
IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 9, 2021

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Kansas Teachers Achieve National Board Certification in Spite of Pandemic

Doing the work required to become board certified in any profession is difficult. When the board certification demands you demonstrate your skill – like teaching in a elementary, middle, or high school classroom – and schooling goes mostly online makes it extremely difficult. However, 10 Kansas determined educators persevered and earned their first-time certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

New National Board Certified Teachers in Kansas are:

USD 229 Blue Valley – Julie Vodehnal (Cedar Hills Elementary School), Adrienne Zielke (Oak Hill Elementary School)

USD 259 Wichita – Cody Dickman (Wichita High School South), Benjamin Stauble (Mueller Aerospace and Engineering Discovery Magnet Elementary)

USD 262 Valley Center – Kristen Joyal (Valley Center High School)

USD 345 Seaman – Kaitlin Gile (Northern Hills Elementary School)

USD 489 Hays – Kimberly Schmeidler (Hays Middle School), Kay Shippy (Lincoln Elementary School)

USD 501 Topeka – Elissa Jones (Topeka West High School), Jennifer Womack (Topeka High School)

Teachers were notified in December if they achieved the certification they worked for during the last school year. Less than half of applicants successfully complete this process and achieve National Board Certification. These teachers achieved certification on their first attempt.

“Teachers involved in the process last year faced major complications caused by the pandemic,” said Alvin Peters, director of Emporia State University’s program which assists teachers working toward national certification. “Because of those complications, they were given the choice of completing and submitting their documentation – including videos of them teaching – by the original deadline, deferring to a later deadline, or withdrawing from the process. While some completed by the original deadline and others had to defer because it was impossible to complete by the original deadline, no Kansans chose to withdraw, which is a credit to their determination.”

Because of the pandemic, deadlines were extended so more NBCT candidates will find out in the future months if they attained NBCT status.

The National Board process is focused entirely on knowledge and practice in all aspects of teaching. The teacher must present evidence which clearly shows their teaching meets the National Board Standards. The process is voluntary and not mandated by a state, school district, or program; teachers choose to seek National Board Certification. Teachers often take three to five years of continual work to achieve certification.

These Kansas teachers were mentored through a program at ESU, the Great Plains Center for National Teacher Certification, which has an estimated a 76% initial certification rate over the past 15 years. This is nearly twice the national initial certification rate of 40%.

Kansas now has a total of 477 National Board Certified Teachers. To date, there are 127,784 NBCTs in the US. Before

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certification, teachers must have a bachelor's degree, a valid state teaching license and three years' experience in the classroom.

The national board standards were created by teachers. The standards represent a consensus for 25 certificate areas in 16 disciplines, including art, English, mathematics, science, world languages, school education and physical education, from pre-kindergarten through high school and six student development levels from early childhood through adolescence.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was launched in 1987; information about NBPTS can be found at www.nbpts.org. More than a decade of research from across the country confirms students taught by NBCTs learn more than students taught by other teachers. More information about ESU's mentoring program can be found at www.emporia.edu/gpcntc.

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Information about Kansas and National Board Certification can be found at www.nbpts.org/in-your-state/in-your-state/ks/.