

Intel® Teach Program Helps Teachers Prepare for National Board Certification



With documented links between the instructional practice of National Board Certified teachers and improved student achievement¹, efforts are underway across the country to support teachers in the attainment of National Board Certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). State education departments and districts in all 50 states and the District of Columbia offer a range of incentives for teachers who go the distance, including salary boosts and bonuses, as well as professional development to help them prepare for and succeed in the endeavor. Increasingly, the Intel® Teach Program is the professional development vehicle of choice in these efforts as a result of the program's alignment with National Board Certification requirements.

Challenges

- The requirements for National Board Certification are vast, addressing both content knowledge and pedagogy.
- The National Board Certification process requires teacher reflection and shifts in teaching practice.
- Professional development must be research-based, with high-quality and consistent, positive results.

Solution Methodologies

The Intel Teach Program:

- Is aligned with National Board Certification requirements.
- Organizes material and provides a useful framework for approaching the National Board Certification process.
- Is a proven method for helping teachers to implement changes in practice in the classroom, in alignment with National Board Certification requirements.
- Is research-based and demonstrates consistent, positive results.
- Is offered free of charge to Local Education Agencies, including state or regional departments, districts and schools.
- Offers flexibility of delivery, including both face-to-face training and online options.

1. *New Report Affirms National Board Certification's Positive Impact on Student Achievement and Learning*, June 11, 2008; retrieved from http://www.nbpts.org/about_us/news_media/press_releases?ID=422; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

While Alabama's Black Belt possesses some of the country's richest soil (thus, its name), it is also home to some of the country's poorest residents. With no industry in the area and a dearth of resources, the majority of people who live in this rural community struggle to get by. Education is no exception. For decades, the area has been plagued by low student achievement, as well as difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified teachers.

Committed to improving teaching and learning in this region, the Alabama State Department of Education and the Alabama Education Association have teamed up to deliver the Alabama National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Targeted High Needs Initiative (THNI), a program geared toward improving the quality of Alabama teachers working in the Black Belt. Specifically, the program provides pre-candidacy training and support to teachers of minority students from high needs schools in an area of the state where there are few to no NBPTS-certified teachers.

At the recommendation of National Board Certified teachers in Alabama, Intel Teach – a professional development program that helps teachers integrate technology effectively in the classroom and improve their overall practice – is the cornerstone of the THNI training. As Maggie Stringer, coordinator of the THNI program puts it, *"The Intel training covers just about everything these teachers need to prepare for National Board Certification. You see, it's not just about the technology. It's about good teaching."*

Developing Highly Qualified Teachers

Adrienne Lee, a Kindergarten and first-grade reading coach at Edgewood Elementary School in Selma, participated in the Alabama THNI program in 2006. Lee spent more than a year attending professional development seminars, discussing pedagogy with a program mentor and other participants, and analyzing and improving her own practice before achieving her goal. In November, 2007, she was in the reading room at school when she went online and learned that she had succeeded. *"Thank you!"* she shouted, jumping up and down like a fan at a football game. *"I am a National Board Certified teacher!"*

Such reaction is warranted say teachers who have taken the exam. The process involves a rigorous, performance-based assessment of each teacher's instructional knowledge, skills and practice, and takes from one to three years to complete. As part of the process, teachers create a portfolio which includes student work samples, assignments, videotapes and a thorough analysis of their classroom teaching.

"It was extremely challenging," says Lee, who spent entire weekends preparing entries for the certification process. She says she could not have done it if not for the support of the THNI program and the Intel Teach Program curriculum, which provided a useful framework for organizing the NBPTS material and helping her work methodically through the application process. *"Intel Teach provided an enormous amount of information, as well as helpful ideas and strategies for effective instruction – everything a teacher needs for the classroom."*

This included learning how to effectively integrate technology into instruction, something Lee hadn't considered before since she didn't see practical applications for her young students. But after engaging them in a health project where they worked collaboratively to create a slideshow presentation documenting their learning, Lee became a believer. *"The students were so excited about 'making a movie,' as they called it. As a result, they were very motivated to learn."*

But technology was only one reason student performance has improved in her classroom, says Lee. The biggest initiator of change was a shift in instructional approach.

"I am a better teacher because I have learned to reflect on the strategies I have used and question myself about why I did it that way," explains Lee. *"As a National Board Certified teacher, you can't*

get defeated and say, 'It can't be done.' You have to look at how it can be done. You have to look at how you can help each and every child learn."

This shift has had an impact on student learning. *"When my at-risk students could come and explain a concept to me, and they knew the concept like the back of their hands – they could recite it, they could show it to me, and apply it in their everyday lives – that's when I could tell a difference in my teaching. That's how I knew it was working."*

Certainly, Lee and other Alabama teachers who have achieved national certification are motivated by the \$5K bonus they receive each year. But many are also motivated by the professional opportunities and recognition that come with it. Regarded as some of the most accomplished teachers in the country, National Board Certified teachers are frequently in the ranks of state and national teachers of the year.

Raising the Bar Throughout Alabama

"Alabama recognizes that National Board Certification is one of the most powerful professional development activities that have come along," says Dr. Eddie R. Johnson, Deputy State Superintendent of Education, Alabama Department of Education. *"Therefore, it is supported by the State Superintendent, the Executive Director of the Alabama Education Association and the governor. Basically, the entire education community stands in support of finding ways to increase the number of board certified teachers."*

A number of school systems throughout Alabama have professional development activities geared toward preparing teachers for National Board Certification and there are plans to extend the THNI program to other parts of the state. The Intel Teach Program will continue to be the cornerstone of this training, as well as a key component of Alabama Technology in Motion (TiM), an effort to help students develop key 21st century skills, including digital literacy, critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration.

"Our goal is to provide effective professional development that reaches the classroom," says Cheri Hayes, TiM Administrator, Alabama Department of Education. *"We have a strong belief that using the Intel Program does have an impact on the classroom and on teaching practice. And one of the things we've found with teachers going through National Boards is that those who went through Intel Teach were much better prepared."*

Approximately 1,300 Alabama teachers have achieved National Board Certification to date. *"The long-term goal is to have one in each school building,"* says Johnson, *"and short of that, one or two in each school system."*

THNI teachers have given Intel Teach professional development rave reviews. *"They just can't get enough of the Intel Teach Program,"* reports Johnson. *"They are singing the praises of how it has assisted them and strengthened them in preparing for National Boards."*

"Intel Teach is a strand that runs throughout all the core propositions teachers have to prepare for their National Board portfolio," explains Stringer. *"It starts with the very basics – planning and implementing effective lessons – and goes on from there. In fact, some of the teachers use the unit they prepare for the Intel Program in their videotaped entry for National Boards."*

Most importantly, adds Stringer, the Intel training reaches the classroom: *"It changes teachers' concept of teaching. It changes their practice."*

Across the Country

Across the country, the Intel Teach Program is helping teachers improve their practice. The program is currently being implemented at the state level in Alabama, Arizona, Louisiana, New York, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia, as well as in large urban city districts, including Atlanta and Chicago.

"In my opinion, the Intel Teach Essentials Course aligns seamlessly with the requirements for NBPTS certification," says LaTina Taylor, Technology Integration Specialist for Chicago Public Schools and a National Board Certified teacher.

The Intel Teach curriculum addresses such National Board Certification standards such as:

- Knowledge of students
- Knowledge of content and curriculum
- Learning environment
- Respect for diversity
- Instructional resources
- Meaningful applications of knowledge
- Multiple paths to knowledge
- Assessment
- Family Involvement
- Reflection
- Contributions to the profession

Taylor says most of these standards are addressed through use of the Intel Teach unit plan template, which offers National Board candidates a framework for planning effective instruction. *"Throughout the National Board certification process teacher candidates are required to describe, analyze, and reflect upon a unit of instruction to implement with their students,"* explains Taylor. *"This template provides them with a tool to help facilitate the detailed planning it takes to foster student inquiry, to ensure all students are actively engaged and collaborating, and to help students to meet the goals of the lesson."* Taylor credits the use of Intel's curriculum framing questions with helping teachers in Chicago Public Schools *"engage students in higher order thinking with a focus on content area standards,"* a critical component of the inquiry-based teaching approach required for National Board Certification.

Effective assessment is another area of focus. *"Gauging student progress and understanding lies at the heart of National Board,"* says Taylor. *"The Intel Teach Essentials Course provides candidates with opportunities to develop a multiple assessment timeline that strives to be learner-centered, ongoing, and formative."*

Intel Teach professional development also helps teachers gain technology literacy, allowing them to access a wide range of technological resources to support student learning and accommodate varied learning styles. *"One key feature is the integration of Web 2.0 skills – blogs and wikis,"* notes Taylor. *"These newer technologies help to promote communication and build classroom community, two concepts highly valued within the learning environment standard where students are encouraged to take intellectual risks, practice democracy, and work collaboratively as well as independently."*

In short, says Taylor, *"The Intel Teach Essentials Course provides the appropriate professional development to guide National Board candidates in making thoughtful instructional decisions to meet the diverse learning needs of all students."*

For more information, visit
www.intel.com/education/teach/us

