

PROFESSIONALISM AT ITS BEST: BECOME A NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHER!

Here are some great reasons to be a National Board certified teacher!

We know that **you are a highly qualified French teacher** or that you have the potential to become a highly qualified teacher. We know that you use background knowledge and cultural knowledge of your students to develop strategies that build toward success. You know the French language and Francophone cultures well. You know what types of language errors may interfere with learning French as a 2nd language. We know you know how to facilitate access for your students to high standards through multiple paths (differentiated instruction). While everyone else is talking about higher standards for our students, you are making it happen.

Now we want you to **be recognized for your excellent work**. National Board Certification is the highest recognition you can have as a teacher. It is the highest symbol of professional teaching excellence. Don't you deserve that recognition?

In addition, students taught by NB certified teachers are more successful. You learn more about your teaching and their learning through the process of obtaining NB certification. Don't **your students deserve the best** you can offer?

Your pursuit of national board certification also helps the French teaching profession strengthen its presence in the educational institutions nationwide. Why is the number of French candidates so much lower than in other certification areas? We want French teachers to make their mark professionally at the national level. We want principals to hire highly qualified French teachers, and that certainly includes Nationally Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs).

As a professional organization, the AATF finds it essential to have members who are teachers recognized with this highest symbol of professional teaching excellence. Help us grow our numbers of highly qualified professionals. It is certainly one of the best professional development opportunities that exist. You can join other AATF teachers today in becoming a candidate for this outstanding recognition. Being a National Board Certified Teacher attests to the fact that **you have been judged by your peers as a French teacher who is accomplished**.

Rewards for being NB certified:

The **rewards for becoming national board certified** make the experience a valuable experience. In addition to **national recognition** and being **authorized and qualified to teach in the many of the 50 states**,

some states reward NBC teachers with a **monetary bonus** to their salary that is good for several years. Although certification through National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has been open to world language teachers (WLOE) since 2001, the number of French teacher candidates has not grown as substantially as in other certification areas, including WLOE/Spanish.

Why National Board Certification? We know that **quality instruction from highly qualified teachers helps students reach high standards of learning**. NBPTS maintains that "Research demonstrates that quality instruction from highly qualified teachers is important; accomplished teachers help students to reach high standards of learning." In other words, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards sets our national standards for accomplished teachers and establishes a voluntary system that really works to assess and certify teachers who meet these standards. The standards represent the consensus of professional educators and are recognized as one measure of a highly qualified teacher. And, we want more French teachers to be counted in this group of recognized professionals.

Professional Development. National Board Certified Teachers who have been through the rigorous process of certification will say that it is "one of the best professional development experiences in their teaching careers." According to NBPTS,

"The process allows teachers to engage in analytic study of their classroom practice as teachers. Teacher reflection becomes an embedded habit as a result. For some teachers, the intrinsic rewards of this opportunity are an end in itself. Others are recognized with financial incentives that substantially enhance their salaries. Districts often are able to retain high quality teachers in the classroom with financial incentives, alleviating the attrition of good teachers to other positions in and out of teaching. National Board Certification can open the doors to many teacher leadership opportunities while allowing these teachers to continue to do what they do best: teach. NBCTs speak at professional conferences, support professional growth in other teachers, work as part of their school communities to enhance student outcomes, and promote teaching as a professional career."

Research. A study by Goldhaber (2004) comparing the students of National Board

Certified Teachers to students of teachers who had not achieved this distinction concluded that students of NBCTs significantly outperformed the comparison group. NBCTs did a "measurably better" job in the classroom. In another study, researchers found NBCTs outperformed non-NBCTs on eleven of thirteen key dimensions of teaching expertise (UNC, Greensboro, 2000).

Act now! If you are a **secondary French teacher** and have **3-5 years teaching experience** in the classroom, now is the time to consider the NB certification process. If you teach at another level, encourage all your colleagues teaching French in secondary schools to pursue NB certification. If you are an elementary teacher, there will soon be a way for you to become NB certified.

You can do it in one year or take up to three years. If one year seems too little time for you to complete the challenging commitment, think of it as a two- or three-year process and redo portions that you need more time for.

Work with a group. It is best to work with a group of teachers supported through a local institution of higher learning. If you live in a rural area or are far from others, become an e-partner with a national board certified AATF teacher, by contacting Steve Dubrow at [Stephen_M_Dubrow@mcpsmd.org]

Comments from one AATF member who contacted Steve this year:

"Steve was so helpful! I am so grateful to have had him review my materials and help me along the way. I know at times I tried his patience, but he was such a helpful resource to me. I couldn't thank him enough. I told him that I would keep him posted on the results."

Financial assistance. Check with (1) your state department of education for possible financial aid, (2) a local university that supports certification through grants or (3) your local AATF Chapter. (Last year the Florida Chapter offered scholarships on a first come first serve basis to help teachers who become candidates by the end of September).

Sign up now to become National Board certified. It just takes commitment to showing that you ARE the great teacher you have become.

To learn more... Telephone: 1-800-22 TEACH; Web : [www.nbpts.org] or contact the co-chairs of AATF Commission sub-committee on National Board Certification: Deanna Scheffer [schefferd@episcopalhigh.org] and Steve Dubrow [Stephen_M_Dubrow@mcpsmd.org] , or Commission Chair, Susan Colville-Hall [colvillehall@uakron.edu].