengthening his practice, he said, “It’s possible to be a reflective educator and go through all the things that could change one’s teaching independently.... But I mean the fact is that I don’t sit down and do all this myself.” In fact, several teachers at these three schools had pursued board certification with a specific learning goal in mind for themselves. One of them who hoped the process would keep him focused on his improvement goals said, “It’s a yoke.”

Some teachers who pursued board certification discovered new learning goals for themselves after they entered the process. When the portfolio directions required teachers to explain how they differentiated instruction for their special education students, some teachers found themselves going back to the textbooks from their pre-service training or asking colleagues how to identify and create modifications for various

special education prototypes. When the content-knowledge tests required elementary teachers to answer subject-specific questions about health or science, for example, some teachers visited the library or the Internet to shore up their subject-area knowledge. Many agreed that the experience had opened their minds to new areas for growth.

It seems important to note here that board-certified teachers do not necessarily have content knowledge that others do not or special instructional strategies that other teachers do not use. A board-certified teacher who had mentored many candidates through the process explained that since people generally “don’t know what they don’t know,” the NBPTS Standards help teachers organize their thinking about what they do know and to identify areas they know nothing about. Studying the standards, she said, helps teachers develop the desire to “know everything they could know.” A teacher who pursued and did not achieve board-certification agreed, explaining that studying the NBPTS Standards had helped her to “make learning a priority.”

A veteran teacher from Red River described what happened when she read the NBPTS Standards: “I found out there are practices I hadn’t been doing that make sense, and now I do those things.” And she listed specific examples:

How reading and writing is a reciprocal process, and that’s something I never thought of before, how important those two are to go together. Making math applicable to everyday life, and showing how math is interrelated with everything. Collaboration with parents, even though I knew that, but how strongly that impacts the children’s learning when parents are part of that process. Those are the ones that... just kind of blew my mind when I first learned the standards.

These are important realizations for a mentor training new teachers. After studying the NBPTS Standards, she began to prepare her portfolio. She said the process of having to explain what she was teaching and why “just took me to a different level.” She reflected,

“It helped me step up my game. Even though I thought my game was ‘here,’ it took me to a different level.... so naturally that’s going to carry over into my everyday teaching and naturally I’m going to share that piece with the interns.” Another board-certified teacher admitted, “Before I pursued board certification, I felt like I was magnificent teacher. Who are they to tell me whether I am or not?” Thinking back, however, she wondered aloud how any teacher could ever determine whether they knew all they could know without some way to check their knowledge against others in the profession.

Networking that occurred during the process also helped many of these teachers sharpen their knowledge and skills. A Red River teacher boasted about the colleagues she had met through her candidate support program. “I have go-to people,” she said. She described collaborating with a board-certified science specialist, sharing book group recommendations with colleagues across town, and receiving support from board-certified teachers who had moved into the positions of principal and curriculum coordinator. She valued having what she called “a wealth of knowledge” available to her through these connections. A middle school science teacher at Red River felt similarly about his new colleagues. He had no content area peers with whom to collaborate in his building and said, “Now I had a professional group that I could bounce ideas off of, which simply doesn’t happen.... It was nice to finally have that group that I could ask questions and get tips.” The opportunity that board certification gave him to build professional relationships across schools not only strengthened his professional knowledge and skills, or human capital, but provided a strong model of collaboration and continuous professional learning for his interns.

Skill in talking about teaching and learning

Many teachers who are knowledgeable about content and classroom practice become tongue-tied when they try to articulate their tacit knowledge. Board-certified teachers were viewed by their colleagues as skilled in talking about teaching and learning. These teachers largely reported that this skill had not only been honed through hours of practice as they prepared the written portions of their portfolios, but shaped by the language of the NBPTS Standards.

While none of the leaders in this study deliberately targeted this characteristic of board-certified teachers in their local reform plans, several of them noted the positive and important influence that board-certified teachers had on the quality of conversation in their schools. The principals of Green View and Blue Hill—who did not know each other—both described the influence of board-certified teachers using the same phrase: “It raises the level of conversation.” James explained: “Going through the process and having done that kind of reflection of their own practice comes across in every conversation they have, with every teacher at every level, so it just brings the quality of what they do every day up a notch.”

Leaders and teachers at Red River also characterized the level of conversation among their faculty as high, although while leaders and non-board-certified teachers pointed to the school’s teacher-training focus, some board-certified teachers at the school traced the quality of conversation to a different root. One teacher said, “It’s in the portfolio. Talking about teaching as your ‘practice,’ the idea of the ‘evidence.’ Parts of [the portfolio language] will come up in our meetings and we’ll say ‘that brings back memories!’” Teachers across all three sites, in fact, reportedly used terms and phrases

from the NBPTS Standards documents and portfolio directions regularly. Board-certified teachers claimed that phrases such as “clear, consistent evidence,” “equitable, accessible and fair learning environment,” “high, worthwhile, and appropriate goals,” and above all, “impact on student learning,” had become part of the vernacular of all teachers in the school.

After reciting a list of board-certification “buzz words” commonly used during Red River faculty meetings, a board-certified teacher explained why teachers continued to use the language: “They use them because they believe in them.... definitely ‘collaboration:’ people do not do anything individually around here and they want to get input from other people. And they talk about the ‘impact on student learning,’ you know: Is this going to be significant? Is it worth doing?” A different board-certified teacher in the same school agreed that these terms were useful: “I think ultimately they are related to the same kinds of good teaching that National Board is a part of.... There is nothing that is the sole property of the National Board.” These phrases represented important concepts that many teachers talk about regularly in their schools, not concepts invented by the NBPTS. The board-certification process gave these teachers shared language that helped them to talk about complex ideas in teaching and to communicate about nuanced topics. One non-board-certified teacher at Red River noted:

I have definitely heard people say, when we’re in meetings and somebody sort of frames something in an interesting way or maybe a succinct way that we hadn’t thought about it, they’re like, “Oh yeah, National Boards teaches you that!” I’ve heard that a few times, so I definitely think there is something to the logic and the way that you so systematically reflect on things, but I haven’t done it myself.

As board-certified teachers were recognized for the relative ease with which they could talk about teaching and learning, their language was adopted and used throughout the faculty and among interns.

Having clear, shared language for talking about teaching was especially important to a board-certified teacher from Red River who identified communication as the most important skill of a master mentor. “You have to be able to communicate what needs to be done.” And the most effective resource she felt she had in supporting communication with interns was the language of the board-certification process. “I think [board certification] definitely gives me that framework to go back to, the framework we used in the portfolio, the Five Core Propositions and then more specifically the standards. I can always go back to those... I have discussed those ideas with my intern.”

Another master mentor had appropriated the actual documents of the board-certification process by using an entry from the portfolio instructions as an exercise to guide her intern in explaining her teaching choices. She said, “I have actually gone over to the portfolio entries.” The series of questions that accompany the entry offered a structured approach for eliciting her intern to talk about her budding teaching practice.

The shared language of board-certified teachers was also a potential problem: some board-certified teachers preferred to talk to other board-certified teachers. One admitted, “It’s not that I would never seek out a teacher that’s not board-certified if I needed advice but I tend to go to those first.” Some terms, such as “reflection” and “collaboration,” had a very particular meaning to board-certified teachers, a meaning that had been defined and calibrated by the board-certification process, making it easier for these teachers to talk to each other in some cases. This teacher explained, “There is a

unity among us [board-certified teachers] because of the things that we've been through with the standards.”

In their enthusiasm to celebrate their practice with one another, a few board-certified teachers at one school had even coined their own phrase. They talked about “National Board Moments.” One of them demonstrated how the term is used: “That’s like, ‘You should have seen me today when I was introducing Blah, Blah, Blah. That was a National Board Moment. The cameras should have been rolling!’” This teacher further explained:

It is the ability to recognize really effective teaching and talk about what’s notable. It is something that I’ve got that’s with me all the time. It’s knowing when the amount of participation of students is really balanced, knowing when students are interacting with students at a high level, and not just working in groups because you don’t have enough materials, but they’re actually working with one another and collaborating.

Having a shared technical language for talking about teaching practice, such as in this situation, may have kept board-certified teachers from sharing their “really effective” teaching moments with non-board-certified peers. It may have served to decrease their informal interactions and had the potential to create cliquishness. However, as will be discussed in Chapter Five, conditions within these contexts were important in determining whether and how board-certified teachers influenced their colleagues’ teaching practice. In these settings, for example, teachers had between three and eight scheduled professional meetings per week, supported by tools and routines that kept the conversation focused on instruction. These meetings ensured teachers had formal opportunities for teachers’ human capital to be available to each other and for teachers to help one another improve their teaching practice.

Cultural Capital

Board-certified teachers were also perceived by key leaders to have potential to positively influence the professional culture of their schools. Leaders viewed them as being committed to students and their students' learning, to reflective practice, and to collaboration. These leaders valued these dispositions and hoped board-certified teachers would be able to encourage and lead their colleagues to adopt these same values.

The task of influencing teachers to be committed to students, reflective practice and collaboration may not appear to be such a great challenge. Few want to leave children behind, and few will argue with the idea that they should think back on how a lesson went or cooperate with others. However, board-certified teachers' conceptions of what these terms mean and look like in practice were much more specific than that. Their understanding of these concepts was shaped by the exercises in the board-certification portfolio. Commitment to students is more than staying late to work with a child, reflective practice is more than writing in a journal, and collaboration is more than cooperation. To a board-certified teacher, accomplished teaching is defined by these ideas, and teaching is not teaching without them. As board-certified teachers brought this perspective to their formal and informal work with colleagues, they were an influence on some of their colleagues and on their school's professional culture.

Commitment to students and student learning

When Blue Hill's superintendent recognized that his initiative to increase financial resources in the district's lowest-performing schools was not making a difference in a few of those schools, he spent time in them and found teachers making

excuses and exchanging blame. He wanted to ensure that all students had teachers who believed their students could learn and concluded that he needed to revamp the professional culture.

At the same time, a small group of teachers who had achieved board-certification had asked to meet with Dart about how their expertise could serve the system. He recalled, “I was so impressed by these teachers who came in to see me.... I said we have something here because what we have is a cadre of individuals who are truly committed to kids and truly committed to teaching and are willing to go above and beyond. And that is the kind of people I want in these schools.” He decided that his comprehensive plan would include introducing four board-certified teachers into the Blue Hill School so that their strong commitment to students and student learning could be an influence on their colleagues.

Things got off to a rough start at Blue Hill. Only a few teachers were interested in interacting with board-certified teachers; most left in resentment at the suggestion that they were not committed to their students. But several teachers were convinced to pursue board certification (not by these board-certified teachers but by the personal challenge it presented, the superintendent’s mandate, or the financial incentive) and a few achieved it, several of whom went on to mentor others.

As the principal of the renewed Blue Hill Academy described the changes she had seen in her teachers as they went through the board certification process, she touched on how NBCTs’ commitment to students looked to her: “National Board really helps teachers to try things that maybe they hadn’t thought about doing... And when you try things and you are really reflecting and you are analyzing, you are really getting at

meeting student needs. I think it helps focus you. It has you thinking, ‘Why I am doing this? What effect?’” She went on to describe specific changes she had seen in teachers’ practices after completing the board-certification process: “[They are] using more strategies. Not just teaching to the whole class as much. Giving kids opportunity. I see more kids actively engaged. I see kids working more in groups. I see kids working with partners. I see kids journaling more.”

A board-certified teacher from Green View further explained what the Board’s first Core Proposition, “commitment to students and their learning,” looks like in practice:

The process forces you to become a diagnostic and prescriptive teacher. Teachers need to be able to assess in a variety of different ways, take students’ interests and strengths and diagnose the way to present information. It has to change from year to year, depending on who you are teaching at the time. Some teachers take what the state says we need to teach and say, “I have to do it this way.” National Board encourages you to think outside the box and not be so rigid. You use what you know about the student, not the state, to impact student learning.

Many factors within the comprehensive plan at Blue Hill helped to support students’ success and the change in professional culture. More effective professional development, new curricula, and most notably the new principal, who brought clear expectations and a focus on teacher learning, were all important. The principal explained that she also had tried to make sure that departing teachers were replaced by those who were familiar with board certification. She said, “We would let them know that our model is the National Board model when we are hiring.”

In 2000, when Dart concluded that teachers at Blue Hill did not have the commitment needed to serve their students well, he offered these teachers two options. He gave them the choice to be a part of recreating the school or to transfer to another

school. The vast majority of teachers chose to leave. However, six years later, the few who stayed raved about working in a professional culture that was focused on professional development and committed to making an impact on students' learning. As more teachers participated in the board-certification process and developed a common vision of what it meant to demonstrate commitment to students and their learning, their habits and patterns of interaction were said to have an influence on others. When Blue Hill Academy students were not making gains, teachers no longer complained or blamed the parents. Instead, they reflected on what they needed to learn, identified promising practices, supported each other to experiment with them, and monitored the impact on student learning. A veteran teacher who withstood the changes said, "I will say that [Blue Hill] is a very different school today than it was six years ago. You would not recognize it, not just physically but when coming into classrooms and seeing the kind of interactions that are going on between students and teachers; students and students; teachers and teachers. I think [board certification] has made a difference."

There were no board-certified teachers who reported that the process had made them *feel* more committed to students or to the belief that all children can learn. Many did report, however, that it empowered them to *act* on their commitment and made them feel accountable to it. They knew that they *should* treat all students equitably, but in their portfolios they had to prove that they *actually did* so. They knew that they should recognize individual differences, but in their portfolios these teachers had to describe, analyze and reflect on how their knowledge of students affected their instructional choices.

For many teachers, this process of being called to task caused changes in their practice and their interaction with colleagues. They began challenging themselves and their colleagues in this way as an ongoing habit; it became part of “teaching” to them. A Blue Hill teacher said, “I just think an important part from National Board is how it connects to student achievement. You’ve got to ask yourself the ‘so what?’ a lot. How do you know if they are learning it? And so what if they are? Those are good questions to check in with yourself about.” After asking these questions for his portfolio, this teacher developed new formative assessments to monitor his students’ learning and sought professional development opportunities that would help him meet his students’ identified needs. Like many other board-certified teachers, he explained that asking questions that require him to trace his actions to student learning—and following up on the answers—had transformed the way he taught.

This practice was reported and observed to be a school-wide habit at Green View. Describing her school as a place where “people try to strive to be the best they can and make as many advances as we possibly can for our kids,” one board-certified teacher described how teachers regularly ask each other, “Did your kids get it? Which ones? How do you know? What will you do next?” She felt having a critical mass of board-certified teachers had helped to establish this norm of constantly tying their teaching back to the impact on students’ learning. She said, “The more people you have on your staff who will really take apart their curriculum and think, ‘How can I make this make sense for kids?’ and ‘How is this going to help them?’ the better student learning you are going to have. The more people you can get on board to do that, the better the school is going to be.”

At Green View, where commitment to students meant challenging high-achieving students as well as serving the needs of lower-achieving students, the principal believed that having board-certified teachers on her faculty increased the chances that when a teacher was struggling, someone would respond with, “Well, let’s try this and this and this,” or “I know somebody here,” or “I’ve read a book.” She said, “The general feeling in this building is, ‘Okay we’ve got a challenge here.’ We may gripe and complain a little bit, we may think about it a little bit, and then it’s, ‘Okay. Where is everybody that we can pull from—resources, personnel—to help us do what it takes?’” This habit of mind, she believed, was a standard that was set and sustained among the faculty by board-certified teachers.

Within the professional culture at Red River, teachers throughout the faculty were similarly willing to take challenges head on. But speaking specifically about board-certified teachers, Gomez said, “One thing that I feel differentiates them from other teachers is that they are risk-takers. They’ll take the risks, and you need to have those kinds of teachers that will try new things, because we have some students here that have been taught one way, and haven’t got it. We need to take risks with them and try new ways.” He felt that this had had a positive influence on the professional culture of the school, and ventured to guess that this risk-taking characteristic of board-certified teachers came from the board-certification process. He said, “They have opened themselves up, and made themselves vulnerable... I think they’ve accepted a certain level of deprivitization, which is uncomfortable for a lot of teachers to do, especially to their colleagues.”

Committed to reflective practice

When Joanne James assumed the principalship of the school where she had worked for 22 years, she planned to transform the professional culture by increasing reflection and collaboration. While these are identified as “best practices” and defined in various ways throughout the professional literature, James’ particular idea of what these terms meant and how they would look in practice, came from her experience with board certification. She therefore saw the board-certification process as a logical tool for tuning her colleagues’ ideas of reflective practice and collaboration to her own and helping them to feel the same commitment to it.

Many teachers, including several who said they already thought they were reflective teachers, described the change they felt when they began to believe that reflection is not just reminiscing about how a lesson went or writing in a journal, but taking strategic action based on one’s observations. A Green View teacher told me, “The reflection was big. I always did it, but never recorded it. In the past if a lesson didn’t go well I said, ‘Hup! Cross that one off! Just don’t do that again.’ But now I will try to figure out *why* that didn’t work. I’m always writing notes to myself.... It really does make a difference at how you look at your teaching and at each other’s.” Another teacher from this school was surprised that she changed her habits after over twenty years of teaching. “For me that was a learning step that you are always saying, ‘Okay, what did the students glean from this?’ and then if you don’t think that it is very much then you revamp.” A Red River teacher described the change she went through during her board-certification candidacy this way: “I did a lot of thinking about what I did in a lesson and why it went the way it did, and then acting on those reflections, making changes, more

critically and more actively.” Discussing the continued impact of that experience on the way she thought about her practice and her work with interns, she said, “You just have to do so much of it in that one year that it becomes natural.”

While teachers’ new habits of reflective practice often led to an increase in their own knowledge and skills, or human capital, their schools only benefited from these teachers’ cultural capital when their habits of reflective practice influenced their colleagues’ practice. There was some evidence at Green View that board-certified teachers had contributed to establishing a standard of reflective practice throughout their school. This standard was identified as unique by a veteran specialist who had worked in nearly all of the district’s schools: “[Teachers in this school] are willing to use a lot of creative ways to approach the subject matter, creative assessment too.... They are always critiquing themselves and probably never teaching a unit the same way each time.” She had seen this as a change over time and she attributed it to board certification. “I think there is something about the process that does that,” she said. A non-board-certified teacher at Green View took note of the new standard of reflection modeled by her board-certified colleagues. Describing how her conversations with board-certified teachers had opened her mind to new ideas and practices, she said she appreciated that when her board-certified colleagues reflected on their teaching, they talked about “*how* they changed as a result of something they do in their classroom and *how* they’re doing what they’re doing.”

Through coaching roles, several board-certified teachers at Blue Hill were in key positions to influence the practice of other teachers in their school. One of them described the influence of board-certification on her coaching work, saying:

If you ask anybody what I think is most important about teaching they'll tell you it's the reflection. I think that I got that from National Board. Because they weren't looking for the best lesson, they were looking for you to really reflect to see what went well and what didn't. And you know, my motto is, 'If you don't have time to reflect, you don't have time to improve.....' I think that that is really, really important.

Another board-certified instructional coach at this school explained that she regularly used the pattern of questions from the board-certification portfolio instructions to help other teachers learn how to reflect.

Having learned about board-certification largely from seeing its impact on teachers in her school, the principal at Blue Hill came to view the model of reflective practice within board certification as an important resource for her school's improvement. She said, "It's the reflective piece of it, that's the piece that I see making a difference. And I think the more people who are reflecting, and the more that are certified by National Board, the better we get as professionals and that helps with student achievement."

Committed to collaboration

The high-achieving Green View School had, according to veteran teachers, always been a congenial community, but several also agreed that the sense of community had not always permitted conversations about classroom practice. With each teacher achieving such high success individually, James believed teachers had a lot to learn from one another, if they could just break the norm of privatized practice and become a stronger professional community, collaborating to have a greater impact on student learning. In fact, to some extent she saw teachers as each other's best resource for

learning, since locally-offered professional development was often not geared toward their needs. She insisted, “We are constantly looking at ways to try to improve student learning. But how do you move these [high-achieving] kids on?”

Collaboration, from the board-certification perspective, is not just cooperation. It involves people pooling their expertise and taking collective responsibility to make sure students are learning. James believed that the board-certification process would be a resource for helping her teachers develop a clear, shared vision of what collaboration looks like, and helping teachers to *want* to collaborate. Once enough teachers had achieved board-certification, a professional culture in the school would ensure that collaboration was not an activity, but the norm.

For board-certified teachers at all three sites, the emphasis that the board certification process had placed on reflection and learning had either validated or initiated a desire for greater collaboration with parents, colleagues, and the larger professional community. It motivated them to view and pursue new relationships with others as potential resources for building and sharing their learning and for improving the conditions for learning in their schools. At Green View, for example, teachers came together in new, informal ways. In addition to participating in regularly scheduled team or school-wide meetings, they began to design interdisciplinary projects together, seek each other’s assistance to plan instruction and interpret student performances, discuss literature and attend conferences together. They operated under the assumption that their colleagues had a right to a voice in what they were doing with their students and would speak up if they had any suggestions. They also sought out learning partners beyond the school such as parents, community members, and colleagues in other schools.

Collaboration wasn't something teachers *did*; it was a climate. One board-certified teacher who had taught at Green View for over 30 years noted, "In the last few years we've been moving more toward a collaboration climate where we plan together and then actually carry out the work that we've planned, and do that together to provide opportunities for students to broaden their horizons."

The climate of collaboration included all teachers, not just board-certified teachers. One veteran—who had no plans to pursue board certification—noted, "We've been doing team meetings forever," but she felt that these meetings had taken on new meaning as the school culture changed. She and her colleagues were not just planning assemblies and ordering supplies; they were discussing classroom challenges and helping each other interpret student performance data.

The change in professional culture at the Green View School is important and interesting because, unlike Blue Hill, teacher turnover was very low and, unlike Red River, the school was quite old. At Green View the culture change was slow and neither smooth nor complete. While the majority of teachers seemed to thrive in this new culture of collaboration, a few teachers remained guarded about their practice. One board-certified teacher observed, "There is resistance. The most resistance I feel in this school is from teachers who are not National Board Certified. Whether or not that goes hand in hand or not, I don't know, but our teaching styles are very different. Veterans as well as new." She further explained, "One of the things you find is [some] teachers teaching the same way they have taught for 20 years. One of the things about National Board is, it's a catalyst for you to start thinking about teaching in a different way." She understood that having colleagues discuss one's practice or visiting one's classroom might feel like a

threat because they might be “afraid that you’re judging me and telling me whether what I am doing is right or wrong.” However, by focusing on the *teaching* and not the *teacher*, she explained, the board-certification process had helped many board-certified teachers learn how to talk about teaching in a way that was less threatening to their colleagues. This is important, as teachers are not likely to improve their teaching if they will not talk about it. One teacher recalled realizing, “Oh! So it’s okay to have someone come into my classroom. They’re not looking at *me*; they’re looking at how the *kids* respond.” Another teacher explained, “The whole emphasis is on student learning—it’s not about us, it’s about them.” Several board-certified teachers noted that by keeping their conversations with colleagues focused this way, as they had learned to do during the board-certification process, they had been able to engage in conversation and collaboration with their non-board-certified colleagues.

The NBPTS conception of collaboration extends to parents and the community too. Several board-certified teachers admitted that they had initiated new collaboration routines with parents and the community specifically for the board-certification portfolio. One board-certified teacher recalled that she paused as she realized that sending home a weekly or even daily newsletter is not two-way communication, and another had noted during the process that an annual conference or even home visit is not in itself on-going dialogue. So they initiated new routines, and where they were useful, they continued them.

One teacher recalled, “I didn’t get a lot of interaction with parents, so I had to really push on that, and since National Board I have done a lot with parents. I’ve tried to use what I learned in that process to make the program better. Now I have a lot of parent

involvement and I think I've been able to work with the students better.” Several other teachers developed classroom websites to facilitate communication with parents. One of these teachers explained that she would have done one anyway, but board certification motivated her to find the time to do it. In several cases, particularly where teachers worked in teams, these routines influenced their colleagues' practice. As the number of teachers embracing parents and the community as part of their vision of collaboration increased at Green View, they began to redefine what collaboration meant at this site and change the professional culture.

Using board-certified teachers to improve the norms of collaboration was an important part of the reform strategy at the new Blue Hill Academy. One veteran teacher recalled, “The thinking was, if they brought in the National Board standards and teachers who were board-certified, it might change the level of collaboration and it might change practices, and then increase student achievement.” And after recounting the school's rocky journey, this teacher concluded that board certification had played an important role in raising the level of collaboration. She described how board-certified teachers' cultural capital had had both a direct and indirect influence on their remaining and newly-hired colleagues:

The direct influence would be on the teachers who have actually chosen to go through the certification process or who have had board-certified teachers come in and do modeling or coaching or that sort of thing. I think the indirect influence is that sometimes even people who might not be as interested in collaborating are drawn into it because they have to be. They have to as a function of their team; they have to be a part of whatever is going on. So they are drawn into it.

Her theories help to explain how planting just a few seeds in this site might have contributed to a school-wide culture of collaboration.

Social Capital

Board-certified teachers were also perceived to have social capital, as the public esteem of their credential and their social network of NBCTs had helped these teachers to attract resources to their schools. Leaders who had a keen understanding of what the credential meant to the public and what it meant to these teachers were able to tap these teachers' social capital to benefit the school.

Status and influence that could attract resources to their schools

Board-certified teachers in these sites helped make new partnerships possible and new grant money attainable. In some cases, they also helped attract high-quality candidates to teaching positions in their schools. These benefits to their schools were possible only because the public had recognized the esteem or status of the credential. That is, because board-certification meant something to those inside and outside of schools in these districts, the public had responded with a willingness to reward or endorse board-certified teachers and these teachers felt new enthusiasm for their work and their profession.

Some school and district leaders realized that the credential's benefit to their school was tied to public recognition of the credential. In order to benefit from these teachers' social capital, they realized that they had to help create it. Accordingly, some leaders went to great lengths to help parents or the general public understand the accomplishment these teachers had achieved. Others went out of their way to ensure teachers were treated like highly-skilled professionals in their schools. In doing so, they

helped ensure that board-certified teachers would be willing and able to attract resources to their schools.

The Blue Hill Academy's underperformance prior to 2000 was compounded by the fact that the school had a very poor reputation. Reports of the school's low achievement scores, poor safety record, and high teacher turnover statistics diminished the hopes of local parents and the goodwill of the community, while the school's working conditions were a real deterrent for most teachers and leaders who might otherwise be willing to come and try to make a difference at the school. Superintendent Dart had been convinced that board-certified teachers would have the commitment and strong classroom practice skills that the school needed, but he also believed that their credential might help to boost the school's reputation.

Board-certified teachers made possible a new partnership with a higher education institution that was seeking to support board certification in the public schools. The university lent resources and expertise to the school change effort and in exchange gained a public school site where student teachers could train with board-certified teachers. The result was a vision that raised the hopes of the community: a new Academy that would not only employ award-winning, board-certified teachers, but would help to generate more board-certified teachers for other district schools and would be entrusted by a local university with its pre-service teachers. Dart recalled the public reaction to this new vision. "It was presented to the parents and the parents were very excited. The PTA [Parent Teacher Association] was very excited about the idea. The community was very excited. And I think it succeeded very quickly in doing that. It did change the community feeling about the school."

Leaders at Red River and Green View did not report that NBCTs were attracting new partnerships, but they did report great success in securing grants. The familiarity of the credential within the public and business community made these grants attainable, and the validation and ownership these teachers felt drove them to pursue them. One Red River teacher who had received several regional community-based grants as well as a fellowship for action research explained, “The ‘NBCT’ at the end of your name, it’s like the equivalent of being an eagle scout. It’s like it eliminates half of the questions in the interview.” Another Red River teacher described a grant application she had filled out that specifically posed the question, “Are you board-certified?” She was glad to be able to say yes and was pretty confident that she would get the money. A Green View teacher discussed the impact these grants had had on the school. She said, “We get a lot of comments from parents about the programs that we do.” Indeed the array of grant-funded programs the school had was impressive. She said, “I’ve gotten a lot more grants since I’ve achieved National Board, and I’ve helped other teachers with grants.”

The reputation as a school that supports board certification also attracted a new caliber of candidate to these schools when there were vacancies to be filled. The principal at Blue Hill explained:

Some people come in and they know we have National Board teachers.... They bring it up. We explain how we have teachers certified and how they collaborate together and how, if you are interested in going through the process, this is what we do. So it is an attraction for people who are interested in that process.

Having board-certified teachers on her faculty, she said, had led to a more competitive hiring process and resulted in positive changes for the school.

Over time, two teachers who had already achieved board-certification elsewhere had transferred to Blue Hill in order to be able to work in an environment friendly to board-certified teachers. One of them told me,

[Blue Hill] was the school where most of the board-certified teachers were going to make an impact with their learning, what they've done and their achievement. The opportunity to transfer that achievement, to take that to this school and do some creative and wonderful things was one of the reasons that drew me here. Plus, I knew people here too who were board-certified, and I thought that was the place for me.

As more board-certified teachers and strong candidates were attracted to these schools, the other benefits were amplified. This was especially true at the Red River and Green View Schools, where a single vacancy might generate applications from over 100 teachers, many of whom held board-certification or hoped to someday.

The clout of board-certified teachers also sometimes led them to assume formal roles beyond their schools, such as being asked to serve on advisory boards at the local, state and national level, to participate in policymakers' roundtables, to serve as a teacher-in-residence in museums or other centers, to join traveling fellowships to exchange expertise with educators from other countries, and to speak in public forums on behalf of their colleagues in the profession. These new affiliations and professional activities, besides being professionally rewarding for teachers, were avenues for networking and for securing new resources that potentially enriched these teachers' schools. They often exposed these teachers to new ideas and advancements in the field, introduced them to other accomplished teachers they might recruit to their schools and gave them opportunities to hear about further resources or grant opportunities.

At Green View, James believed teachers' professional activities were of tremendous benefit to her school. She had teachers who worked as adjunct faculty members at a local college, participated in policy conversations at the state level, and had traveled across the country to train in new instructional strategies. While board-certified teachers were often identified for such opportunities due to their credential, James had high expectations for all of her teachers and she helped all of them to connect to outside opportunities, providing substitutes or other support if necessary. As part of her strategy, she made time at the beginning of each faculty meeting for teachers to share their experiences and their reflections on what they had learned. She said,

I believe it is important to get out of [this school]. It is so important. It is so powerful to hear people talk about their schools and what went on there and learn from one another... I just think every profession puts a major amount of resources into sending their people out to learn new strategies and just get out and talk to other people who do what you do. Teaching can be very lonely sometimes. I just think it is an important part of professionalism.

The roles that board-certified teachers held outside of Green View only benefited their school because of a variety of contextual factors. In this setting, outside agencies knew enough about board-certification to invite these teachers' participation in special roles, teachers were supported by their principal to accept these roles, and time was created for teachers to share what they were learning through these roles with their colleagues back at school. In fact, contextual factors such as these were an important influence on whether and how board-certified teachers were able to influence the standard of teaching practice in all three settings of this study. These factors will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Contexts that Support Board-Certified Teachers

Board-certified teachers were able to bring human capital, cultural capital, and social capital to reform plans aimed to improve the quality of teaching. Context was important, however, in whether and how their schools benefited from these teachers' capital.

The three contexts of this study had important similarities and differences. In each, leaders had initiated a reform plan involving board-certified teachers, but these plans were set in schools with different job markets, based on different local goals, created to serve different student populations and supported by different local administrative structures. For example, Green View was in a rural area with few alternate employment opportunities for teachers. If teachers did not like the reform plan, they might not have been as likely to leave their jobs as teachers from Blue Hill had been. Red River, in contrast, was a brand new school where it was not necessary to change existing beliefs or patterns of interaction for the reform to succeed. Teachers were hired to fit the plan.

Another contrast between the contexts was that the Blue Hill faculty had much greater variation in experience and skill than the other two schools, and therefore their reform task had a greater focus on developing teachers' knowledge and skills. Green View's goal was focused on changing the professional culture and Red River's aim was to improve new teacher retention rates in the district. These varied goals each had

different requirements and elicited different reactions. The Blue Hill and Red River plans, for example, both were motivated by a sense of urgency that the Green View plan was not.

While all three schools were public elementary schools of roughly the same size (450-550 students), each was supported by a unique structure of formal and informal leadership that involved school or district administrators, teachers, parents, and other community partners. Major staffing changes among the leadership at Blue Hill—the superintendent, the principal, and many teachers who were strong informal leaders at the school—led to a shift in strategy over time, while the strategies for capitalizing on the expertise of board-certified teachers at the other schools remained largely unchanged.

Looking across these similarities and differences, I observed two factors that were important in determining whether and how board-certified teachers were willing and able to be resources or agents for influencing the standard of teaching in their schools and districts. These factors were the features of their workplaces and formal and informal leaders' beliefs about good teaching.

School workplace features affected whether board-certified teachers were willing and able to be resources for reform in practical ways. They affected whether these teachers felt comfortable with their formal or informal roles, whether their physical environment provided what they needed, and whether they were supported to feel their work would be worth the effort. These workplace features were determined by leaders who, in these cases, deviated from traditional organizational assumptions in some ways and experimented with school structures in order to strategically support those plans. In doing so, they also supported the board-certified teachers that were part of those plans.

With some workplace features supporting them and others sometimes inadvertently working against them, board-certified teachers were not always employed efficiently as agents for reform, but their experiences are instructive. Important workplace features were status and voice; facilities and resources; and recognition and reward.

Since formal and informal leaders have significant influence over workplace features, the coordination of leaders was also important. Board-certified teachers were expected to be resources in support of good teaching, but various formal and informal leaders also worked to support good teaching, and there was not always perfect agreement among these formal and informal leaders about what good teaching is. The extent to which they had a clear, common understanding of the standard of the good teaching they were working to support was important. The alignment of their visions of good teaching affected whether board-certified teachers were effective agents for improving the quality of teaching within their schools.

Workplace Features

Some of the leaders in this study thought about how the conditions of their contexts would affect their reform plans. They considered how the professional culture, the availability of necessary resources, and/or receiving recognition might affect whether and how the work would be done and how people would feel about it. In a 1990 study of teachers' workplaces, Johnson found that when teachers who were deemed "very good" by their principals did not have the conditions they needed to do their work well, "some teachers had, over time, narrowed the scope of their attention and responsibility in response to the conditions of their work" (Johnson, 1990, p. 325). The study identified

seven workplace features that interacted to influence these teachers' satisfaction and productivity. They included sociological, political, organizational, physical, cultural, psychological and economic features. I examined these features of the workplaces in this study and found that they were also important influences on whether and how board-certified teachers were willing and able to become resources for reform.

Board-certified teachers were supported by contexts that helped maintain *respect* among colleagues, provided necessary *resources*, and offered teachers *recognition*. An overview of these features is provided in Figure 1.

| Figure 1: Workplace features that affected whether and how board-certified teachers were willing and able to be resources for reform | |
|---|--|
| <i>Conditions of their contexts</i> | <i>Workplace features</i> |
| <p>Respect A climate based on respect for all teachers made it permissible for NBCTs to be resources for reform.</p> | <p>Sociological, political, and cultural features such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebration of all teachers' successes • Clear and high expectations for all teachers • Authentic roles in decision-making for all teachers |
| <p>Resources Availability of resources such as time, space, materials and training made it logistically possible for NBCTs to be human resources for reform.</p> | <p>Organizational and physical features such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to interact with colleagues • Teachers' workloads • Space and materials • Leadership training and professional learning • NBC candidate support |
| <p>Recognition Recognition affected whether NBCTs wanted to be resources for reform.</p> | <p>Economic and psychological features such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial recognition • Public recognition |

Respect

The issue of respect is critically important to the question of board-certified teachers' roles in schools because egalitarianism is a deeply-rooted norm among teachers in U.S. schools. According to Lortie, teachers strive to maintain equilibrium among their

ranks because they feel it safeguards their autonomy and the sense of satisfaction they derive from making a difference with their students. Whereas teaching promises no significant financial reward or recognition, the “psychic rewards” derived from achieving instructional success are very important to teachers. The egalitarian culture in schools protects teachers from having these psychic rewards stolen by their colleagues. That is, it assures them that no colleague has the right to rob them of the feeling that they made a difference in the lives of their students (Lortie, 1975). Some teachers even turn down special roles and responsibilities or reduce the scope of those roles if they fear it may disturb this equilibrium (Donaldson et al., forthcoming; Mangin, 2005).

The board-certification credential and its benefits have the potential to disrupt this carefully-guarded equilibrium. The credential could cause envy within a school faculty, as some teachers receive more recognition, money, autonomy, and career opportunities than others. It could generate fear that board-certified teachers will intrude on their classroom practice and perhaps even succeed in cases where they had failed. It could also create a double standard or a class system among teachers, causing non-board-certified teachers to feel less respected.

If board-certified teachers do not want to be the cause of envy, fear and resentment among their colleagues, they may not be willing to disturb this equilibrium. They may prefer to withhold their newly-identified capital rather than disturb the culture of their school. Of course, if they did cause envy, fear and resentment among their colleagues, it would become unlikely for these teachers to be effective agents for improving teaching anyway because their colleagues would be likely to reject their assistance.

Principals in these three schools (though not initially at Blue Hill) seemed to take on the task of helping maintain the norm of egalitarianism in their schools; they attempted to ensure every teacher was equally respected, even while they each brought different knowledge, skills and experience. The success of board-certified teachers as agents for improving teaching depended upon their ability to become part of the fabric of these schools without violating this norm of the profession in any problematic way. Some of the ways formal and informal leaders gave their attention to the issue of teacher respect were celebrating all teachers' successes, keeping expectations clear and high for all, and providing opportunities for authentic roles in decision-making.

- *Celebration of all teachers' successes*

In 2007 I observed that all three schools had a professional culture in which teachers celebrated one another's achievements often. Teachers were praised for achieving board-certification, but also for earning a master's degree, being named teacher of the year, taking the lead in running school-wide events, and even attending workshops. It was not that board-certified teachers were not treated as special. Rather, all teachers were treated as special for what they brought to the school. If principals had allowed board-certified teachers to be perceived as show-offs, know-it-alls or goody-two-shoes (regardless of whether they actually were or tried to be), these teachers might withdraw into the isolation of their own classrooms or feel resentment from their peers and withhold their readiness to contribute to the improvement of teaching in their schools.

Leaders in these schools were careful not to suggest that some teachers were *better* than other teachers. While the board-certification process only assesses teachers who participate in it, national media have often misinterpreted board certification to be

comparative, resulting in headlines such as, “Board certified teachers are better” (Henry & Wong Briggs, 2000) and referring to NBCTs as “elite teachers” (Mathews, 2005). All three principals in these schools explained to me that they had many accomplished teachers on their faculty, only several of whom had chosen to pursue board certification. They felt it was important to celebrate board-certified teachers for their accomplishment, but to keep the distinction objective and not relative, and many teachers expressed similarly strong sentiments.

For example, James recalled that one time when she was ordering name plaques for each classroom door at Green View, there was a discussion during a faculty meeting about whether or not to include ‘NBCT’ after the names of board-certified teachers. It was reportedly a very short discussion, but several teachers happened to mention it to me. One explained, “We thought that would just be leaving us open for that kind of division that ‘you are one,’ and ‘you are not.’ For parents to say, ‘I want that one, not that one—’ those kinds of things. We’ve been able to avoid that.” The idea was never raised again.

To be sure, celebrating board-certified teachers required a tricky balancing act. There were benefits of convincing the public that board-certified teachers were highly-skilled teachers and from treating these teachers as professionals. But there were also risks in violating egalitarian norms. All three schools eventually seemed to arrive at the same conclusion: the solution was to raise the expectations of all teachers, celebrate them all for their accomplishments and treat them all as highly-skilled professionals.

- *Clear and high expectations for all teachers*

Principals in these schools had high expectations for all teachers, and teachers had high expectations for each other. These formal and informal leaders did not pretend that

every teacher brought the same capital, but they did emphasize that every teacher's experience contributed something valuable to school-wide collaboration. The result was that teachers rose to this expectation. There was no double-standard. At Blue Hill, for example, where variation in experience and skill among the faculty was the greatest, all teachers participated in a content-area team, charged with planning and providing professional development in that area. Novice and veteran teachers alike shared leading roles in its delivery.

Teachers in all three schools were expected to reflect on how their teaching affected their students and to use and create assessments that would allow them to diagnose and address students' needs. All teachers were engaged in ongoing professional development, even board-certified teachers whose credential meant that they no longer needed recertification credits. All teachers were considered for special roles; if a board-certified teacher became a literacy coach or committee chair, it was on a full consideration of her merits not because of the certificate alone. All teachers were expected to be professional, accomplished teachers; they were *not* all expected to take the time to pursue National Board Certification.

Many teachers responded to leaders' high expectations by collaborating. With a few exceptions, teachers in all three schools largely embraced a norm of collective autonomy that resulted in shared responsibility and ownership. In a way, they had agreed to pool their knowledge and skills in exchange for pooling their psychic rewards (Lortie, 1975). They knew each other's students, celebrated successes together and lamented each other's failures as their own. In these schools, egalitarianism was still as important, if not more important, than in traditional schools. Agreeing to pool their efforts and

rewards only worked because everyone was seen to be an equal contributor. Maintaining an egalitarian culture reduced the risk that some teachers would assume or be assumed to have more than their equal share of the rewards.

Gomez described the way that the high expectations at Red River motivated teachers to “feed off each other,” in a kind of positive peer pressure. He said, “If you have four or five of those people on that committee working their tails off, those other one or two are going to come around or else they’re going to be showed up.” And he described the effect on his school this way:

I’ve just seen teachers work alongside each other in unprecedented ways. At other schools they never had somebody that was with them all the way, that could keep pace with them. They love it. They love being able to plan together, to share ideas and excite each other, and that excitement carries over to the students. He felt this culture of high expectations was good for the school and proudly told me, “We’ve got some great synergy.”

These schools were organized so that teachers’ work was interdependent, and teachers did not avoid intruding into the traditionally sacred spaces of each other’s classrooms; they expected collaboration. Withholding expertise that might help a colleague with her students would have been more counter-cultural among some of the teaching teams in these schools than giving unsolicited advice.

- *Authentic roles in decision-making for all teachers*

The schools I visited in 2006 were organized so that teachers had an authentic role in many of the decisions that affected their work. Teachers rotated in and out of committees that determined curricular resources, school-wide goals, interventions to serve the special needs of students, and professional development. It was expected that

teachers' varied experiences would add to the conversation. James said, "By involving teachers in our [many committees], their voices are part of ongoing conversations about teaching and learning that help make professional development an ongoing, daily part of our school experience." Board-certified teachers did not have more control or clout in these conversations. Everyone was deemed to have some human, cultural and social capital worth sharing. At Blue Hill, the norm was posted during meetings: "Everyone participates!"

This norm could have also been posted at Green View, where it was enforced informally. James explained that she had always cautiously made clear that any special roles teachers assumed were not assigned based on achieving board certification. However, she also felt that these teachers' accomplishment merited some distinction, something more meaningful than having their classroom door decorated with streamers on the day they their achievement was announced. One year, as school was winding down, James decided she wanted to recognize board-certified teachers for their expertise by asking for their input on the school's professional development plans, and she sent each a postcard inviting them to her home on a summer afternoon. She recalled, "Some of them were a little wary. They said, 'We aren't going to make any decisions are we?' And I said, 'Absolutely not. I just want to pick your brains.'" Several board-certified teachers agreed to attend, and some did not. She said, "I guess my mission was to recognize them and their accomplishment to—in a word—to get feedback from them as that group.... But I just think they don't want there to be any kind of rift between them." When I asked board-certified teachers about this event, one explained that she felt there were many accomplished colleagues at the school who did not have time to pursue board

certification. She questioned why they should be left out of the opportunity to provide feedback.

The board-certification credential did not entitle teachers to formal roles in any of these three schools; however the principal of Red River noticed that NBCTs' sense of validation as expert teachers seemed to help them play a powerful informal leadership role within the decision-making structure. She said, "It is their confidence. You know? You don't have to be running a meeting to be a leader. You can lead by speaking up. You can lead by sharing with others or having other people come in and observe you teach. You can mentor other teachers." James agreed with this observation. She explained,

It just sort of makes you carry yourself like, "By golly, I am *not* going to apologize when I say this is what we should do to help this child learn." Where I think before we meekly say, "I'm just a teacher but I think this." It's just that whole different way you present yourself because you have been validated at a national level. And when you have a building that has a lot of people, you have that kind of professional feeling about what you say and do on a day to day basis. It's amazing, I think, what we can do for children.

Resources

Resources were important for practical reasons; people needed the time, space and materials necessary to get their work done. But resources were also important in these schools for reasons of efficiency. If teachers are highly-skilled people who have specialized knowledge about teaching and learning, why would they be asked to collect lunch money? Why should they spend time scrambling for index cards? Such supports not only influenced teachers' ability to serve as agents for improved teaching in a

practical way, but they also were a signal to teachers about how important their expertise was.

The formal leaders in each of these schools shared the vision that their teachers were valuable human resources that should not be drained by activities unrelated to teaching and learning. By providing a variety of logistical supports that relieved teachers of these burdens or streamlined their work, the principals, assistant principals and some district leaders helped to create a more efficient and sustainable system, allowing teachers more time and energy to focus on the quality of their teaching. They paid attention to teachers' opportunities for interaction, teachers' workload, space and materials, leadership training and professional learning, and board-certification candidate support.

- *Opportunities to interact with colleagues*

The schedules in these three schools were each arranged to allow teachers to meet together frequently. In addition to their many informal conversations before or after school, time for collaboration was protected from interruptions. At Green View creative scheduling gave every team at least 30 minutes together during each school day. In addition, the principal had lined up teams of parents to cover specialists' classes so that they could attend special interdisciplinary planning meetings each semester with each grade-level team. Red River teachers had time scheduled with their teams during the day too but were also paid 20% extra for the after-school time they were expected to spend interacting with interns. Blue Hill's initial job-sharing arrangement created time for board-certified teachers to interact with their peers, and while the arrangement failed for socio-political reasons, there did not appear to be any reason why this would not be a viable solution for instructional coaches who are respected by their colleagues but want

to stay connected to the classroom. Although this model was dropped, interaction among the faculty was not. The principal of Blue Hill explained how very complicated but important it had been to design a schedule that accommodated two double-periods of planning time for every grade-level team per week, but she said it had been well worth the effort because she had confidence that her teachers knew how to use the time productively. She noted that accomplished teachers did not need a formal role; they would lead “by speaking up.” In these meetings, teachers used what they learned from interpreting assessment data and talking to colleagues during grade-level team meetings to inform their work in school-wide curriculum committees and other planning teams, and they brought back resources and ideas from these school-wide meetings to their teams.

Recognizing that their schools and students would be the beneficiaries if teachers were supported to use their time efficiently and effectively, each principal had created a system of organizational supports that enabled teachers to make the most of their time together. Daily bulletins, teacher mailboxes, e-mail or bulletin boards were used to make announcements, saving face-to-face time for topics that required interaction. Routines for meeting times, venues and roles meant that no meeting time was wasted with logistics. Agenda and note-taking templates eased facilitation, record-keeping, and meeting follow-up in all three schools. Protocols and norms allowed meetings to run smoothly and remain focused on the matter at hand: improving the quality of teaching.

These opportunities for professional interaction among colleagues were important because through them board-certified teachers’ capital was shared. One vivid example of how teachers benefited from interaction was the Green View’s School-wide

Assistance Team. All teachers rotated onto this 8-member team for a two-year term. At any given time there were three or four teachers on the team who had had experience with structured reflection in the board-certification process, and the principal she felt she could count on them to know how to make the reflective conversation effective. This team, which had been chaired for nearly a decade by a teacher who happened to be a board-certified teacher, met monthly to discuss the cases of individual students who presented particular academic, social or behavioral challenges to their teachers. The team followed a reflective inquiry protocol calling on teachers to collaborate as diagnosticians. They interpreted student products and performances, pooled their professional knowledge, and used their professional judgment to recommend interventions. They took time during meetings to reflect individually on what they were learning that could inform their practice and to reflect collectively about the implications of what they were learning were for school-wide support, such as professional development. This exercise provided all participating teachers with regular, structured practice in reflection. Several teachers I spoke with felt that of all committees at the school, this team had the most significant impact on the school's success. It aided the students who needed it most, it supported all participating teachers to learn from these cases, it built shared responsibility and ownership among the staff, and it placed teachers in an arena for interaction that helped them learn the skills of reflection. One teacher explained, "Everyone has a voice and everyone is ready to express their opinion. We don't always agree, but we don't have to. We have everything from kindergarten to middle school and specialists, and everyone sees the child from a different perspective. We're learning, but in the end it's the children who

have been served.” The organizational support had been established for teachers to serve as resources for improved teaching for each other, and by all accounts, these teachers rose to the challenge and raised the standard of teaching in their school.

- *Teachers’ workload*

Principals at Green View and Red River also lightened teachers’ workloads by removing non-professional responsibilities. Secretaries and teachers’ aides in these schools were expected to help with tasks such as copying, ordering buses for field trips and making conference reminder calls. Parents were organized in two of the schools to take on fundraising and book orders. In fact, Red River had an aide designated specifically to serve teachers’ secretarial needs. Gabriel Gomez explained, “We try to treat them as professionals by honoring their time, by not bogging them down with the mundane, by taking away as much as we can so they can get to work.” This school had also invested nearly \$10,000 in a debit card system that freed teachers from managing lunch money and lunch tickets.

Sometimes James even pitched in to lighten teachers’ loads at Green View. One teacher who was the school representative for regional accreditation explained her role, “There are places in the state where this is a huge role, and they are pretty much expected to do everything.” At Green View, however, James had relieved her of some of the paperwork associated with her role by doing it herself or having the secretary do it. James had told her she’d rather have her spend her time on teaching and learning. James explained, “I guess I see that as our role in this office, taking as much as possible off teachers.” This conviction was grounded in her own experience as a teacher, when she used to complain about “the useless paperwork.” Now that she was in the front office,

she said, “I try to constantly take that off them.” She felt committed to protecting teachers from such chores and she explained, “When there are things that I think of that I want to do that will require some time on their part, I think it all the way through first and say, ‘Will I get valuable enough information to make a better decision for our school, or is this just going to document something that I can find out another way?’”

- *Space and materials*

Teachers needed to have the space and materials to fulfill their formal and informal roles for improving teaching. At Blue Hill, for example, the vision from 2000-2003 was that board-certified teachers would have time—half of each school day—to meet and collaborate with their colleagues. However, they had no designated space in which to meet and collaborate because their shared classroom was in use. While providing board-certified teachers with their own office might have been perceived as a threat to egalitarian norms, the fact that there was no system or administrative support for this logistical problem of space created a tension for these teachers that dampened their willingness and ability to be agents for improved teaching.

Red River, on the other hand, had a spacious building with plenty of room to support professional activities. Most of the classrooms had a one-way glass mirror between them and an adjacent office space. Teachers and their interns used the mirror to observe one another teach, and they used the shared office space to meet with each other, collaborate with colleagues, talk with parents, and plan instruction. The school’s conference room could accommodate the entire faculty and several extra classrooms were available for interns’ workshops. Most teachers had their own classroom phone with voice mail, and Gomez was hoping to have business cards printed up for his teachers.

Most impressive, however, was the teacher workroom, which had the feel of a well-stocked office supply store. The school expected all of its accomplished teachers to collaborate with colleagues, interns and parents, and they provided the necessary resources for teachers to be able to do so.

Frank Feldman was proud of the accommodations he had been able to make at Red River to support teachers' professional practice, and he felt it paid off in better teaching and learning. He said,

Teachers feel good because ninety-five to a hundred percent of the time we're talking about teaching and learning. And that's the Holy Grail for teachers, when you can really talk about, "How do you improve students' learning?" "How do you change children's behavior and attitude?" Instead of, you know, "Is there enough toilet paper in the washroom?"

These principals believed that treating teachers as professionals supported them in being professionals. Frank Feldman explained why professionalism is important: "It just reinforces and re-energizes [teachers] to who they are and what they're about. And I think when you are exposed to a professional climate that celebrates you, you also want to rise to the challenge and the bar." He believed this kind of professional climate allowed teachers with capacity to perform at capacity, and to be of greater benefit to their students.

- *Leadership training and professional learning*

Teachers were able to perform efficiently in teams if they had skills for facilitation, consensus-building or managing conflict, and they were more effective mentors if they had training in the principles of adult learning.

Blue Hill's case illustrates the importance of leadership training. When the first four board-certified teachers were brought into Blue Hill in 2000, they received no

training in how to be a “master mentor” (nor did they receive a specific description of what the job would entail.) These teachers had been identified for their roles based on their expertise as classroom teachers, yet they were asked to work with colleagues who resented them. One Blue Hill veteran who witnessed this said, “I don’t think you can just assume that because someone is board-certified that they know how to work with adults or they know how to coach adult learners.” By overlooking the need for such training, the administrators limited the possibilities of what these teachers could accomplish. In contrast, when the new principal arrived at Blue Hill with expectations of teacher collaboration, she used some of her time and professional development money to have a few faculty members trained in how to establish norms and maintain routines to assist in group functioning. She found that once teachers started using these systems in school-wide meetings, they carried over into team meetings because they found them so useful.

Training was also essential at Red River. They had been able to hire strong teachers but also recognized that their mentors might still require some basic training in the principles of adult learning. During his tenure as principal, Feldman had seen how important it was for interns “to feel safe enough to either make mistakes or expose themselves to what they don’t know in order to be better able to learn that in a non-threatening way and as an equal.” Whereas many interns in this program were mid-career entrants who had held positions of power in prior work, their new positions as novice teachers had the potential to create a difficult situation with their mentors. Their mentors needed to create a safe space where these adults could take the risks that learning required. The program provided mentors with strategies for getting to know a new intern, developing productive rapport, and supporting their learning; and all of the mentors

received ongoing training in peer coaching. By providing this support to mentors, program directors aided master mentors to be stronger resources for their interns.

In order to support board-certified teachers—and all teachers—to be effective, school leaders also thought strategically about professional learning. These principals largely followed the principles of effective professional development that are well-documented in the literature (Garet et al., 2001; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997). Professional development in these schools tended to be job-embedded, interactive, sustained over time, and teacher-directed. This aligned well with what board-certified teachers wanted and expected, and helped them feel sustained and supported. In all three schools, principals had systems in place for teachers to determine the focus of their own professional development as well as to plan and provide it for each other.

Since teachers' capacity to provide professional development to one another is limited by what they know, having a system for new knowledge to enter these schools was also important. In all three schools, teachers participated in district-based professional development offerings and were encouraged or even sponsored to attend professional conferences and workshops beyond their districts. At Green View, in-school staff development often introduced professional books or articles. At Red River, a team of consultants was brought in to facilitate teachers' learning. Blue Hill had an extensive professional library and all faculty members participated in a summer reading assignment. In addition, the library-media specialist at Blue Hill photocopied the table of contents of each periodical in the collection and displayed them in the teachers' bathrooms each month!

Frank Feldman discussed the special learning needs of board-certification candidates. He noted that sometimes teachers measure themselves up to the NBPTS Standards and recognize gaps in their practice, but if they do not have a way to fill those gaps and to build their professional knowledge in the areas they identify, then “they are no better off than they were before.” By providing access to a rich array of learning sources and knowledgeable people, principals enabled teachers to have their needs met much more efficiently than if they had to seek out professional learning on their own.

- *Candidate support*

Chapter Four included teachers’ accounts of how the board-certification process had helped them to strengthen and shape their knowledge and skills in ways that were useful to their school. Many board-certified teachers in this study had pursued the board-certification process within candidate support groups. Therefore, it was not surprising to find that features of their candidate support programs affected how board-certified teachers were resources for influencing teaching in their schools.

When teachers within a school participated together in a candidate support program, they built new relationships that affected the school culture. In fact, school-based candidate support was part of James’ strategy at Green View. She expected teachers to build the trust and skills they would need to reflect and collaborate. She explained,

To me, it’s not the slogging through the answers to all the questions that are in the process, but those kinds of discussions that go on, and they’ll discuss it with their colleague in their grade level. And then they’ll go seek out another NBCT to sort of see their perspective on it. And that conversation just grows and grows and grows across the building.... Now everything is moved up a little bit because of the kind of conversations that we can have. So, I think that whole process brings everybody else along without having everyone go through it.

For one candidate at Green View, the prospect of having new relationships with her colleagues provided a strong incentive to pursue board certification. She saw two advantages. First, she noticed, “It does seem like cohorts have a special relationship,” and she felt it might open new natural opportunities for collaboration with her colleagues. An NBCT in her school confirmed, “When you get involved with that, people support you so much and help you through that process so you gain congeniality among your colleagues, you really do.”

Second, the Green View candidate had noticed that board-certification candidate support groups had brought together people who otherwise might not interact. She described how easy it was for middle school teachers to write off early childhood teachers’ work because “all they do is play.” She noted how primary teachers frequently stood in judgment of middle school teachers who “can’t seem to control their students,” and she observed how classroom teachers tended to place themselves above specialists who only had to come up with “cute” activities once a week. Board certification, though, “brings together a different mix,” with colleagues from different areas of the school sitting together over their portfolios, seeing inside each other’s classrooms, and gaining new respect for the specialized professional knowledge required of each grade level and subject area. She said, “It just brings an awareness of what’s going on in the building, that awareness that we are all doing important really good stuff.”

The disadvantage of these school-based cohorts was that they had the potential to become cliques inside the professional culture of the school. One NBCT who perceived a divide among her colleagues admitted, “I think there is camaraderie among National

Board teachers. It's like, 'I have gone through this, I have existed through this process which is so strenuous. Only another NBCT understands this process.'" While some colleagues developed strong professional relationships, others were left out.

Other teachers participated in a candidate support program outside of their schools. Some of the benefits of this experience have been discussed in Chapter Four. Teachers often developed new social networks through their candidates support groups and maintained relationships with colleagues with whom they continued to exchange ideas, strategies, classroom materials, and professional resources. The activities that occurred within support programs were important too. After asking one another the questions from the portfolio directions in their candidate support groups, some board-certified teachers continued the habit of asking such critical questions of their own teaching and exercised the skill of inquiring about teaching practice with their peers. One teacher recalled joining a candidate support group only after working on her portfolio on her own for a full year. She described, "They didn't tell me what to write, but they asked me those guiding questions that got me there.... I learned how to be purposeful." After achieving board-certification and becoming an instructional coach, she continued to use those guiding questions in her practice. She said, "Now I am able to see when I go into classrooms, 'Is this purposeful?' 'Is this going to impact the students' learning?' I am able to do that.... And I want teachers to get to the point where they say to themselves, 'Is this purposeful? Is this going to help them as a reader or a writer?'" And I think that came out of me being able to ask myself that."

Leaders at Green View and Red River had both observed that board-certified teachers who had received formal peer-mentoring training to mentor board-certification

candidates carried their skills over into their schools. The program director at Red River recalled a board-certified teacher,

I was so impressed with the way that she mentored her resident. She knew not to say to her, “Do you want me to tell you everything that you did wrong?” She knew, and instead she elicited from her. She really was skillful. And later when she and I talked and I told her how impressed I was, she said, “Well I actually learned that from National Boards because I mentor other people.” So that I saw was a real plus for National Board experience and the process.

The Red River school district actually offered two very different candidate support options. Since one of them used a peer-mentoring strategy that was aligned with the mentoring work that Red River needed them to do, it might have been an effective, strategic move for Red River leaders to encourage teachers who wanted to pursue board certification to enroll in that program.

Recognition

Board-certified teachers’ work was also affected by the way they perceived the personal costs and benefits of the work. Financial recognition and public recognition were two factors that influenced their decisions to contribute or withhold their effort.

- *Financial recognition*

Board-certified teachers in these schools each received between \$5000 and \$10,000 per year more than their non-board-certified colleagues. For some, it was bonus money to be spent on special purchases; for others it was essential income upon which they depended to pay bills. One teacher, for example, explained that she had pursued board-certification so that she and her husband could afford for him to stay home with their young children. Several veteran teachers said they pursued board-certification so

that they could retire at a higher pay rate. In some cases, the financial rewards relieved stress in their lives and made their situations more comfortable, potentially making them more willing and available to work to improve the quality of teaching in their schools.

Receiving financial compensation was also a source of tension for some board-certified teachers. While they enjoyed the benefit of receiving the money, they expressed some concern about the threat it might pose to the egalitarian culture in their schools. One teacher bought a new leather coat with the money, for example, and then avoided wearing it to school in case someone asked about it. Board-certified teachers did not want to create a rift among their colleagues. Interestingly, several board-certified teachers responded to this potential tension by attempting to raise their colleagues up. A Red River teacher argued that all teachers should receive the higher, more professional wage. “We’re all doing the same work. We’re all excellent teachers here,” he said. Two other teachers noted that board certification is voluntary and one noted, “There is nothing keeping every teacher here from doing it. And they’ll get lots of support from all of us.” In fact, some board-certified teachers described feeling a sense of responsibility for providing candidate support or assuming other extra tasks at their schools because they felt as though they needed “to give back.”

Some teachers further described feeling pressure to talk about all they had learned in the process, so that colleagues did not think they pursued it only for the money (even if they did). One teacher who had achieved board-certification at a different school in the district noted, “People here don’t talk about [the money]. It’s all about the professional learning.” At Green View, which offered the largest incentive of the three sites, a teacher said, “I don’t know any teacher here who didn’t start out doing it because of the money,

but every teacher who has done it, they all say, ‘You know what? This made me a better teacher.’ ‘I do *this* now because of *that*.’ Or, ‘Now I think in *these* ways.’ And they all have gotten so much more out of it than the money.”

As a result of the financial recognition that they received, board-certified teachers were motivated to support their colleagues to pursue board certification and to promote it by talking about their experience. To the extent that increasing the number of board-certified teachers was part of the local reform plan, board-certified teachers’ reactions to financial recognition led them to be resources for reform.

- *Public recognition*

Recognition was widely reported by these teachers to be as important, or more important, than money. All of these schools publicized widely that they had a large number of board-certified teachers and they announced newly-certified teachers’ accomplishment in the school newspaper. All three districts had a public recognition ceremony, one of which was broadcast repeatedly on local access TV. By making the teachers’ accomplishments public, these leaders helped their schools to benefit from the board-certification credential in several specific ways. Their announcements generated public esteem for the certificate, which assisted many board-certified teachers to win grants and attracted partnerships and quality candidates to their schools.

Public recognition, like monetary recognition, pressured some board-certified teachers to be their best. Since colleagues and parents in these settings tended to know who was board-certified and who was not, many board-certified teachers talked about feeling a sense of obligation to uphold the integrity of the credential and feeling increased

pressure to always do their best work. Several suggested that as a result their schools got more from them. One teacher said:

It's like, gosh, I have to be careful now because I'm a National Board Certified Teacher, and I don't want people to think that National Board Certified Teachers do that. So, it's sort of like you feel like you have to keep up this standard. I can't just do that for a year and then slide back.

A Red River teacher admitted that he had signed "NBCT" after his name when he felt he needed to catch people's attention. He, too, said he felt the pressure. He said, "You don't need to give as much background or to prove yourself as much, but then you've got to produce." This pressure was not experienced as a bad thing. One teacher explained that she appreciated how her credential held her accountable for the quality of her practice:

It's making me live up to the standards. I wouldn't go back to teaching things the way I did before I knew better, I'm just not going to do that; I can't do that. And especially too if other people know I've gone for certification, that would just kind of take away the dignity of the whole national board process if I did that. So it holds me to the standard. And you know, I like the way it does. It makes you feel really good about your practice, and it makes you want to share that.

Board-certified teachers from all three sites spoke with pride about the sense of validation their achievement had brought them. One told me "the credential gives you some degree of clout," and another said "competence tends to be assumed" when you are board-certified. And since the egalitarian norm within these schools was strong, the effect was to raise the standard of practice for all. A non-board-certified teacher at Blue Hill described her school's new professional culture by exclaiming, "I feel like nobody wants to be left behind, so we all try to keep up with everyone else!" This positive peer pressure motivated board-certified teachers to be willing to be resources for improved teaching in their schools.

Aligned visions of good teaching

Formal and informal leaders in these settings aimed to support good teaching in a variety of ways. When formal leaders established expectations of teachers, provided resources, or offered feedback, their actions were informed by their vision of what good teaching is. When teachers informally influenced one another's practice through their regular interaction, they were each guided by their vision of what good teaching is. But some of these formal and informal leaders were board-certified teachers, who tended to have their own idea of what good teaching is. The alignment—or misalignment—of these leaders' conceptions of good teaching appeared to affect the influence board-certified teachers had on the standard of teaching practice within their schools. Board-certified teachers were only perceived to be *improving* teaching practice to the extent that the standard of practice they upheld was shared by others.

From the perspective that “leadership” includes anyone involved in activities that are understood or intended to influence the core work of the organization, leadership in organizations is distributed (Spillane, 2006). This is especially true in schools where the core work is teaching and learning, and where many types of personnel—teachers, administrators, support staff, and elected school board members—all routinely make decisions that affect how teaching is practiced and whether learning is accomplished.

From this analytic perspective, a school's effectiveness depend largely upon the unity of vision among a school's formal and informal leaders and the coordination of their efforts. This is because the school cannot efficiently achieve its task if each leader has a different idea of what the task is. Formal and informal leaders, administrators and teachers, all have power over whether a school's leadership is coordinated or fractured

because their intentional and unintentional actions are either aligned to make a difference or are competing and weakening the net effect.

In the three schools in this study, one or two key leaders had introduced the idea that board certification was not just a vehicle for rewarding teachers. They believed it was associated with specific professional characteristics or capital that could be resources for their organization because these characteristics were in line with their vision of good teaching. But schools have many formal and informal leaders. Therefore, board-certified teachers were more likely to be perceived as useful agents for improved teaching where there was some agreement among leaders that the NBCTs' characteristics represented good teaching, a common understanding about NBCTs' role within the reform or improvement plan, and an attempt to coordinate efforts with that shared vision in mind.

In Green View, for example, James held a vision of good teaching as reflective and collaborative work, and saw board-certified teachers as potential resources for creating a more reflective and collaborative faculty. As more teachers within the school achieved board certification, there were more "leaders" who accepted the vision of good teaching as reflective and collaborative work, and the idea that the board-certification process could help more teachers learn to practice this way. Furthermore, the board certification framework had shaped their thinking so that they had a clear, common vision of what reflection and collaboration might look like.

The expectations for accomplished teaching that James held for all teachers were easy for board-certified teachers to understand. With this principal pushing to achieve one clear vision of good teaching in her school and several members of her faculty informally influencing their peers with that same vision in mind, these leaders had a

strong influence on the prevailing patterns of practice among all teachers at the school. A board-certified teacher at Green View said,

It helps to have a leader who's been through the process.... I think [board certification] has been interwoven in what we do. I think teachers are working more together, collaborating more, sharing what they are doing, willing to help each other. We've always been a close faculty and worked well together, but I think this does enhance that environment.

James had deliberate strategies for bringing others in line with this vision as well. She communicated her vision of good teaching as reflective and collaborative work regularly to all of the other "leaders" in her school through meetings, routines and her own example. She also counted on board-certified teachers to help her model this professional standard.

In fact, board-certified teachers across the three schools confirmed that they felt pressure to practice at the accomplished level of the NBPTS Standards given that their principals and so many others around them knew that they had achieved certification. They wanted to uphold the integrity of the credential. Therefore, James's expectation of board-certified teachers did not need to be communicated to them. One told me, "We know [James] wants us to have professional discussion, and sometimes when discussion leads to personal things, we just try to keep us focused."

With board-certified teachers working throughout her school and participating within each team and committee, these teachers naturally became recognized as informal leaders of the reflection and collaboration that went on in their meetings. Formal attention to these teachers as models or leaders was unnecessary and would have been counter-productive. An explicitly tiered system might have suggested that reflection and collaboration were professional characteristics particular to board-certified teachers or to

formal teacher leaders. James' goal and expectation was to have *all* teachers, whether board-certified or not, practice with reflection and collaboration as a professional norm, and over time more and more of them did.

While James did not expect all teachers to pursue board certification, she did advocate for it vigorously. She explained,

Why should principals push this with their teachers? It's because of the effect that they can have in your building to raise the level of instruction and what your whole school does.... The advantage, and that's what we're seeing here, is that when you have that number of people, you have so many to collaborate with and work with you and bounce ideas off of and do a lot of team teaching and that kind of thing. The dialogue is just so rich when you have that many on board who have done it.

James also worked to align the leaders outside of her building to this vision. In some cases, visions were already aligned. For example, the Green View school district had several policies that placed value on teacher collaboration as a key aspect of good teaching. Common planning time, curriculum meetings, school-wide assistance teams and school improvement teams were all supported by district mandate. Not all school faculties in the district supported this vision. An itinerant teacher at the school recounted, "They all have these meetings, and it hinges on what the administration supports. Some just try to cover material and share resources; others have a broader, directional focus on instruction." Alignment of vision and coordination of efforts between the administrators and many of the teachers at Green View helped to ensure that this mandated collaboration time would be valued and used productively.

Stepping outside of her role as a principal, James also collaborated with colleagues at the state and district level to advocate for policies that would support accomplished teaching. Policymakers responded by increasing support for teachers to

achieve board certification but refused to provide teachers with more compensated time for the reflection and collaboration that these teachers' believe is essential to accomplished practice.

In contrast to the many formal and informal leaders who influenced teaching and learning at Green View, leaders at the Red River Pilot School, even after five years, maintained different ideas of what good teaching was. Teaching interns were being prepared to meet the state's licensure standards. The formal evaluation system in place for teachers had been created by the district to meet its own local standards. The standard of professional practice that teachers actually carried out at Red River, however, had been shaped by teachers' frequent interaction. It had been influenced by the language and standards from the board-certification process, not defined by it, as at Green View. These varied conceptions of good teaching did not explicitly conflict, however the potential for coordinating their efforts to increase their effectiveness may have been lost.

The Blue Hill Academy case illustrated what could happen when visions are not aligned. Superintendent Dart's vision of using board-certified teachers to exemplify good teaching was not only unshared, it was flatly rejected by powerful informal teacher leaders at the school. Teachers were unwilling to accept NBCTs as good teachers solely on the basis of their credential; there had been no discussion about what expertise these teachers might have or what gave this credential its weight. Ironically, Blue Hill teachers had already declared their opinion on what good teaching is, when two years before this initiative began, the faculty voted to adopt a scripted literacy curriculum. The very idea of a scripted curriculum stood in striking contrast to board-certified teachers' convictions about professional practice. Therefore, although these teachers were expected to be

master teacher models for their colleagues, they were thwarted by this curricular mandate.

Understandably, teachers at Blue Hill were largely unwilling to coordinate their efforts with Dart's plan when it was first introduced. Many resisted giving up their planning periods to meet with these outsiders, some refused to be observed, and when the board-certified "master teachers" came to model instructional practices in their classrooms, a few had reportedly viewed these visits as providing an opportunity to go get some coffee or make copies. The board-certified teachers, themselves, found their charge a bit vague. They were stymied by the lack of guidance or training in how to provide support for good teaching among resistant colleagues. The principal in that first year did not necessarily know what to do either. It was said that she supported the idea that board certification represented good teaching, but the connections between board-certification and other school goals or district initiatives were unclear to her. Over time, many teachers—with and without board certification—proved themselves to be good teachers and the model of allowing only board-certified teachers to job-share and support the instruction of their peers made less sense and faded away.

A small group of teachers were willing to accept, however, the second part of the superintendent's vision, which called for all teachers in the school to pursue board certification. Some saw it as a challenge, wondering if they could meet a national standard of what good teaching is. Some liked the idea of making Blue Hill a "professional" school and were encouraged that it might raise their status as teachers. They also were willing to accept the idea that the four imported board-certified teachers had expertise they didn't have about how to complete the board certification process. In

the first year, eight teachers stepped forward to become candidates and agreed to receive candidate support from these board-certified teachers, and several candidates joined them each year after that.

The initial principal was replaced in 2001 with another who began to witness and appreciate over time how the board certification process helped her teachers to become a faculty valuing professional learning. She felt it worthwhile to coordinate her efforts with this vision. Like James, this principal began planting the idea of candidacy in teachers' heads. She discussed it with them during her individual meetings with teachers and she invited teachers who had achieved board certification to talk during staff meetings about their experience and what they were learning.

Over time she did drop the expectation that had been expressed by the former superintendent that every teacher at Blue Hill would be required to pursue board certification, but she explicitly maintained the vision of Blue Hill as a place where good teaching was guided by National Board Certification. In fact, when people inquired about the school, she said, "I let them know that our model is the National Board model." She made this known through interviews, the school website, and the school's literature, and this reputation successfully spread throughout the district. One teacher who transferred to Blue Hill explained that she was looking for a culture where "adults are in the habit of investing in education and learning is a priority." She had specific professional learning goals that included pursuing board certification and she believed, "This is a good school for it." She described the support structure and the various other "teacher learning venues" at the school that she found attractive. She said, "[Blue Hill] was a place where you could really develop and really strengthen, to learn something

more, and use it.” Board certification had been an important tool in establishing this professional standard at the school.

The third part of the superintendent’s vision for using board-certified teachers was that once Blue Hill began increasing its number of board-certified teachers, some would transfer to other low-performing schools within the district. This vision was fully in line with the conception of professionalism held by board-certified teachers, who tended to see themselves as members of a profession, not just employees of a particular school. In fact, this vision was also aligned with the thinking of district leaders, who created a financial incentive for board-certified teachers to transfer to low-performing schools. Several board-certified teachers from throughout the district accepted. The principal at Blue Hill agreed with this vision, albeit regrettably. She said, “It is so hard because you have got all these great leaders and they are doing stuff in your school and outside your school and people recognize them and see them and they want them. But you can’t hold them back. You can’t hold them back.”

The workplace features leaders created and the visions they held of good teaching both had an important impact on whether and how board-certified teachers were able to become agents for improving the quality of teaching in their schools. These findings suggest that in order to make “efficient use of these highly-skilled people,” as suggested in *A Nation Prepared*, schools need to be organized to support teachers to practice together as accomplished teachers.

Chapter Six

Board-Certified Teachers as Resources for Reform

In recent decades education reformers have come to agree that teaching is the most important influence on student learning, but have continued to disagree about what good teaching is. The task of getting more teachers to practice good teaching without having a clear, common idea of what goes into good teaching practice has proved challenging.

In 1986, leading members of the education profession were convened to start the bidding. They were asked to set the bar for good, professional, or “accomplished” teaching practice and to create a system to identify teachers who practice at that level so that these teachers could be resources for reform, agents for improving the standard of teaching practice throughout U.S. schools. In the years since the NBPTS began certifying accomplished teachers in 1994, many schools or districts have rewarded these teachers but few have considered board certification as a way to identify assets or build capacity for their education reform plans.

The three sites examined in this study, however, did pursue board-certified teachers as resources for reform. Data from this study reveal that while these teachers were reported to have a positive influence on the standard of teaching practice in their settings, the conditions within their contexts were important in supporting them to be willing and able to be resources for improved teaching and to be effective in their formal and informal reform roles.

Summary of the Findings

The strategies

Key leaders in the three sites in this study believed that National Board Certification could help them to identify or develop the human resources they needed for improving the quality of teaching in their schools or districts. Their plans involved both increasing the number of board-certified teachers and strategically employing them in formal and informal ways that capitalized upon their knowledge, skills and experience. In one case, the superintendent of a large district viewed board-certified teachers as an asset in his plan to renew the district's low-performing schools. By transferring four board-certified teachers to the Blue Hill School, he believed these teachers could achieve measurable student achievement gains with their students, help improve teaching practice and professional culture among their colleagues, and enhance the reputation of the school through their credential. At the same time, they could support more of their colleagues to achieve board certification. In Red River, a team of education and business leaders had decided that their plan to train new teachers to work in the district's neediest schools would be enhanced by recruiting board-certified teachers as mentors. In Green View, a school principal who held board certification herself believed that if she could create conditions that support all teachers to practice as accomplished teachers, she could rely upon her board-certified teachers to informally lead their non-board-certified colleagues to practice at that level.

Characteristics and capital of board-certified teachers

The strategies employed in these settings were each designed to capitalize upon particular features that key leaders believed to be characteristic of their board-certified teachers. All of these leaders expected board-certified teachers to be knowledgeable about their content and classroom practice, and several had noticed that these teachers were skilled in talking about teaching and learning issues. Most had observed board-certified teachers to have a strong commitment to students and student learning, to reflective practice, and to collaboration which they hoped might influence the dispositions of others in their schools. A few leaders also recognized that the esteem and influence of NBCTs' credential might be able to attract resources to their schools.

Observations and accounts from these schools suggest that these features were largely characteristic of board-certified teachers across all three sites. To the extent that board-certified teachers had these features, they brought to their schools three kinds of capital that were useful as resources for reform: human capital (knowledge and skills), cultural capital (valued interactive styles or dispositions), and social capital (social networks and external influence).

Importantly, the board-certified teachers in these schools described many ways in which the board-certification process had strengthened or shaped their knowledge, skills, dispositions and external influence. It appeared that one of the important reasons these board-certified teachers were capable of being agents for influencing the standard of teaching practice in their schools and districts was that their experience with the board-certification process had given them a clear and shared way of thinking and talking about teaching.

The contexts

In each of these schools key leaders attempted to match the knowledge, skills and experience, or forms of capital, that board-certified teachers brought to their schools with what their schools needed. However, various factors within their contexts influenced whether and how board-certified teachers' capital actually supported local reform strategies in the intended ways. The sociological and cultural climates that school leaders encouraged, the physical and organizational structures that they created and the economic and psychological incentives they offered all affected the extent to which these teachers were willing to be available and perceived as effective as agents for influencing the standard of teaching practice in their schools and districts.

Since formal and informal leaders who shaped these aspects of the context each held their own visions, expectations and unspoken assumptions about good teaching practice, their actions were not necessarily coordinated with NBCTs' actions or with one another. When leaders held a vision of good teaching practice that was in line with the NBPTS vision of accomplished teaching, their actions and decisions were aligned with one another and resulted in contextual conditions that supported board-certified teachers to be more effective and efficient as resources for reforming the standard of practice in their schools. In these cases, they viewed board-certified teachers' influence on the standard of teaching practice to be effective for improving the quality of teaching practice.

Creating Contexts that Support Accomplished Teaching

This study finds that while board-certified teachers were reported to have an influence on the standard of teaching practice in these settings, the conditions within which they worked were important in whether they were willing and able to be resources for improved teaching and to be effective in this way. Understanding this, it is possible to hypothesize about how conditions within these contexts might be altered to result in a more efficient, and ultimately effective, use of board-certified teachers. These cases also make it possible to imagine how board-certified teachers might help to raise the standard of teaching practice throughout the U.S.

Efficient Use of Board-certified teachers

Drawing on lessons from the field of business, the authors of *A Nation Prepared* suggested that the problem of low performance in education could be treated as a problem of low productivity. Businesses encourage productivity by increasing inputs or improving efficiency. In education, they noted, increased student learning is impeded by a lack of agreement about what the inputs are or how to identify assets that could be reorganized to improve efficiency. The authors proposed that leading members of the profession convene to identify the inputs—the specialized knowledge and skills that define accomplished teaching—and create a valid system for identifying assets—teachers who possessed these knowledge and skills. It is done this way in every other profession. They wrote,

Not only do professionals typically have a range of support staff and services available, but they are usually organized so that the most able among them influence in many ways the work that others do, from broad policy direction to

the development of staff responsibilities. This... is a matter of simple efficiency, making sure that the experience and skill embodied in these valuable people makes itself felt throughout the enterprise (p. 40).

Notably, the leaders in this study did not set out to make efficient use of board-certified teachers. They set out to improve the quality of teaching in their schools and districts, and they believed that National Board Certification would enhance their comprehensive plans to improve the quality of teaching because it would help them to identify the assets within their organizations.

Their belief that board-certified teachers might be assets was based on their own prior familiarity with the NBPTS or experiences working with board-certified teachers. I would argue, however, that if they had begun with a clearer or more complete sense of what these assets were, or what board-certified teachers had to offer, they might have been able to make better use of these teachers' knowledge, skills and experience. They might have been able to consider more strategically whether what these teachers bring is valued, how these teachers' expertise could be applied to meet local needs, and how to create contexts that support these teachers to be most effective as resources for improved teaching.

- *Is the standard of accomplished teaching valued?*

Board-certified teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions are not true resources or capital unless they align with formal leaders' visions of good teaching. A teacher's commitment to collaboration, ability to contribute to professional dialogue or skill for monitoring individual students' development, for example, would only be considered a resource by a principal who believes these dispositions and skills are important and hopes to encourage them in teachers. The Five Core Propositions describe what the NBPTS

values about teaching, and each of the 24 sets of NBPTS Standards outlines the critical aspects of accomplished teaching practice for a particular subject area and/or developmental level. School and district leaders who aim to make efficient and effective use of board-certified teachers should review these documents and consider how what they value aligns with what board-certified teachers know and do. At Green View, where the principal held board certification herself, there was consistent alignment between the vision of good teaching she aimed to support among her staff and what board-certified teachers brought; her thinking and her board-certified teachers' thinking about good teaching had been shaped by the same experience.

Board-certified teachers at Blue Hill and Red River, however, might have been more efficiently employed as resources or agents for improved teaching if leaders had considered the question of alignment. At Blue Hill, board-certified teachers had a very different perception about what good teachers know and do than their colleagues, the strong informal leaders who had supported the school's adoption of a scripted curriculum. It was unrealistic to ask board-certified teachers to serve as master mentors to colleagues committed to this kind of curriculum. It was an inefficient use of their expertise. Red River also would have benefited from greater alignment of board-certified resources to their tasks. As a training academy for new teachers, Red River had certain standards and expectations for its interns. However, leaders had not fully considered the ways in which their program's expectations compared and contrasted with the NBPTS Standards their board-certified mentors were modeling. For example, the worksheet that mentors were asked to complete twice weekly to help them reflect with their interns did not align with board-certified teachers' understanding of reflection and consequently

many refused to do it. Program leaders might have been able to make the program's components more efficient and effective if they had a keener understanding of the ways in which board-certified mentors' practices aligned with program goals.

Leaders who aim to capitalize on board-certified teachers as resources for improved teaching should be aware that board-certification does not represent "good teaching" generically, but represents a very specific way of thinking about teaching practice. Such leaders should familiarize themselves with the Core Propositions and consider how the standard of accomplished teaching aligns with what they value about teaching.

- *How can accomplished teachers serve local needs?*

With a clear sense of what board-certified teachers bring to their schools, and ideally, agreement that what they bring is valued, school and district leaders might apply these human resources as solutions to local problems. This study finds that board-certified teachers bring to their schools human capital (knowledge and skills), cultural capital (valued styles and dispositions) and social capital (social networks and external influence). With this knowledge, school and district leaders in this study might have been able to make better use of board-certified teachers.

In his plan to turn the Blue Hill School into Blue Hill Academy, Dart had some ideas about what board-certified teachers would bring to the school. Believing that they had human capital that could support their effectiveness with students as well as cultural capital that could be a positive influence on their colleagues, he had to decide whether it would be more effective to have these master teachers remain in their classrooms or leave their classrooms to work with colleagues. Strategically, he decided to split their time,

arranging for these teachers to share responsibility for two classrooms so that they could spend half of their time in each role. This creative solution might have been an efficient use of their knowledge, skills and experience if, as discussed earlier, it could have been implemented without violating cultural norms. It is possible, too, that the social capital of board-certified teachers could have been strategically tapped for this plan. With an awareness of the extended social networks of board-certified teachers, school and district leaders might have been able to use their board-certified teachers as informal headhunters to help replace some of the many teachers who departed.

The leaders who planned the Red River Pilot School saw a direct match between the classroom expertise of board-certified teachers and the classroom expertise they needed in their new program's mentors. They believed these teachers would bring knowledge about teaching, and decided that their program could provide training to assist these mentors in talking with their interns about teaching. In fact, each of the NBCTs and board-certification candidates I spoke with at this site gave rich examples of how the board-certification process had given them language and a useful approach for communicating with their interns about teaching. Perhaps the program's mentor training program could have become more efficient and effective if program developers had been more keenly aware of what these teachers bring. Board-certified teachers or sections of the board-certification portfolio might have been used as resources in the training.

Similarly, given board-certified teachers' social capital, it might have been possible to think more strategically in all three schools about how to increase the resources they brought. In these settings, public recognition about board certification was high and board-certified teachers had been quite successful in securing grants and

drawing in other resources. Grant opportunities and grant-writing assistance could be directed to board-certified teachers, and board-certified teachers could have been supported to participate in partnerships or pursue resources to benefit their schools. Not until leaders have a clear idea of what these teachers bring can they can think strategically about how these resources will be most effectively applied to local needs.

- *How can contexts best support accomplished teachers?*

The strategies employed in these sites all aim to improve the quality of teaching by positioning board-certified teachers to influence the teaching practice of their colleagues. Context played a critical role in determining whether they were willing and able to be resources for improved teaching, and whether they were effective as positive influences on their colleagues' practice. Some important aspects of the context are discussed in Chapter Five. These findings suggest, however, that if formal leaders want to make the most efficient use of board-certified human resources, they should consider how their contexts can support all teachers, not just board-certified teachers, to practice as accomplished teachers.

Keeping in mind that board-certified teachers and the board-certification process are simply resources or means to achieve the goal of raising the level of professional practice, leaders might emphasize in their plans the standard of practice that board-certified teachers represent, and not the teachers as individuals. In this way they might avoid two potential problems posed by board-certified teachers. First, NBCTs' credential and title present a threat to the egalitarian norm of schools and place non-board-certified teachers in the uncomfortable position of feeling competitive and defensive, creating a frame of mind which is not conducive to improving their practice. Second, the credential

and the title can obscure the fact that board-certified teachers are so positioned because of what they know and can do, not because of their credential. When school cultures emphasize board-certification status, it can become hard for other teachers to see board-certified teachers as allies for helping them to acquire these knowledge and skills too.

James's firsthand knowledge of what board-certified teachers know, do and bring to their schools made it possible for her to support all teachers to be accomplished teachers, and perhaps made it obvious to her that she should do so. She did so knowing that the teachers on her staff who had already been certified to meet the Board's standards would provide a critical mass of support for their colleagues to practice at that level.

In contrast, the emphasis that Dart's strategy placed on the teachers—and not on the standard of practice they represented—worked to the plan's detriment. Holding up the board-certified teachers as “master teachers” flew in the face of egalitarian norms and created turbulence in the culture that closed many teachers' minds to the risk-taking required for improvement. These teachers had been given no credible reason to accept the board-certified teachers as master teachers, and therefore, they did not. The majority of the faculty responded by leaving the school. In retrospect, it seems their strong reaction might have been mediated if they have been introduced first to the notion of a professional standards board in teaching and the reasons for having professional standards for teaching practice. Some Blue Hill teachers might have accepted the idea of NBCTs as allies for their school's improvement and could have been included in selecting and hiring the four board-certified teachers who were to help them align their

teaching to this new standard. Preparing the context in these ways might have enabled the board-certified teachers to be more efficient and effective in their roles.

Within two years it became clear in Blue Hill that, since the board-certified teachers were making little headway with their colleagues, the special staffing arrangements should be abandoned. Under these conditions, working full-time with students was a more efficient use of these teachers' knowledge, skills and expertise than releasing them to try to work with teachers who didn't believe they had anything to offer.

Interestingly, as the socio-political climate changed over time, several board-certified teachers crept back into out-of-classroom roles where they supported teachers, the same kind of roles that had been abandoned five years earlier. They did not assume these roles because of their board-certification credential, however, but because they were widely accepted by their colleagues to have expertise that could assist them. Teachers had adopted a new standard of practice in which they took collective responsibility for students' learning and recognized that assistance from colleagues was not a sign of weakness but a sign of commitment to students and professionalism. It is what colleagues in a profession do.

By pursuing board certification as a key resource for improving the quality of teaching in their schools and districts, the leaders in this study endorsed and introduced a new standard of practice into their schools. The contexts that most efficiently supported board-certified teachers to influence their colleagues' practice were those organized to support all teachers to practice at the level of this new standard.

Is the Nation Prepared?

The architects of National Board Certification expected that this new credential would inspire revolutionary changes in education and improve teaching and learning throughout U.S. schools. They did not expect that all U.S. teachers would pursue and achieve this credential, but they did believe that all teachers would be affected by its standard. They posited that if good teaching were understood to be more than a matter of opinion, and a standard for good teaching practice were to be articulated by education professionals and accepted by the public, it would become difficult for schools to justify not using teachers who meet that standard as resources to stimulate more good teaching. It would be in a school's best interest to reorganize in ways that support teachers to practice at the level of that standard. They envisioned that, "The National Board can be a catalyst for lasting change. It can redefine teaching as a career by stimulating new incentive structures, staffing patterns and organizational arrangements" (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986, p. 41). The new staffing patterns and arrangements would enable the new standard of accomplished teaching to spread throughout U.S. schools while providing new professional opportunities that would help attract and retain teachers.

The cases in this study illustrate how this might happen. In these settings, something about board-certified teachers rang true for school or district leaders and it made sense to them to use these teachers as resources for improved teaching within their reform plans. As these leaders adjusted their contexts to increase the influence of these teachers, all teachers were supported to practice at the level of this new professional

standard. National Board Certification was a tool to identify, build or shape the capacity needed for this change to take place in the professional standard of teaching practice.

This study has implications for state and local policymakers who support board certification, for National Board Certified Teachers and for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. These stakeholders could increase the impact of board certification on the quality of teaching and learning in the U.S.—if they are prepared to take action.

- *State and local policymakers*

Most state and local policies that support board certification aim to reward good teaching by providing incentives and rewards for teachers who achieve it. This study suggests that such policies would result in an increasingly large group of teachers who all ascribe to a similar, very specific idea of what good teaching is. These teachers may develop their own shared technical language and have an ever-growing social network that supports their convictions about teaching. State and local education leaders who provide such incentives and rewards therefore would be wise to consider in what ways they agree with what the NBPTS values about teaching (the Five Core Propositions) and in what ways they disagree. If they do not agree, it would be counter-productive to continue supporting it. If they do agree, they should examine how their contexts are organized to support or limit this standard of professional practice and consider how these teachers might be effective resources for raising the standard of practice among their colleagues.

This raises the question of how state and local policymakers will determine whether or not they agree with the Five Core Propositions. Is it a matter of opinion?

Should it be up to them? In fact, several education policymakers worked alongside leading members of the profession to craft the Five Core Propositions in 1989. However, today policymakers have demonstrated a strong interest in empirical data. Studies do confirm that teachers whose practice is aligned with the NBPTS Standards produce higher student achievement gains than teachers' whose practice is not, (that is, they tried but did not achieve board certification) (Bond et al., 2000; Cavalluzzo, 2004; Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004). However, there are many teachers who also have high student achievement gain scores who have never attempted to pursue board certification. We do not know to what extent the practice of these effective teachers may also align with the Five Core Propositions. We do know that the NBPTS Standards and the Core Propositions on which they are based represent one valid standard for effective teaching.

Recent efforts to identify effective teachers by value-added methodology have not helped identify what kind of teaching leads to high achievement, how to train more teachers to practice that way, or how schools might be organized to better support that kind of teaching. Policymakers should call for more research on the teaching practice of effective teachers. Whereas board-certified teachers are a very particular kind of good teacher, research might reveal other kinds of good teachers or even other dimensions of good teaching that could help to strengthen the standard of professional practice in U.S. schools.

The data from this study reveal that the board-certification process can help teachers develop a clear, common conception of good teaching and build their skills for being resources for improved teaching. School and district leaders, therefore, should take care not to shortchange the board-certification process in their efforts to increase the

number of board-certified teachers in their locales. They might strategize about whether to support school-based or district-level candidate support based on local needs, and they should provide the resources to ensure that these groups are effective at strengthening the skills that are most needed locally.

- *National Board Certified Teachers*

National Board Certification is an experience that leads many teachers to wonder, “What’s next?” In achieving National Board Certification, teachers have demonstrated to NBPTS that they are able to practice at the level of their professional standards. But when they work in contexts that do not support them to practice at that level, they may not always do so or they may choose to do so only through roles outside their schools. However, this study reminds us that the purpose of the credential was to identify, build or shape the capacity needed to restructure education and raise the standard of professional practice throughout U.S. schools. From this perspective, board-certified teachers have a responsibility to push back against the school structures that keep them from practicing at a professional level and to hold their colleagues to the same high standard of practice to which they ascribe.

For example, since board-certified teachers are “committed to students and their learning,” according to the first of the Five Core Propositions, they should insist that their schools have strong systems supporting collaboration with families and they should negotiate flexible staffing arrangements that attempt to organize instruction in ways that will best serve their students. They should participate in making sure schools have authentic assessment systems that help teachers develop knowledge of their students and strong child study teams where teachers can go to get real help with difficult cases.

Since board-certified teachers are committed to being experts in their content areas and classroom practice, they should invite colleagues to join them in being both consumers and producers of professional knowledge: attending conferences, reading professional literature, and conducting action research. When they participate in professional associations and other activities beyond the school they should feel a responsibility to bring their learning back to their schools. They should also insist on receiving increased pay for achieving board certification, just as teachers are routinely compensated for the knowledge and skills they demonstrate through graduate credits.

Board-certified teachers are also committed to reflection and collaboration. They need to insist on having time to interact with their colleagues and take responsibility for making sure that the time is used well, perhaps even using the NBPTS Standards, the portfolio instructions or other NBPTS products such as Take One¹² as an aide. They should push back on school chores that are not related to teaching and learning, but assume a share of tasks that are related to instruction, and they should suggest ways in which all teachers can have an authentic voice in the decisions that affect their work. Board-certified teachers also should take the initiative to use their credential to benefit their schools by applying for grants, seeking partnerships and bringing back learning from their social networks. In these ways board-certified teachers stand to be powerful informal influences on the standard of practice in their schools.

Board-certified teachers might also assume formal roles. This study has shown that the understanding that formal leaders hold about what the credential represents is important in the success of this type of reform initiative. Therefore, in addition to

¹² Take One is a professional development opportunity offered by NBPTS in which teachers complete one video-based entry of the board-certification portfolio and submit it for scoring.

educating school leaders, board-certified teachers might become formal school or district leaders who can lead the way in experimenting with school structures and staffing arrangements that take best advantage of available expertise.

These are high expectations. It's worthwhile to question whether it is reasonable to expect board-certified teachers to have the commitment and capacity to force these kinds of changes in their schools and districts. I think it is for two reasons.

When a teacher receives National Board Certification, it means that the NBPTS has determined that they are able to practice at the level of the NBPTS Standards, not that they always will. A majority of board-certified teachers in the U.S., however, continue to receive financial rewards for up to ten years after their achievement. It is reasonable, therefore, to expect that they should feel a commitment to say something if they encounter conditions that inhibit them from continuing to practice at the level of the NBPTS Standards, or if they have ideas for how their context might better enable more teachers to practice at the level of the standards. At least in theory, those who are compensating them to practice at that level should want to hear it.

Second, while the reform work suggested here might appear to require teachers to acquire a large spectrum of new knowledge and skills, I would argue that through the board-certification process, board-certified teachers have already strengthened the most important skill necessary: reflection. Contexts that support accomplished teaching are not yet common. If we are to see such contexts, we will have to teach ourselves how to create them. Creating such contexts will require some careful strategizing, thoughtful risk-taking, and constructive reflection. This is the framework that underlies board-certified teachers' teaching practice; it is what accomplished teachers do when confronted

with student learning challenges. Board-certified teachers are well-equipped to do this. In fact, it probably cannot be done without them.

- *The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards*

The NBPTS has created standards and certified over 55,000 teachers, but it has no control over how education leaders might respond to these standards and the teachers who meet them. It was expected that, once leading members of the profession identified a professional standard of practice in teaching, schools and districts would see it in their best interest to provide incentives and rewards for teachers to pursue the assessments, to align local initiatives to this standard, and to capitalize upon the expertise of teachers certified to meet this standard.

While it may seem curious that most schools and districts have chosen to pursue only the most expensive of these three responses, the other two responses are in fact more challenging because they require school and district leaders to understand the NBPTS Standards. Education leaders do not have to understand the actual standards just to reward teachers for meeting them; the National Board makes the assessment of teachers for them. They would, however, have to be familiar with the NBPTS Core Propositions and standards in order to align local initiatives with them or to capitalize on the expertise of teachers who meet them. Leaders would need to be aware that board certification does not represent generic “good teaching,” but identifies teachers who have specific ways of thinking about, discussing, and practicing teaching. They would have to take time to understand the NBPTS Standards and agree with the idea that they represent a strong standard of practice for the profession. Again, if they do not agree, they should question why they are rewarding teachers so handsomely to meet them.

If National Board Certification is to become the catalyst for reform that it was intended to be, the NBPTS needs to help education leaders understand the Core Propositions and standards. While it is true that the professional standards boards in medicine do not have to convince hospital administrators of the value of their standards and in law the standards for the bar are not under debate, professional standards for teaching practice are new, and consensus-building is still necessary. Schools cannot be organized for greater efficiency and effectiveness without greater agreement than currently exists on what constitutes professional practice in teaching.

The Board, therefore, needs to engage more formal education leaders with the NBPTS Standards in a meaningful way. It might do this by soliciting wider participation in the standards review process. All NBPTS Standards are reviewed periodically by committees and open for public comment. The participation of key school or district administrators, such as the leaders of their professional associations, might lead to greater awareness among these groups about the NBPTS Standards.

It might do this by developing a national certification system for education leaders that is aligned to the same conception of accomplished teaching. Going through this process might help school and district leaders understand what board-certified teachers know about accomplished teaching and develop the same language for talking about teaching and learning.

The NBPTS might also do this by supporting more board-certified teachers to move into formal leadership roles, such as principal and superintendent. It should then create a network of such board-certified leaders and the board-certified teachers working with them so that they can learn together as they experiment and reflect on how to

redesign their schools and districts to support accomplished teaching. The National Board might take an active role in sharing this learning, for example, using its annual conference and web-based tools. It could help schools and districts which have board-certified teachers to understand how their contexts are supporting or inhibiting accomplished teaching. And since board certification represents some of the same kinds of good teaching that many other reforms advocate, the Board might take a more active role in identifying and advocating related reforms that support accomplished teaching.

If “accomplished teaching” is to become truly accepted as a national standard for professional practice in teaching, more research about this standard is needed. Thus far, research has focused on board-certified teachers and the outcomes of their students, not on the teaching represented by the NBPTS Standards. The NBPTS should support research that examines the validity of the NBPTS Standards and helps to strengthen them.

The authors of *A Nation Prepared* believed that teachers need to come to teaching with a clear, high idea of what their work is, they need to have this idea in common so they can support each other to practice at that high standard, and schools need to be organized to make that standard of practice possible. Twenty years ago the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards clearly articulated a standard for professional practice in teaching, making it possible for teachers and schools to align their efforts to meet it. To date, over 55,000 individual teachers have accepted the challenge. It is time for schools to rise to the same challenge.

Appendix A

Founding Members

of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

In 1986, the authors of *A Nation Prepared* noted,

Virtually every occupation regarded by the public as a true profession has codified the knowledge, the specific expertise, required by its practitioners, and has required that those who wish to practice that profession with the sanction of its members demonstrate that they have a command of the needed knowledge and the ability to apply it. That is, the leading members of the profession decide what professionals in that area need to know and be able to do. (p. 65)

Following is a list of the “leading members of the profession” who participated as founding members of the NBPTS and drafted the Board’s central policy statement, “What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do.” They are listed with the primary roles held at that time. It should be noted that many held several additional roles and notable awards in education.

Leonard Anderson

Librarian & Media Specialist
Grant High School
Portland, OR

Mary-Dean Barringer

Exceptional Needs Teacher
Regional Education Service Agency
Wayne County, MI

Lewis M. Branscomb

Chief Scientist and Vice President
IBM Corporation
Armonk, NY

Alan Campbell

Executive Vice President
ARA Serviced, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

Iris Carl

Elementary Math Instructional Specialist
Houston Independent School District
Houston, TX

Ivy Chan

Special Education Teacher
Garfield Elementary School
Olympia, WA

Ernesto J. Cortes, Jr.

Director
Industrial Areas Foundation
Austin, TX

Joseph Delaney

Assistant Superintendent
Spartanburg School District Seven
Spartanburg, SC

Martha Dolfi

Language Arts/Math Teacher
Brookline Elementary School
Pittsburgh, PA

Karen Dreyfuss

Director
Dade-Monroe Teacher Education Center
Miami Springs, FL

Jaime Escalante

High School Math Teacher
Garfield High School
Los Angeles, CA

Joel Fink

Guidance Counselor
Oldham County High School
Buckner, KY

Norman C. Francis

President
Xavier University
New Orleans, LA

Clifford L. Freeman

Project Manager and Executive Assistant
Oregon Department of General Services
Salem, OR

E.K. Fretwell, Jr.

Chancellor Emeritus
University of NC at Charlotte
Charlotte, NC

Mary Hatwood Futrell

President
National Education Association
Senior Fellow
George Washington University
Washington, D.C.

Charleyne A. Gilbert

Business Education Teacher
Westbrook High School
Westbrook, ME

Barbara Hatton

Deputy Director
Education and Culture Program
Ford Foundation
New York, NY

Richard E. Heckert

Retired Chairman of Board & CEO
E.I. DuPont de Nemours and Co., Inc.
Wilmington, DE

Sonia Hernandez

Senior Associate
National Center on Education & the
Economy
Rochester, NY

Joseph Nguyen-Trung Hieu

Social Studies Teacher
Clemente Community Academy
Chicago, IL

Shirley Hill

Professor of Education and Mathematics
School of Education
University of Missouri-Kansas City
Kansas City, MO

John W. Gardner

Co-founder
Independent Sector
Washington, DC

Fred H. Hechinger

President
New York Times Company Foundation
New York, NY

Patricia Hodges

Principal
Paradise Elementary School
Las Vegas, NV

Bill Honig

California Superintendent of
Public Instruction
California State Department of
Education
Sacramento, CA

Sue Hovey
Teacher and Consultant
Moscow High School
Moscow, ID

James B. Hunt, Jr.
Senior Partner
Poyner and Spruill
Former Governor
Greensboro, NC

Nancy Jewell
Vice President
Oklahoma Education Association
Enid, OK

Ann Kahn
Educational consultant
Former President
National PTA
Chicago, IL

Susan Adler Kaplan
English Teacher
Classical High School
Providence, RI

Vera Katz
State Representative
Speaker of the House
Former Mayor of Portland, Oregon
Portland, OR

Thomas H. Kean
Governor
Trenton, New Jersey

David T. Kearns
Chairman and CEO
Xerox Corporation
Stamford, CT

James A. Kelly
Founding President
NBPTS
Grosse Point Farms, MI

Nat LaCour Jr.
President
United Teachers of New Orleans
Vice President
American Federation of Teachers
Washington, DC

Judith E. Lanier
Dean
College of Education
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI

Peggy Lathlaen
Elementary Teacher
Friendswood Public Schools
Friendswood, TX

Esther Lauderman
Kindergarten Teacher
Williamstown Elementary School
Williamstown, WV

Barbara B. Laws
Elementary Art Teacher
Norfolk Public Schools
Norfolk, VA

Kathy Layton
Math Teacher
Beverly Hills High School
Beverly Hills, CA

Hayes A. Lewis
Superintendent
Zuni Public Schools
Zuni, NM

Susan Lloyd
History/Music Teacher
Phillips Academy
Andover, MA

Robert Lynch
Social Studies Teacher
Jericho High School
Long Island, NY

Arturo Madrid
Founding President
Tomas Rivera Policy Institute
Los Angeles, CA

Shirley M. Malcolm
Director
American Association for the
Advancement of Science
Washington, D.C.

Helen Martin
Earth and Space Science
Unionville High School
Unionville, PA

Deborah Meier
Director
Central Park East Elementary School
New York, NY

Damon P. Moore
Biology and Chemistry Teacher
Muncie Northside Middle School
Past President
Indiana State Teachers Association
Muncie, IN

James R. Oglesby
Director of Facilities Utilization
University of Missouri
Columbia, MO

Rebecca A. Palacios
Bilingual Pre-Kindergarten Teacher
Zavala Special Emphasis School
Corpus Christi, TX

Patrick O'Rourke
Civics Teacher
Hammond High School
Hammond, IN

Thomas Payzant
Superintendent of Schools
San Diego, CA

Claire Pelton
San Jose Unified School District
Educational Consultant
Los Altos Hills, CA

Ruth E. Randall
Professor
University of Nebraska
Former MN Commissioner of Education
Lincoln, NE

Doris Roettger-Svoboda
Reading and Language Arts Teacher
Heartland Area Education Agency
Johnston, IA

Leonard Rovins
Senior Partner
Summit, Rovins & Feldesman
Former President
National School Board Association
New York, NY

Mary Budd Rowe
Professor of Science Education
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL

Franklin Schlatter
English Teacher
Roswell High School
Roswell, NM

Phillip C. Schlechty
President
Schlechty Center for Leadership in
School Reform
Louisville, KY

Albert Shanker
President
American Federation of Teachers
New York, NY

Susan A. Stitham
English and History Teacher
Austin E. Lathrop High School
Fairbanks, AK

Edith Swanson
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, MI

Peggy Swoger
English Teacher
Mountain Brook Junior High
Mountain Brook, AL

Irene Phelps Thorman
ESL Teacher
Withrow High School
Cincinnati, OH

Vicky Turano
Assistant School Principal
The Shrine of St. Anne
Arvada, CO

Adam Urbanski
President
Rochester Teachers Association
Vice President
American Federation of Teachers
Rochester, NY

Reg Weaver
Science and Health Teacher
Brooks Junior High School
Harvey, IL

Terry L. Wyatt
Physics Teacher
School Consultation Program
Toledo, OH

Source: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (1990). *Toward high and rigorous standards for the teaching profession* (Second edition). Southfield, MI: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Appendix B

The NBPTS Five Core Propositions

In 1999, two years after the NBPTS was established, the Board released its first policy statement entitled, *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*. This 22-page document outlined Five Core Propositions that became the basis of all subsequent standards and assessment development. A summary of the Five Core Propositions, an excerpt of the larger document, is reprinted below. The full text can be found at: http://www.nbpts.org/UserFiles/File/what_teachers.pdf.

What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do Policy Position (Five Core Propositions)

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards seeks to identify and recognize teachers who effectively enhance student learning and demonstrate the high level of knowledge, skills, abilities and commitments reflected in the following five core propositions.

- **Teachers are committed to students and their learning.**

Accomplished teachers are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They act on the belief that all students can learn. They treat students equitably, recognizing the individual differences that distinguish one student from another and taking account of these differences in their practice. They adjust their practice based on observation and knowledge of their students' interests, abilities, skills, knowledge, family circumstances and peer relationships.

Accomplished teachers understand how students develop and learn. They incorporate the prevailing theories of cognition and intelligence in their practice. They are aware of the influence of context and culture on behavior. They develop students' cognitive capacity and their respect for learning. Equally important, they foster students' self-esteem, motivation, character, civic responsibility and their respect for individual, cultural, religious and racial differences.

- **Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.**

Accomplished teachers have a rich understanding of the subject(s) they teach and appreciate how knowledge in their subject is created, organized, linked to other disciplines and applied to real-world settings. While faithfully representing the collective wisdom of our culture and upholding the value of disciplinary knowledge, they also develop the critical and analytical capacities of their students.

Accomplished teachers command specialized knowledge of how to convey and reveal subject matter to students. They are aware of the preconceptions and background knowledge that students typically bring to each subject and of strategies and instructional materials that can be of assistance. They understand where difficulties are likely to arise and modify their practice accordingly. Their instructional repertoire allows them to create multiple paths to the subjects they teach, and they are adept at teaching students how to pose and solve their own problems.

- **Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.** Accomplished teachers create, enrich, maintain and alter instructional settings to capture and sustain the interest of their students and to make the most effective use of time. They also are adept at engaging students and adults to assist their teaching and at enlisting their colleagues' knowledge and expertise to complement their own. Accomplished teachers command a range of generic instructional techniques, know when each is appropriate and can implement them as needed. They are as aware of ineffectual or damaging practice as they are devoted to elegant practice.

They know how to engage groups of students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to allow the schools' goals for students to be met. They are adept at setting norms for social interaction among students and between students and teachers. They understand how to motivate students to learn and how to maintain their interest even in the face of temporary failure.

Accomplished teachers can assess the progress of individual students as well as that of the class as a whole. They employ multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding and can clearly explain student performance to parents.

- **Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.** Accomplished teachers are models of educated persons, exemplifying the virtues they seek to inspire in students – curiosity, tolerance, honesty, fairness, respect for diversity and appreciation of cultural differences – and the capacities that are prerequisites for intellectual growth: the ability to reason and take multiple perspectives to be creative and take risks, and to adopt an experimental and problem-solving orientation.

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of human development, subject matter and instruction, and their understanding of their students to make principled judgments about sound practice. Their decisions are not only grounded in the literature, but also in their experience. They engage in lifelong learning which they seek to encourage in their students.

Striving to strengthen their teaching, accomplished teachers critically examine their practice, seek to expand their repertoire, deepen their knowledge, sharpen their judgment and adapt their teaching to new findings, ideas and theories.

- **Teachers are members of learning communities.**

Accomplished teachers contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development. They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of school resources in light of their understanding of state and local education objectives. They are knowledgeable about specialized school and community resources that can be engaged for their students' benefit, and are skilled at employing such resources as needed.

Accomplished teachers find ways to work collaboratively and creatively with parents, engaging them productively in the work of the school.

Source: NBPTS. (2007) *What teachers should know and be able to do*. Southfield, MI: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Appendix C

NBPTS Teaching Standards: Middle Childhood/Generalist

In 1987 the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards established **Five Core Propositions** for what all teachers should know and be able to do. They are:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.

Subsequently, the Board convened teams of classroom teachers and other experts to develop **NBPTS Standards** which define what the *Five Core Propositions* look like at an accomplished level in each subject specialty and at each level of child development. In 2007, NBPTS Standards were available in 24 fields.

Below is a summary of the 49-page NBPTS Standards for the *Middle Childhood/Generalist* certificate excerpted from the complete document. Complete standards documents for all subject areas and levels are available online at www.nbpts.org.

Middle Childhood/Generalist: NBPTS Standards, Second Edition (*National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2001c*)

I. Knowledge of Students

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of child development and their relationships with students to understand their students' abilities, interests, aspirations, and values.

II. Knowledge of Content and Curriculum

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of subject matter and curriculum to make sound decisions about what is important for students to learn within and across the subject areas that comprise the middle childhood curriculum.

III. Learning Environment

Accomplished teachers establish a caring, inclusive, stimulating, and safe school community where students can take intellectual risks, practice democracy, and work collaboratively and independently.

IV. Respect for Diversity

Accomplished teachers help students learn to respect and appreciate individual and group differences.

V. Instructional Resources

Accomplished teachers create, assess, select, and adapt a rich and varied collection of materials and draw on other resources such as staff, community members, and students to support learning.

VI. Meaningful Applications of Knowledge

Accomplished teachers engage students in learning within and across the disciplines and help students understand how the subjects they study can be used to explore important issues in their lives and the world around them.

VII. Multiple Paths to Knowledge

Accomplished teachers provide students with multiple paths needed to learn the central concepts in each school subject, explore important themes and topics that cut across subject areas, and build overall knowledge and understanding.

VIII. Assessment

Accomplished teachers understand the strengths and weaknesses of different assessment methods, base their instruction on ongoing assessment, and encourage students to monitor their own learning.

IX. Family Involvement

Accomplished teachers initiate positive, interactive relationships with families as they participate in the education of their children.

X. Reflection

Accomplished teachers regularly analyze, evaluate, reflect on, and strengthen the effectiveness and quality of their practice.

XI. Contributions to the Profession

Accomplished teachers work with colleagues to improve schools and to advance knowledge and practice in their field.

Source: NBPTS. (2007) *Middle Childhood/Generalist: NBPTS Standards*. Retrieved April 21, 2007, from http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards/standards_by_cert?ID=27&x=26&y=5.

Appendix D

National Board Certification Assessment Process Overview

National Board Certification is a two-part assessment involving a portfolio, and an assessment center test.

The Portfolio

Candidates prepare four portfolio entries to demonstrate how their teaching meets the NBPTS Standards. Each entry requires teachers to provide evidence (described below) submitted together with 10-12 pages of written commentary in which teachers describe, analyze and reflect on their teaching practice. The description of evidence provided below is an excerpt from the NBPTS website.

The Three Types of Entries

NBPTS portfolios assess a teacher's performance based on three distinct sources of evidence, which the teacher submits to NBPTS in the form of entries. The sources of evidence are:

- samples of students' work;
- video recordings of classroom practice; and
- documentation of accomplishments outside the classroom.

Under the headings below are summaries of the three entry types that all NBPTS portfolios share.

Entries Based on Student Work Samples (*submit 1*)

One essential source of evidence about a teacher's practice is student work: what are the students asked to do, how are student responses interpreted by the teacher, and what does the teacher do with the information the student work provides? Because there are many kinds of student work, portfolio entries of this type sample the types of student work that are most important to teachers in each certificate area.

As part of this process, candidates will look for patterns in the student work samples collected.

Note: No student work samples can be taken from a unit or lesson that is featured in either of the other entries. The students chosen should represent different kinds of instructional challenges for you.

Entries Based on Video Recording (*submit 2*)

There is no better evidence of what a teacher does than actual classroom practice. For this reason, video recordings of practice in varying situations and circumstances are essential evidence of the accomplishments of teachers. Therefore, portfolio entries of this type use video recording to sample a teacher's classroom practice across different concepts during the year, capturing different kinds of instruction and classroom interactions.

As part of this process, each video recording is individually contextualized and situated by the teacher, using a Written Commentary.

Entries Based on Documented Accomplishments (*submit 1*)

The third essential source of evidence about a teacher's practice reflects aspects of teaching outside the classroom, such as a teacher's interactions with students' families, with the school and local community, and with colleagues. Portfolio entries of this type center on documenting these kinds of interactions.

Source: NBPTS. (2007) *The Three Types of Entries*. Retrieved April 21, 1007, from http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/the_portfolio.

The Assessment Center

Candidates schedule one half-day appointment at a computer testing center where they have 30 minutes to answer each of six questions. Prompt descriptions for all certificates are found on the NBPTS website. (See citation below.) The prompt descriptions for the Middle Childhood/Generalist certificate are provided below as an example.

National Board Certification® Assessment Center Descriptions Middle Childhood/Generalist

Exercise 1: Supporting Reading Skills Teachers will demonstrate their ability to analyze and interpret student errors and patterns of errors in reading. Teachers will be asked to analyze and interpret a transcript of a given student's oral reading of a given passage. Teachers will also be asked to identify and justify appropriate strategies to address the identified student's needs.

Exercise 2: Analyzing Student Work Teachers will demonstrate their ability to identify mathematical misconceptions/errors in a given student's work, to identify concepts/skills necessary for student understanding of the math problem, and to provide appropriate strategies with a rationale to assist the student's understanding of the identified concepts or skills.

Exercise 3: Knowledge of Science Teachers will demonstrate their ability to identify and understand fundamental concepts and principles in science. Teachers will be asked to respond to a student's inquiry about a real-world phenomenon by identifying scientific concepts and principles that are related to the real-world phenomenon. They will also be asked to describe an appropriate learning experience with a rationale that will provide student understanding of a concept/principle that relates to the real-world phenomenon.

Exercise 4: Social Studies Teachers will demonstrate their ability to identify and interpret social studies/history information within a given graphic. Teachers will be asked to identify a cause-and-effect relationship based on the information in the given graphic. They will also be asked to describe a learning experience/activity that develops student understanding of a real-world connection related to the identified cause-and-effect relationship.

Exercise 5: Understanding Health Teachers will demonstrate their ability to identify and address health-related needs of a given student. Teachers will be asked to read a student profile and determine the particular health issues related to the identified student. Teachers will be asked to identify and justify appropriate steps and resources/materials used in meeting needs of the student.

Exercise 6: Integrating the Arts Teachers will demonstrate their ability to use the Arts to develop student understanding of concepts in another discipline. Teachers will be asked to identify concepts in a given subject area and describe an arts-focused learning experience that will establish a connection for students understanding of an identified concept and provide multiple paths of access for student learning of that concept. The teacher will be asked to justify how the arts-focused learning experience will enable students to develop a deeper or broader appreciation of the arts.

Source: NBPTS. (2007) *National Board Certification® Assessment Center Descriptions: Middle Childhood/Generalist*. Retrieved April 21, 1007, from <http://www.nbpts.org/index.cfm?t=downloader.cfm&id=50>.

Appendix E

Study Methods

Data Collection

I collected data about the three contexts of this study and the professional activities of teachers within them during a week-long site visit to each school. During those five days I conducted interviews, led a focus group, observed professional activities of teachers, and reviewed relevant documents. I also asked teachers to complete a sociogram activity. Table 1 provides an overview of the data I collected.

| <i>Table 1: Data Collection Overview</i> | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| | Principal Interviews | NBCT Interviews | Non-NBCT Interviews | Additional Interviews | Sociograms | Focus Group Participants | Observations | Documents Reviewed |
| Blue Hill Academy | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 ^a | 13 | 8 | four team meetings, staff development session | school improvement team binder, interdisciplinary team meeting binders, team meeting notes |
| Red River Pilot School | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 ^b | 17 | 8 | vertical team meeting, faculty meeting, faculty professional development session, intern workshop | faculty handbook, mentor binder, team meeting notes |
| Green View School | 3 | 8 | 6 | 1 ^c | 19 | 20 | two team meetings, school improvement team meeting, parent workshop, staff development session | school improvement team binder, team and content committee notes, teacher/ student /parent surveys, school-wide assistance team documents |
| TOTALS | 45 | | | | 49 | 36 | 14 | -- |
| a Former superintendent, district-level program administrator, assistant principal b Founding/ former principal, teacher training program administrator c Assistant principal | | | | | | | | |

The interviews involved teachers, principals and other school or district leaders. Principals participated in short, structured phone interviews before my arrival*, spoke with me for 60 minutes at the beginning of my visit based on a semi-structured protocol, and granted me 90 minutes on the final day of my visit for an open-ended opportunity to address additional questions that arose for me during the week. In two of the schools, the principal at the time of my visit was not the principal at the time when the initial idea of capitalizing on board-certified teachers was conceived. Therefore, I conducted additional 60-minute interviews with past and present district personnel to learn more about the history of their initiatives and settings.

The teachers whom I interviewed were selected through consultation with the principal. I chose both teachers who had achieved board certification and those who had not. I also attempted to include range of teachers, including both veterans and novices, teachers who were new to the school but not to teaching, teachers at different grade levels, itinerant teachers, teachers who played key roles on school-based committees and a representative of the union or local professional association. These teachers were invited to set up a time to meet with me. Approximately 85% of those invited to participate agreed to do so. Each participated in an interview that lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and was based on questions I tailored for each teacher from a semi-structured protocol. I interviewed eight to fourteen teachers at each site, about half of whom had achieved board-certification. Several of the non-board-certified teachers I interviewed were active candidates for board certification or had been unsuccessful candidates in the past.

At each site I had arranged a focus group discussion on the first or second day of my visit. Participation was voluntary and open to all faculty members. Between 14 percent and 41 percent of the instructional staff participated at each site. During these 60-minute sessions, teachers collaborated in an activity asking them to identify for me the array of interactions, tasks or activities that occurred at their school that were designed or perceived to influence teaching and learning. Documenting their responses helped me to identify some of the opportunities teachers perceived they had to be influenced by each

* The pre-visit interview for Red River was conducted with a teacher instead of the principal.

other's practice. By conducting this focus group early in the week, I was able to use the responses to help shape my interviews with teachers and others in the days that followed.

Since I was interested in teachers' interactions, I also requested that faculty members complete a sociogram activity, with which I planned to track the patterns of interaction among the faculty, specifically, who interacts with whom about matters of instruction and how often they did so. Participation was voluntary and between 23 percent and 61 percent of teachers participated at each site.

Throughout the week I observed a variety of professional meetings including full-faculty meetings, school-wide committee meetings, team meetings, and professional development sessions. In addition, the principals in each site provided access to relevant documents, such as the school's improvement plans, notes of faculty meetings, and curriculum planning documents. These observations and documents enabled me to triangulate the data collected through interviews, the focus group and the sociograms, and to round out the descriptions I had collected about teachers' interactions and professional activities.

Data Analysis

Since I wanted to use the data collected early in the week to inform subsequent decisions about data collection, I collected data in a way that facilitated an immediate first layer of analysis. Immediately after each interview or observation I created an analytic field note summarizing what I had learned related to each research question. By creating these notes in a matrix I was able to look for similarities and differences in themes across the data while I was still in the field. Similarly I coded and catalogued the sociogram data and focus group exercise notes as soon as they were collected so that in subsequent interviews and observations I could follow up on patterns I saw and try to learn more about them.

At the end of each week-long site visit I used my analytic field notes to create thematic summaries of the data for each site. The summaries enabled me to compare the data related to my research questions within and across sites. I created codes for the

patterns that emerged so that I could examine the raw data systematically and seek explanations for these patterns.

I worked with interview data—both the digital audio files as well as text transcriptions—using ATLAS qualitative analysis software. The range of codes I had identified through my thematic summaries helped me to search for patterns and themes within and across sites related to my research questions.

Validity and Confidentiality

The biggest threat to the validity of my research about board-certified teachers is also its greatest asset: theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). That is, due to my experience as a board-certified teacher working in public schools, I had insights and beliefs about the salient themes that might arise in this research. These insights helped me to identify meaningful codes and interpret the data, but they also created the potential for researcher bias. To reduce the validity threat, I used the tools within ATLAS to look systematically for discrepant data and I presented my data analysis matrices and interpretations to my colleagues at Harvard's Project on the Next Generation of Teachers for peer review. I also had one participant in each site review an early draft of the paper.

A second potential threat was the possibility that the participants—whether they were board-certified teachers or not—might have felt that they had a personal or professional interest in manipulating how they related their experiences to me. I took care to explain to participants that this was not an evaluation study with consequences for their careers or their school. I also triangulated the interview data with observations and other interviews.

A third potential threat would have been created if teachers did not feel secure in my commitment to maintain their confidentiality. For this study participants were informed that the names of all individuals and the names and locations of the school sites would be changed to pseudonyms. I took care to conduct interviews in a private location, I safeguarded the interview audio files, and I invited faculty members to complete the sociograms privately.

Site Selection

For this study, I needed to identify settings in which school or district leaders had taken a purposeful and organizational approach in their support of National Board Certification. Given the enormous investments that had been made in supporting teachers to achieve board certification across the U.S., I presumed it would be a simple task to identify schools and districts in which leaders had thought about how board-certified teachers might be an asset to their improvement and reform initiatives. This task proved to be much harder than I expected.

In November of 2005 I sent an e-mail message to over thirty personal and professional contacts, such as directors of networks of board-certified teachers or board-certified teachers themselves, indicating that I was soliciting information about schools throughout the U.S. that were “capitalizing on the expertise of their board-certified teachers.” Over the next three months as my e-mail snowballed across the internet, I received dozens of enthusiastic replies informing me of schools and districts that were capitalizing on board-certified teachers to recruit and support more candidates for board certification. What I wanted to know, however, was what these schools and districts planned *to do* with board-certified teachers once they had more, and more, and more of them. Follow-up inquiries led to a flurry of accounts of individual board-certified teachers who had wrestled their way into leadership positions, negotiated special arrangements to allow them to take on new responsibilities while remaining in the classroom, or obtained their own grants to start new programs that would fill a need in their schools. To be sure, these schools seemed to be benefiting from their NBCTs, but these arrangements were each individually negotiated for one or two specific teachers. They did not suggest that there had been an organizational plan for the investment in board certification or a systemic effort to use the expertise of board-certified teachers.

I therefore sent a new e-mail solicitation to an additional twenty individuals, requesting information about *school leaders* who were attempting to capitalize on the expertise of their board-certified teachers in ways other than candidate support. This proved a bit more successful. At the end of my six-month-long national search, I had a pool of nine potential sites where it appeared that school or district leaders did not view

board certification as an end in itself, but rather aimed to make “efficient use” of these teachers. Board-certified teachers in each of these sites were part of a systematic plan to improve the quality of teaching practice at the school or district level.

From the potential nine sites, I decided to identify a small sample of schools that would allow some comparison. I eliminated district-level initiatives as well as very large schools, high schools, and schools with only one or two board-certified teachers from the pool. I sought to create a sample of three schools that would provide variation in the features of the context that might matter. (See Table 2)

| Table 2: Schools Overview | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| school¹ | Blue Hill Academy (K-6) | Red River Pilot School (K-8) | Green View School (preK-8) |
| staffing | 58 faculty members 5 NBCTs 3 starting NBC 2 in NBC process | 30 faculty members 6 NBCTs 2 starting NBC 1 in NBC process | 41 faculty members 15 NBCTs (incl. principal) 6 starting NBC 2 in NBC process |
| students² | 450 students 63% FRLP 32% LEP 16% white | 570 students 52% FRLP 9% LEP 48% white | 540 students 30% FRLP 2% LEP 95% white |
| location | Metropolitan East Coast suburb | Urban Midwest | Rural South |
| achievement² | 70% math 60% ELA (advanced or proficient) | 82% Math 72% ELA (advanced or proficient) | >95% at or above proficient in Math and ELA |
| NBC supports and incentives³ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Candidate support: district-based program available providing salary-increment credits ▪Fee: paid in full by district and state ▪Reward: \$8500 first year, \$6000 annually for nine years ▪Public awareness: high ▪Other: full credit awarded for state licensure renewal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Candidate support: two district-based program options available ▪Fee: paid in full by teachers union and/or district ▪Reward: \$5500 annually, plus salary increment credits, plus additional \$1000-3000 for mentoring ▪Public awareness: high ▪Other: automatic state licensure renewal for ten years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Candidate support: school-based, district-sponsored program available ▪Fee: paid in full by state ▪Reward: annual 12% salary differential on the base pay ▪Public awareness: high ▪Other: three release days and state licensure renewal |
| 1- pseudonyms have been used throughout this paper 2- based on 2005-2006 School Report Cards 3- as provided in 2006 | | | |

My final sample included three mid-sized public elementary schools in which several members of the instructional staff (9-27%) had achieved board certification. The schools were located in three regions of the U.S., and in different types of communities: one urban, one suburban, and one rural. In addition, one was located in a collective bargaining state. Most importantly, each of these three schools had a different reason and strategy for capitalizing on the expertise of their board-certified teachers.

Appendix F

Comparison of Pay Increases for Earning National Board Certification and a Master's Degree in Ten States

Comparison of Pay Increases for Teachers' Knowledge and Skills in the Ten States with the Highest Total Numbers of NBCTs

| State | Total teachers [†] | Avg. teacher salary [‡] | Total NBCTs [§] | Pay Increases for Earning NBC | | | Pay Increases for Earning a Master's Degree | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| | | | | % teachers holding NBC ^{**} | Avg. % pay increase per teacher ^{††} | Total cost statewide (2007 estimate) in dollars | % teachers holding Master's Degrees [†] | Avg. % pay increase per teacher ^{‡‡} | Total cost statewide (2007 estimate) in dollars |
| NC | 86,020 | 43,348 | 11327 | 13.1 | 12 | 58,920,336 | 29.5 | 6.3 | 69,299,654 |
| FL | 128,634 | 41,590 | 9236 | 7.2 | 20 | 76,825,048 | 33.6 | 9.5 | 170,768,426 |
| SC | 43,754 | 42,189 | 5076 | 11.6 | 17.8 | 38,118,943 | 43.3 | 15.0 | 119,893,641 |
| CA | 280,036 | 57,876 | 3656 | 1.3 | 3.5 ^{§§} | 7,405,813 | 30.3 | 6.9 | 338,847,349 |
| OH | 123,370 | 48,692 | 2629 | 2.1 | 3.5 ^{***} | 4,480,394 | 45.7 | 11.3 | 310,214,305 |
| MS | 33,097 | 36,590 | 2554 | 7.7 | 16.4 | 15,325,941 | 37.0 | 5.0 | 22,403,855 |
| GA | 88,161 | 46,526 | 2331 | 2.6 | 10 | 10,845,211 | 37.6 | 14.8 | 228,255,780 |
| IL | 137,213 | 55,421 | 1986 | 1.4 | 9.0 | 9,905,949 | 48.9 | 9.5 | 353,266,196 |
| OK | 45,830 | 37,879 | 1569 | 3.4 | 13.2 | 7,845,043 | 33.3 | 4.9 | 28,326,223 |
| WA | 54,816 | 45,718 | 1306 | 2.4 | 7.7 | 4,597,493 | 46.8 | 20.3 | 238,087,423 |

[†] From National Center for Education Statistics (2005) *Digest of Education Statistics*. "Table 67. Highest degree earned, years of full-time teaching experience, and average class size for teachers in public elementary and secondary schools, by state: 1999-2000." Retrieved April 21, 1007 from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d05/tables/dt05_067.asp

[‡] From NEA Research (November 2006). *Rankings & Estimates: Rankings of the States 2005 and Estimates of School Statistics 2006*. Retrieved April 21, 1007 from <http://www.nea.org/edstats/images/06rankings.pdf>

[§] From National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. "Top Ten States by Total NBCTs. (As of January 22, 2007)" Retrieved April 21, 1007 from http://www.nbpts.org/resources/nbct_directory/top_ten_states_by_total

^{**} This figure is overestimated: I divided total NBCTs by total teachers. However, it is likely that a small percentage of NBCTs in each state are not working as teachers.

^{††} From National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. "State and Local Information." Retrieved April 21, 1007 from http://www.nbpts.org/resources/state_local_information (See descriptions for each state below. Increases are reported here as a percentage of the average teacher's salary.)

^{‡‡} Based on data from National Center for Education Statistics (Gruber et al., 2002). *Schools and Staffing Survey, 1999-2000: Overview of the Data for Public, Private, Public Charter, and Bureau of Indian Affairs Elementary and Secondary Schools*. Retrieved April 21, 1007 from

The size of the pay increases available to board-certified teachers in each state and how these increases are offered vary widely. Some are offered a one-time stipend; others are offered an annual salary bonus; some teachers move to a new lane on the salary scale; others have an increment added to their salary base; and still others receive increased compensation tied to their assuming specialized roles such as mentoring. These incentives not only vary from state to state, but from year to year. In fact, teachers in the same state may receive vastly different compensation packages due to additional bonuses that may be offered by a local district or education fund.

To illustrate this variation, I have provided descriptions of state support below. These descriptions are excerpts from the NBPTS website.

Descriptions of State Support

Excerpted from www.NBPTS.org

North Carolina:

North Carolina provides the following for National Board Certified Teachers:

- A 12% salary differential to the teachers' regular base salary upon receipt of National Board Certification, good for the 10-year life of the certification, per the requirements of the legislation.
- A North Carolina teaching license to out-of-state teachers employed in North Carolina who possess National Board Certification.

Florida:

Through the Dale Hickam Excellent Teaching Program, the state pays 90% of the certification fee for eligible applicants, provides teachers who achieve National Board Certification with a salary bonus for the life of the certificate, and an additional mentoring bonus to those who agree in writing to provide the equivalent of 12 work days of mentoring and related services to teachers who may or may not be National Board candidates. These bonuses are equal to 10% of the statewide average salary for classroom teachers for the previous year and will now be included in a teacher's base

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/2002313.pdf> (Note: Table 1.02 provides the average teacher salary by state for bachelor's with no experience and master's with no experience. I divided the difference by the former to get an estimate of the % average increase.)

^{§§} In California, \$20,000 is provided over four years only to teachers in high-need schools. Here I calculated that \$20,000 over the life of the certificate (10 years) would be an average salary increase of 3.5% for those who would receive it.

^{***} In 2007, about 1/3 of NBCT in Ohio (862) will receive \$1000 while two-thirds (1767) will receive \$2500.

salary. The program also provides a \$150 incentive to help defray costs for portfolio preparation.

Florida has also recognized National Board Certification as a means of meeting the requirements for license renewal, and teachers with a valid National Board certificate may demonstrate mastery of Professional Preparation and Education Competence.

South Carolina

According to Proviso 1A.28 (SDE-EIA:XI.C.3-National Board Certification Incentive) classroom teachers, or classroom teachers who work with classroom teachers who are certified by the State Board of Education, and who have certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), shall be paid a salary supplement of \$7,500 in the year of achieving certification. The salary supplement will be added to the annual pay of the teacher for the length of the national certificate (10 years).

NBCTs have a 10-year re-certification cycle for their South Carolina certificate. South Carolina NBCTs are exempt from taking six semester hours for certification renewal during the 10-year life of the NBPTS certificate. Additionally, NBCTs moving to South Carolina will receive a SC certificate and their re-certification will be consistent with National Board certification.

South Carolina grants certification to anyone from out of state who has National Board certification and a valid educator certificate in the area of certification from that state, without any additional requirements (e.g. test scores, courses).

California:

NBCTs who agree to teach students at least 50 percent of the time in a high-priority school (Academic Performance Index 5 or lower) for four consecutive years are eligible for the \$20,000 incentive award, if they have not previously received this award. This one-time incentive award of \$20,000 is paid in \$5,000 installments for four consecutive years. School districts will verify that teachers have met the requirements before funding is released to districts to pay the teachers.

California Education Code Section 44398 specifies that a teacher who is licensed to teach in another state and who receives National Board Certification by NBPTS shall be issued a professional clear teaching credential authorizing the teacher to teach in the subject area in which the teacher received National Board Certification.

Ohio:

Ohio provides the following for its National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs):

- An annual stipend of \$2,500 for teachers who are candidates on or before May 31, 2003 and certified before December 31, 2004

- \$1,000 for any other teachers certified by NBPTS

Mississippi:

Legislation has established that for public school teachers with at least three years of teaching experience, and who are employed in a local school district, the state will: (1) pay National Board Certified Teachers a salary supplement of \$6000 per year for the life of the certificate (10 years); (2) renew MS Teaching License for one five year period. An additional appropriation was authorized to support the Mississippi World Class Teaching Project.

Georgia:

Georgia educators who receive National Board Certification on and after July 1, 2006, must teach full time in a Needs Improvement School to be eligible for the 10 percent salary supplement. Georgia educators who received National Board Certification prior to July 1, 2006, will receive a 10 percent salary supplement based on their state salary regardless of school assignment if they meet the specified criteria.

Illinois:

Illinois state appropriations provide annual stipend incentives and compensation for National Board Certified educators who hold an Illinois Master Certificate as defined by statute – Illinois Teaching Excellence Program. Teachers may be eligible for an annual \$3,000 increase for achieving National Board Certification. The annual increase will apply to the NBCTs already teaching in the state. In addition, and to the extent that funds are available through the State Board of Education, NBCTs will receive a \$1,000 if they provide 60 hours of mentoring and/or \$3,000 to assist candidates teaching in academically at-risk schools or schools located in economically disadvantaged communities. Beginning in May 2000, the State Board of Education will issue a Master Certificate valid for 10 years and renewal thereafter every 10 years through compliance with requirements set forth by the State Board of Education for NBCTs. [For the table above, I calculated the average pay increase based an estimated average increase of \$5,000.]

Oklahoma:

Oklahoma provides the following for its National Board Certified Teachers: An annual \$5,000 salary stipend (as per regulation) for the life of their certificate.

Washington:

- The Washington Legislature funds an annual \$3,500 salary enhancement for teachers who achieve National Board Certification. This stipend must be approved in the state biennial budget every two years.

- The Washington State Board of Education has approved regulations that National Board Certification will fulfill the renewal requirements for state certification for five years or until the expiration of the National Board Certificate, whichever is greater. In addition an out-of-state NBCT coming in to Washington to teach will be granted a Washington State Professional Level Certificate.
- WAC 181-85-033: A person holding a valid educational certificate pursuant to RCW 28A.410.010 shall receive the equivalent of forty-five continuing education credit hours (clock hours) for completion of an assessment process as part of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certificate application. Upon achieving National Board certification, the individual shall receive the equivalent of an additional forty-five continuing education credit hours for a total of ninety continuing education credit hours per National Board certificate.

Source: NBPTS. (2007) *State and Local Information*. Retrieved April 21, 1007, from http://www.nbpts.org/resources/state_local_information.

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Yankelovich Partners. (2001). *Teachers survey data report*. Southfield, MI: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

VITA

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Degrees and credentials

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| 1986- 1990 | Harvard University Cambridge, Massachusetts | ▪B.A. in Fine Arts and Religion June 1990 |
| 1990- 1991 | Lesley University/ Shady Hill School Cambridge, Massachusetts | ▪M.Ed. in Elementary Education October 1991 |
| 1991- present | Massachusetts Teaching Licensure Massachusetts Department of Education | ▪Elementary Professional, 1991 ▪Middle School Professional, 1997 ▪Transitional Bilingual (TBE) Professional Certification, 2002 |
| 1998- present | National Board for Professional Teaching Standards | ▪National Board Certified Teacher in Early Adolescence/ English Language Arts, 1998 |
| 2006- present | Massachusetts Administrative Licensure Massachusetts Department of Education | ▪Principal/ Assistant Principal Initial Certification (5-8), 2006 ▪Supervisor/ Director Initial Certification (All Levels), 2006 |

Professional experience

| | | |
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| 1991- 1993 | Escola das Nações Brasília, Brazil | ▪Primary Grades Teacher |
| 1993- 1994 | Shady Hill School Cambridge, Massachusetts | ▪Fifth Grade Teacher |
| 1994- 2001 | Cambridgeport School Cambridge Public Schools Cambridge, Massachusetts | ▪Middle Grades Teacher |
| 2000- 2002 | Office of Educator Quality Massachusetts Department of Education Malden, Massachusetts | ▪Consultant |
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