Olathe Teachers Measure Up – Again

Three teachers in the Olathe USD 233 school district have renewed the highest credential available to American educators as a National Board Certified Teacher through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

A decade ago, during the 2003-04 school year, JoAnn Hiatt, Denine Larson, and Beth Pope went through the challenging year-long process of becoming National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs).

A year ago, they decided to renew their certificates as the life of their original 10-year certificates was soon to expire.

In late October the educators were told their work had measured up when they received notice their national board certifications were renewed.

Hiatt, a mathematics teacher at Olathe East High School, renewed her certificate in adolescence and young adulthood/mathematics.

Larson, a Title I reading teacher at Fairview Elementary School, renewed her certificate in early and middle childhood/literacy/reading-language arts.

Pope, a fourth grade teacher at Bentwood Elementary School, renewed her certificate in middle childhood/generalist.

These three teachers are among the 43 NBCTs working in USD 233.

“This process of board certification is similar to how a doctor becomes certified in a special area,” said Dr. Roger Caswell, who assisted these teachers in their process to renew their NBCT status. “This is voluntary – no state, school district, or program is demanding them to go through this process. That’s why – a decade after earning their certification the first time – it’s a huge commitment to say, ‘Yes, I want to do it again.’”

The process is often misunderstood to mean a teacher passed a test or was nominated for the award. Alvin Peters, the director of the program that guides teachers through working towards becoming NBCTS, 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.”

A recent comprehensive study by the nonpartisan National Research Council found that students taught by board certified teachers make higher gains on achievement tests than students taught by other teachers.

ESU’s Great Plains Center for National Teacher Certification maintains a 100% renewal rate with candidates achieving recertification on their first attempt. This is the ninth consecutive year the center’s renewal rate has reached 100%. More information about ESU’s program can be found at www.emporia.edu/jones/nbpts/.

Kansas currently has a total of 368 national board certified teachers. Nationwide, the total number of national board certified teachers is more than 102,000.

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Is your teacher board certified?

They are among the best teachers in the profession, undergoing a rigorous process taking at least one year.

They are told to expect a 400-hour time commitment, and less than half will achieve certification on their first try.

NBCTs represent less than one percent of all educators in Kansas. The voluntary process is the equivalent of national board certification for physicians and other health professions.

Some 368 teachers in Kansas are NBCTs, with many teaching in larger school districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>NBCTs</th>
<th>Total #</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Valley</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olathe</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wichita</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manhattan-Ogden</td>
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To see a list of NBCTs, go to www.nbpts.org/nbct-search.

By late November teachers who worked toward their initial certification during the 2012-13 school year will find out if they achieved National Board Certification.