

# Investing in a Strong Teacher Workforce

## New State Policies Promoting National Board Certification

Certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), commonly referred to as National Board Certification, is a performance-based and peer-reviewed advanced credential for teachers. Developed by teachers for teachers, this certification provides a path for teachers to demonstrate their proficiency on rigorous standards for accomplished teaching and grow their teaching practice.

Research has shown that Board-certified teachers:

- Have [higher rates of retention](#) in the profession compared with other teachers.
- Improve [student achievement](#), especially for [students from low-income backgrounds](#).
- Engage in professional learning opportunities that improve their knowledge.

States that have implemented incentive policies for earning National Board Certification have seen [increased retention in hard-to-staff schools](#).

The National Board has made the path to Board certification more accessible and flexible. Although three years of experience are required to obtain certification, candidates can now begin the certification process during their first three years of teaching while working toward meeting the experience requirement. Additionally, the process can be completed in one year or over several years to accommodate teachers' schedules.

Recently, several states have enacted innovative policies to promote Board certification and strengthen the teacher workforce. Below, the efforts of three states are highlighted.



### California



Through [Assembly Bill 130](#) (2021) — a strategic response to the need for improved teacher retention and teacher quality— California established a subsidy program to support teachers in pursuing National Board

Certification while working in high priority schools. Schools are considered high priority if 55% or more of their students are identified as English learners, foster youth or eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Any teacher who begins the Board certification process while working at a high priority school is eligible for the subsidy. The program provides an award of \$2,500, which covers the [cost](#) of

certification and up to \$600 in retakes.

The bill also funded an incentive for teachers with National Board Certification to work in high priority schools. Board-certified teachers can receive up to \$25,000 for agreeing to teach at a high priority school for at least five years.

In addition, the legislation encourages districts to provide release time and support for teachers pursuing Board certification. As a condition of such support, districts may require teachers to serve as mentor teachers after earning the certification.

In the first year of implementation, 1,712 teachers received the subsidy, four times the number of teachers in high priority schools who pursued Board certification in the prior year. Additionally, 1,945 teachers from 142 school districts received the incentive. Over half of the teachers receiving the subsidy or incentive were teachers of color.

## ■ Maryland



As a part of the [Blueprint for Maryland's Future](#) —a comprehensive effort to build a world-class education system with a focus on elevating the teaching profession— [House Bill 1300](#) (2020) established an incentive program for obtaining National Board Certification and a teacher career ladder program tied to Board certification.

The incentive program provides a \$10,000 salary increase for teachers with certification and an additional \$7,000 for Board-certified teachers who teach at a low-performing school, for a total potential increase of \$17,000. In addition, the state covers the cost of completing and renewing certification and operates a program to support teachers in obtaining and maintaining certification. The support program provides for a national board coordinator at the state level and requires each superintendent to select a coordinator to organize the delivery of the program locally.

The career ladder features tiers associated with increased responsibility paired with release time and salary increases. Pursuing Board certification can be used to move to the second career ladder tier; earning the certification can be used to move to the third tier.

To ensure alignment, the legislation requires the development of new evaluation and professional development systems. The new systems must be aligned with the five core propositions of the National Board and include training on designing and supporting collaborative professional learning for teachers pursuing certification.

The legislation also directs county school boards to place teachers with Board certification throughout the county, prioritizing low-performing schools. Starting in 2029, teachers must hold Board certification to become a school principal.

Since the legislation was enacted, the number of teachers who began pursuing certification went from 144 in 2020-21 to 2,045 in 2022-23, and the number of teachers who earned the certification rose from 73 in 2021 to 217 in 2022.

### Key Takeaways

- National Board Certification, offered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, supports teachers in enhancing their practice and provides recognition for meeting the profession's standards of accomplished teaching.
- Teachers with National Board Certification positively impact student achievement and are retained at higher rates than other teachers.
- California, Maryland and Texas recently enacted legislation incentivizing National Board Certification by covering the costs associated with obtaining certification and providing salary incentives to certified teachers, including targeted incentives to work in high-need schools.
- All three states have had early successes in increasing the number of teachers with National Board Certification.

■ Texas



Texas [House Bill 3](#) (2019) established a teacher designation system that can be adopted by school districts or charter schools to attract and retain highly effective teachers at traditionally hard-to-staff schools and provide a path for top teachers to earn six-figure salaries. The system has three designations: master, exemplary and recognized. Teachers with National Board Certification may be automatically designated as

recognized.

Through the Teacher Incentive Allotment, the recognized designation provides a district with an increased allotment of \$3,000 to \$9,000 per teacher. The total amount depends on the district's student population and rural status. Districts are entitled to an additional allotment to cover the fees associated with earning and maintaining Board certification.

At least 90% of the allotment must be used to increase teacher compensation at the school that employs the teacher with the designation. The remaining funds must be used for implementation, including supporting teachers in obtaining designations.

Initial data shows the number of teachers who began pursuing Board certification in Texas went from 69 in 2019-20 to 584 in 2022-23, and the number of teachers who earned the certification rose from 14 in 2020 to 92 in 2022.



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