Buhler Teacher Measures Up – Again

Sheryl Smith recently found her work as an educator in the Buhler School District measured up to be worthy of the highest credential available to American educators. She successfully renewed her certification as a National Board Certified Teacher through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

Last year the Buhler High School art teacher was one of 15 Kansas educators deciding if she wanted to go through the rigorous journey toward certification again.

A decade ago, during the 2003-04 school year, Smith went through the challenging year-long process of becoming a National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT). A year ago, she chose to attempt to renew her certificate as the life of her original 10-year certificate was soon to expire.

In late October Smith was informed her certificate early adolescence and young adulthood/ career and technical education was renewed.

Smith is one of two NBCTs working in USD 313. A recent comprehensive study by the nonpartisan National Research Council found students taught by board certified teachers make higher gains on achievement tests than students taught by other teachers.

“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.”

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.

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>Total # NBCTs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Valley</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olathe</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wichita</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manhattan-Ogden</td>
<td>27</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.