Manhattan Area Teachers Achieve National Board Certification

Three teachers from Manhattan-area school districts recently found out they had achieved the highest credential available to American educators as a National Board Certified Teacher through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

During the 2012-13 school year, Crystal Rankin from Geary County USD 475, Dr. Lucas Shivers from Manhattan-Ogden USD 383, and Randi Weller from Clay Center USD 379 were among more than two dozen educators from across the state who went through the challenging process of becoming National Board Certified Teachers.

In late November the teachers were informed their work had measured up – they are now NBCTs.

Rankin is a second grade teacher at Westwood Elementary School. She earned her certification in early and middle childhood: literacy / reading-language arts.

Shivers is the Director of Elementary Education for the Manhattan Ogden School District. He earned his certification in early and middle childhood: literacy / reading-language arts.

Weller is a sixth grade reading teacher for Clay Center Community Middle School. She earned her certification in early and middle childhood: literacy / reading-language arts.

Statewide, there are a total of 25 new NBCTs, bringing the total of NBCTs in Kansas to 394.

“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 requires they go through this process.”

While state licensing systems set the basic requirements to teach in each state, NBCTs 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. All but one of the new NBCTs received guidance from the program hosted at ESU, the Great Plains Center for National Teacher Certification. The center has a 78% initial certification rate, which has been consistent over the last eight years. This is nearly twice the national initial certification rate of 40%. More information about ESU’s program can be found at www.emporia.edu/jones/nbpts/.

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