
IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Alvin Peters, gpeters@emporia.edu, 1-877-378-5433, 620-341-5372

Two Blue Valley Teachers Achieve National Board Certification

Julie Vodehnal and Adrienne Zielke are among 10 Kansas educators who recently found out they earned their first-time certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Vodehnal is a K-5 reading specialist at Cedar Hills Elementary School and earned her certification in literacy: reading language arts/early and middle childhood.

Zielke is a K-5 reading specialist at Oak Hill Elementary School and earned her certification in literacy: reading language arts/early and middle childhood.

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 an elementary, middle, or high school classroom – and schooling goes mostly online makes it extremely difficult. The teachers were notified in December they had been successful 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. USD 229 now has 109 NBCTs working in the school district, the most of any school district in Kansas.

“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 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.

EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY

■ *The* TEACHERS COLLEGE

Jones Institute for Educational Excellence

Campus Box 4036

1 Kellogg Circle

Emporia, Kansas 66801-5415

620-341-5372

620-341-6674 fax

www.emporia.edu/jones

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.

###TEACH###

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