ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

December 12, 2001

Agenda Topic: Informational Item -- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: Recently Certified Illinois’ Teachers

Materials: Graphs (5) Showing Illinois Participation and Certification
Maps (2) on the Statewide Distribution of Board Certified Teachers

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Purposes of Agenda Item

• To inform the Board on the number of Illinois’ teachers recently certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards;
• To illustrate the growth of the National Board certification program sponsored by the agency; and
• To identify areas of concern.

Expected Outcome of Agenda Item

• Provide data for future policy decisions regarding the State Board’s continued participation in the program

Background Information

The State Board of Education has been supporting the candidacy of Illinois teachers for certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) since FY94. However, it has only been since FY99 that specific practices and targets have been adopted and implemented. In FY99 and FY00, the budget allocation was $75,000, although additional funds were solicited and received from the federal government, school districts, and regional offices of education.

In FY01 and FY02, the Illinois General Assembly approved a $1.075 million appropriation, in large part to pay the stipends called for under the Illinois Teaching Excellence Program (105 ILCS 5/21-27). National Board certified teachers who possess an Illinois Master Teaching Certificate, according to the law, are entitled to a one-time stipend of $3000 in recognition of the national distinction. External funding continues, particularly through the support of the
Illinois Business Round Table, the Illinois Education Association, and the Illinois Federation of Teachers.

The Division of Professional Preparation currently

- pays the application fees of qualified applicants named by the advisory National Board Design Team;
- subsidizes the applications of teachers from the Chicago Public Schools;
- solicits funding support from external sources (i.e., the Illinois Business Round Table, the Illinois Education Association, and the Illinois Federation of Teachers), including the federal government;
- sponsors multiple regional and statewide preparation workshops each year for National Board candidates;
- arranges for National Board certified teachers to mentor candidates;
- authorizes the issuance of stipends for qualified National Board certified teachers;
- produces informational materials on the program and the process, and aggressively markets it statewide; and,
- provides formal assistance to candidates who did not achieve certification in one year and are retaking not more than two failed components in a subsequent year.

Data on Illinois’ Board Certification

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards recently announced that 163 Illinois teachers have earned national distinction, a 66.3% increase over the 98 teachers entitled in 2000. Illinois now has 348 teachers who have earned national recognition by NBPTS, up from 185 last year (Figure 2).

A review of the past seven years reveals Illinois has moved from 3 NBPTS teachers in 1994 to 34 in 1998 and to 348 in 2001. This represents an 11,500% increase since the first year of the program. In the last three years alone, the program has grown from 87 to 348 Board certified teachers in the state.

Illinois is in the top ten among all states for a one-year total

According to national data released by NBPTS, the 163 newly certified Illinois’ teachers in the state places Illinois in a tie for 8th with Alabama among states with the highest number of Board recognized teachers in 2000-2001. However, despite this increase Illinois is far behind North Carolina (1260 in 2001), Florida (992), South Carolina (928), California (516), Ohio (417), Mississippi (405), and Georgia (310). Several states ahead of Illinois (e.g., Georgia, California, etc.) introduced or expanded incentive packages in 2000-2001 to attract teachers to the process.
Illinois Moves from 10\textsuperscript{th} to 9\textsuperscript{th} among all states in overall total

In December 2000 Illinois was tied for 10\textsuperscript{th} among states for the total number of National Board certified teachers. This year, Illinois moved up to 9\textsuperscript{th} place, but still lags behind North Carolina (3660 total), Florida (2256), Ohio (1334), California (1303), South Carolina (1291), and Mississippi (1159). Illinois trails Georgia by 74 and Oklahoma by 46. Iowa (321) rounds out the top ten states. Other neighboring states (i.e., Indiana, Wisconsin, Missouri, and Kentucky) have between 74 and 141 teachers certified by the National Board.

Graphs attached to this report detail:

- the annual growth of the National Board program in Illinois (Figure 1);
- the cumulative increase in Board certified teachers (Figure 2);
- the increase in the number of applicants engaged in the process between 1996 and 2000 (Figure 3);
- the composition of the 2000-2001 National Board certification recipients (Figure 4); and
- the completion and pass numbers of 2000-2001 applicants (Figure 5).

Concerns

While the substantial growth in the number of Illinois teachers honored for their classroom excellence is encouraging, some concerns remain. These challenges include accelerating geographic and minority disparities, a disturbing increase in the number of candidates who do not complete the process, and the funding implications associated with the growth of the program.

Disparities

As the attached maps indicate (see Map 1 and Map 2), the geographic distribution of Board certified teachers continues to be concentrated most heavily in the northeastern portion of the state, particularly Cook and the collar counties. Two out of every three National Board teachers are employed in Cook, Lake, DuPage, Kane, McHenry, or Will counties. The National Board teachers in the remainder of the state (i.e., 119) are largely clustered south of Interstate 80, with 16 of this number located south of Interstate 64.

Last year, 201 teachers from the Chicago Public Schools were applicants for Board certification, and more than 50% were African American, Hispanic, Asian America, and Pacific Islander. However, only nine of these candidates achieved national certification. In a similar situation with East St. Louis teachers one year ago, most withdrew from the program prior to completion. The ability to attract, support, and retain qualified minority candidates to the National Board process is a critical issue for the State Board. More specifically, the Board should develop a policy that (1) targets qualified candidates from low-performing schools and (2)
establishes incentives to attract Board certified teachers to these schools. These actions should be embedded in the larger policy consideration of quality teachers and the achievement gap.

**Drop Outs**

Each year, all candidates commence this most rigorous process full of optimism and commitment. However, to some, the constraints of time, the difficulty of the work, and/or the realization that their teaching does not as yet meet the expectations demanded for certification causes them to drop out.

More than 30% of the 201 candidates from the Chicago Public Schools did not complete the certification process (Figure 5). This compares to a 13% withdrawal rate for applicants sponsored by the State Board, 15% of the candidates from the Chicago Quest Center, 25% of the “others” funded by regional offices of education and university lab schools, and 14% of the candidates re-taking one or two segments of the assessment.

Interestingly, the increase in the drop-out rate in recent years (i.e., less than 10% in 1998-99 and more than 21% in 2000-2001) may be attributed to districts offering more incentives for Board certification. A bonus, movement on the salary schedule, an increase in salary assured over the ten years of the certificate, and more have been shown to attract individuals who do not have the promise of success. Effective screening procedures, such as those developed and implemented by the State Board’s National Board Design Team, have created a stronger candidate pool. Individuals funded for participation in the Board certification process independent of the State Board (e.g., school districts, regional offices of education, etc.) or other entities (e.g., the Quest Center of the Chicago Teachers Union, etc.) may be guided more by the incentive than the appropriate skills and abilities.

A similar phenomenon may be demonstrated in the pass rate. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards reports the national pass rate to be approximately 50%. In this most recent candidate cohort, 52% of the “completers” earned certification. Those applicants sponsored by the State Board passed at a 54% rate, while 19% of the “completers” from the Chicago Public Schools received national recognition. The pass rates for Quest Center candidates (74%) and “re-takers” (56%) equaled or surpassed the national average.

Candidates in the “others” category were not funded by the State Board, were not selected through the ISBE Design Team process, were not known by the State Board, and did not participate in agency-sponsored workshops and mentoring. These applicants achieved certification at a rate of 47%, below the NBPTS national average.
Funding Implications

The increase in the number of applicants each year and the concomitant growth in the number of teachers who earn Board certification pose a funding dilemma. For instance, paying the one-time only $3000 stipend provided under 5/21-27 of the School Code will require an expenditure of $489,000, 46% of the FY02 appropriation.

The remaining $586,000 of the $1.075 million appropriation must fund nearly 400 applicants in 2001-2002, sponsor multiple workshops for the candidates, reimburse National Board certified teachers who serve as mentors to the new candidates, and more. This year, the State Board will again receive additional funding from the federal government, and the Illinois Business Round Table ($200,000), the Illinois Education Association ($25,000), the Illinois Federation of Teachers ($25,000). Several regional offices of education and school districts continue to provide support to candidates. Nevertheless, the continued expansion of the program will require a reconsideration of the appropriation that sustains it or a contraction of the support available from the State Board.

Implications for Policy, Budget, Legislative Action, and Communications

This report is intended to inform the Board of its successes in improving the quality of teaching in Illinois as demonstrated by the continuing increase of Illinois’ teachers earning certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. No action on this item is requested, although two recent reports to the State Board (March 2001 and September 2001) identify various policy issues for Board consideration.

At the request of the Board, staff will provide appropriate follow-up on policies and strategies for the National Board certification program.