Kansas Teachers Achieve National Board Certification

Eleven Kansas educators are among the more than 4,000 nationwide who achieved the highest professional credential they can earn – they attained first-time certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in 2014.

National board certification is recognized nationwide as a model for identifying accomplished teaching practice. Teachers were notified in late November if they achieved the certification they worked for during the 2013-14 school year.

Newly certified teachers are:

USD 229 Blue Valley – Stephanie Brachtenbach, Brenda M. Colwell, Trevor Goertzen, Kristen Learning, Jean Reynolds, Tonya Runnels
USD 259 Emporia – Jamie Dawson
USD 489 Hays – Amy D. Wasinger
USD 233 Olathe – Nancy L. Smith
USD 320 Wamego – Michael Alan Petermann
USD 259 Wichita – Steve Maack

“This process of board certification is similar to how a doctor becomes certified in a special area,” said Alvin Peters, director of Emporia State University’s program which assists teachers working toward national certification. “This is voluntary – no state, school district, or program is demanding them to go through this process.”

While state licensing systems set the basic requirements to teach in each state, National Board Certified Teachers have demonstrated advanced teaching knowledge, skills and practices. National certification takes from one to three years to complete.

The process is often misunderstood to mean a teacher passed a test or was nominated for the award. Peters adds, “National Board certification is a different kind of honor. Teachers must submit extensive documentation of their instruction, including videos of their students at work in the classroom.”

The accomplishment of national board certification benefits the teachers, the schools they work in, and studies have shown NBCTs improve student learning. The program hosted at ESU, Great Plains Center for National Teacher Certification, has a 78% initial certification rate over the past eight years. This is nearly twice the national initial certification rate of 40%.

Kansas currently has a total of 403 national board certified teachers. To date, more than 110,000 teachers in all 50 states are NBCTs. More information about ESU’s program can be found at www.emporia.edu/jones/nbpts/.

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