Wamego Teacher Achieves National Board Certification

Michael Alan Petermann recently found out he achieved the highest credential available to American educators as a National Board Certified Teacher through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Petermann teaches seventh grade English/language arts at Wamego Middle School in USD 320.

During the 2013-14 school year, he was among the 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.

Petermann earned his certification in Early Adolescence/English Language Arts.

Statewide, there are a total of 11 new NBCTs, bringing the total of NBCTs in Kansas to 403.

“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. Guidance for the candidates comes from Emporia State’s Great Plains Center for National Teacher Certification. The center has a 78% initial certification rate, which has been consistent over the last nine years; this is nearly twice the national initial certification rate of 40%. More information about the program can be found at www.emporia.edu/jones/nbpts/.

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