

M. Chairman, and Members of the Committee

My name is Michelle Accardi and I am a National Board Certified Teacher. I earned my certification as an Exceptional Needs Specialist here in New Mexico in 2005 while teaching for the Albuquerque Public Schools at Susie Rayos Marmon Elementary School. I hold New Mexico Level Three licenses in General and Special Education with an additional endorsement in TESOL. I have also had the privilege of working with students as a teacher and consultant at Laguna Middle School and Zia Pueblo. In November of 2011, I became the Director of State Policy for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in Arlington, Virginia.

It was a hard decision to leave my classroom, but I knew that I had to be able to make a difference for more students than those who passed through my classroom door each year. I had experienced the difference that National Board Certification had made for me and for my students and I believe that all of our students need a better education to meet the challenges of their future.

In my office in Arlington, I have a picture of my last class in Albuquerque that rests alongside a small piece of pottery. The pot was a farewell gift from Douglas and his grandparents. Douglas was a Native American student that I worked with for three years. He had

faced many hardships in his young life and was being raised by his Grandparents. As much as they wanted to keep him close to his family and his roots in their community, his special needs could not be adequately addressed by the teachers there. They made the difficult choice to bring him to live in Albuquerque. I am proud to say that I was able to work with Douglas and help him to make great progress in his reading, math, and social skills. I still smile when I think of the jokes he loved to tell and how excited he would get when he was able to tell his grandmother that he had done well on a lesson. I am still sad when I think of how much he missed by not being able to stay in the community he loved, learning his traditions, culture, language, and family. Going and visiting home every few weekends simply was not the same. New Mexico Native families should not have to relocate to find the best teachers for their child. As I work with the National Board to help develop policies to bring more Board Certified teachers into classrooms, I see the butterfly pattern on that small pot and think of Douglas.

I thank you for the opportunity to bring you information about National Board Certification and our outreach to Native American educators and all educators who teach Native American students in New Mexico and other states.

For 25 years, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has been at the forefront in establishing the highest measure of teaching excellence. The National Board's rigorous certification process defines, develops, and assesses quality teaching and connects it to student learning and achievement. National Board Certification assures the public – parents, families, and communities – that the teachers who educate our children are experts in their field and have the skills to help all students learn.

National Board is to advance student learning and achievement by establishing the definitive standards and systems for certifying accomplished educators. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of the teaching profession for the benefit of all teachers and all students.

In 1989, the National Board published What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do, a document that articulated the National Board's Five Core Propositions for Teaching — comparable to medicine's Hippocratic Oath — setting forth the profession's vision for accomplished teaching. The Five Core Propositions form the foundation and frame the rich amalgam of knowledge, skills, dispositions and beliefs that characterize National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs).

All National Board Certificates are based on the Five Core Propositions. All NBCTs in all grade levels and subject areas share their commitment to and understanding of these Propositions. Therefore, the Five Core Propositions represent what all accomplished teachers share in their expertise and dedication to advance student achievement.

Proposition 1: Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Commitment is just another word until you act on it. Through the certification process, I developed both the skills and the mindset that I could always find a path to lead my student to the knowledge and skills that they needed.

Proposition 2: Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

We hold our students accountable for demonstrating what they have learned. Board Certified teachers provide evidence that they are lifelong learners who are able to translate their knowledge to students. We hold ourselves and our colleagues accountable for the things we should know. After I certified, I was confident that I was a resource for my students and for other teachers looking to improve their lessons.

Proposition 3: Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

Knowing what my students knew and what they needed to learn to be successful at the next level was so important in being an effective teacher. I didn't have to wait for the year end test results to be published because I knew each day what successes and challenges each student had. My assessments informed my instruction. Our students have so much ground to cover in their learning journey and as their teacher I must be prepared with a map that shows the way.

Proposition 4: Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

Reflection is at the center of everything that a Board Certified teacher does. Every lesson can be improved, every child can learn a little more tomorrow. The certification process requires that teachers not only submit video of their teaching, but lengthy papers detailing the evidence that they are meeting the standards and reflecting on what they can do better. At first, I was not comfortable watching tapes of myself teaching. However, as I went through the process, I developed a laser like focus on identifying what I did well and what I could tweak the next time. If I expect my students to improve every day, I must always be seeking ways to improve as their teacher.

Proposition 5: Teachers are members of learning communities.

This is my favorite proposition. No one teacher can be solely responsible for the education and wellness of a child. We must develop relationships with the family members, community leaders, and other teachers and professionals who support that student. Collaboration between expert teachers should be as natural and common as consultation among medical specialist working with the same patient. I valued the team of parents, teachers, and community members that I was able to bring together for each student.

As a National Board Certified Teacher in New Mexico, I was guided by the 5 core propositions each day as I worked to help my students reach their potential.

More detailed information about each of the five core propositions is included in the materials I have provided to the committee.

National Board Certification is an advanced credential which indicates that a teacher demonstrates high levels of both pedagogical and content knowledge for their specific area of teaching. Similar to professional boards in the fields of medicine, architecture, and engineering, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has established the standards and assessments to measure what effective teachers should know and be able to do in their classrooms.

National Board Standards are developed by committees of expert teachers in each content area. Written by teachers for teachers our standards are also regularly reviewed and periodically revised to ensure that they reflect the latest knowledge in both content and pedagogy.

Many school systems use the standards as the basis for ongoing teacher professional development, and many colleges and universities incorporate them into their undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation programs.

The National Board offers 25 certificates that are applicable to most teachers in U.S. public schools. Certificate areas range from Early Childhood literacy to High School science. There is a list of available certificate areas included in your materials.

Certification is an intensive process during which teachers submit a portfolio which demonstrates various components of their teaching. The portfolio includes video of lessons along with reflective analysis of the lesson and the student outcomes. In addition, the teachers demonstrate their ability to analyze student work and use the information to plan and deliver effective instruction to students with a diverse range of abilities. The portfolio also requires that teachers provide evidence of their contributions to their learning community.

Certification also requires that teachers pass a series of assessments designed to test their content area expertise.

Multiple studies over a number of years have verified the effectiveness of National Board Certification. I will start with the impact on students since the whole purpose of schooling is student learning. Research, including a comprehensive study by the National Research Council, found that students taught by board certified teachers have higher achievement test gains than those taught by non-board certified teachers. These studies show that students of Board Certified Teachers score 7 – 15 percentage points higher than students of non-board certified teachers. A recent study by the Harvard Strategic Data Project noted that students of Board Certified Teachers showed approximately 2 additional months of learning gains in Math and one additional month in English Language Arts. These learning gains make a difference for students and for their futures. Think of the advantage a student would have if they had Board Certified Teachers year after year and in many subject areas. These additional months of learning can close achievement gaps and give students the preparation they need to succeed in college and in their chosen career.

The Harvard Strategic Data project study in the Los Angeles Unified School District also reported that National Board Certified Teachers had

a greater impact on closing the achievement gap of students than all other interventions that were studied. This data, and similar positive results from a wide range of studies indicate that communities that are faced with low performing schools should invest in Board Certification for their teachers. In addition to the positive impact on students, teachers routinely report that the certification process is one that promotes intense and lasting professional growth. The value of NBCTs to the education community is also reflected in the numbers of NBCTs who identified as being at the top of their profession through such awards as the Presidential Math and Science Awards and both State and National Teachers of the year.

Given the advantages for students, one might expect to find Board Certified Teachers concentrated only in affluent schools. However, in reality, almost half of all Board Certified teachers work in high needs schools. States like Washington, Wisconsin, and Colorado provide special incentives for Board Certified teachers who work in high needs schools to bring the best teachers to students who need them most.

As compelling as the research on student achievement is, the stories that we hear from teachers around the country and here in New Mexico are also evidence of the positive outcomes for students of Board Certified teachers. One example is Loma Linda Elementary School

in Anthony New Mexico. After several years of failing to meet AYP, the school was placed under corrective action and reconstituted by the state. In order to move forward, the staff undertook a pledge to engage in the National Board Process. The first year of the project 2 teachers certified, the school made its AYP benchmark, and most importantly, parents reported a dramatic increase in the positive community atmosphere at the school. The school and in fact the whole Gadsden District continue to make progress. The school earned a B ranking from the state and there are now 15 NBCTs in this small district!

In Hawai'i there is a strong collaboration between the Native Hawaiian community, the Hawaii Department of Education, school leaders in both the public and private schools, and nonprofit foundations to achieve the goal increasing the number of Native Hawaiian teacher with Board Certification and the number of Board Certified Teachers working with Hawaiian Native Students. Kamehameha Schools and the ALU Like, foundation are dedicated to helping Native Hawaiians achieve social and economic self-sufficiency. As a cornerstone of that effort, ALU Like offers scholarships for educators seeking Board Certification with a preference given to Native Hawaiian educators. They state "ALU LIKE, Inc. understands that by helping teachers reach their goals we are ultimately helping our keiki become successful lifelong learners." In

addition to scholarships for certification fees, Kamehameha Schools offer hiring preference and leadership opportunities for Board Certified teachers. In Hawaii, Board Certified teachers gain the highest level of licensure and receive a \$5000 stipend for the life of the certificate. The National Board is a proud partner in Hawaii's efforts to improve the education of Native Hawaiians and is pleased to report that the state has made tremendous progress towards their goals and that Kamehameha Schools leads the nation in the number of board certified teachers focused on working with Native Students.

As of this November, more than 106,000 teachers across the nation have achieved National Board Certification. While impressive, this number is less than 3% of the teaching population. In New Mexico, more than 860 teachers have certified. While this represents tremendous growth over the past several years, the reality is that less than 4% of the teachers in New Mexico have met these rigorous standards. More than half of the state's board certified teachers are employed with the Albuquerque Public Schools. While we celebrate the growth in numbers of NBCTs in the state, it is important to remember that the vast majority of students in New Mexico, particularly in our more rural communities, will not have the benefit of even one Board Certified teacher. Imagine the advantages for students who attend schools like La Cueva High School in Albuquerque where

more than 20 of the teachers are board certified. In parts of North Carolina, one out of every five teachers is Board Certified. When our New Mexico Native American students compete for college admission, scholarships, and ultimately careers, those who have had the benefit of Board Certified teachers giving them those extra learning gains year after year will have an advantage over those who attend schools without Board Certified teachers. Equity demands that all New Mexico's children have access to the best education that we can offer.

The state legislature and Public Education Department has provided some policy supports which encourage New Mexico teachers to pursue Board Certification. In New Mexico's public schools, teachers who earn Board Certification are eligible for a stipend equal to 1.5 student units (approximately 5800) each year that they hold National Board Certification. In addition, National Board Certification is one pathway to attain Level Three Licensure.

The National Board works closely with the New Mexico NBCT Network, local school districts, education associations, Eastern New Mexico University and others to provide mentoring and support for teachers who are candidates for Board Certification. NBPTS was recently awarded a SEED grant which will allow us to bring 1.5 million dollars to support a partnership with Albuquerque Public Schools to being more

Board Certified teachers into the schools with the highest needs over the next three years. The grant will also focus on helping to place Board Certified teachers in instructional leadership roles where they can share their skills with other teachers. While it is wonderful to be able to report that New Mexico has a growing number of Board Certified teachers, the teachers proven to be the most effective at helping our children learn more, this progress means little to children in schools without even one board certified teacher.

Despite the increase in the number of NBCTs in some parts of New Mexico, an issue of heightened concern for us was the lack of Native American Educators who were Board Certified and teaching in a Native American Community School setting. In their report “Striving to Achieve: Helping Native American Students Succeed – The National Caucus of Native American State Legislators noted that ensuring equitable distribution of qualified staff is necessary. They go on to state that “the only way to rely on teacher quality to close the achievement gap is to ensure that Native students have access to the best teachers”. Finally, they noted the importance of having Native teachers in the schools serving as role models and important members of the education community for students. One of the policy recommendations made as a finding of this report was to “create incentives for American Indian, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian

teachers who teach in Native communities to become nationally board certified.”

In 2011, there were only 7 Native American teachers in New Mexico who were Board Certified. Of these, none reported that they were teaching in a school setting in a Native American community. Given the facts that students of Board Certified Teachers achieve more, this was a disturbing find.

The National Board believes that all students deserve the benefits of having a National Board Certified Teacher in their classroom. There is a special concern that students facing the challenges of poverty, special needs, and historically underserved or underperforming populations have equal access to Board Certified Teachers.

While the numbers of Native American Board Certified teachers throughout the nation remains low, in other states with high concentrations of Native American students and teachers, like Oklahoma and Washington, there has been a steady positive growth. In Oklahoma, 7% of the NBCTs are Native American, in New Mexico it is only 1%.

Upon studying these facts, the National Board increased our outreach to the New Mexico Native American educator community. In response, in 2012-13 we focused efforts on a Native Schools Initiative. As a part of

these efforts we have been working to provide information, scholarships, and other supports to Native American Educators and to administrators and teachers in public, tribal and BIE schools throughout New Mexico. We have worked with The New Mexico NBCT Network and the faculty of Eastern New Mexico University to provide information sessions for teachers and mentoring and support for teachers who chose to undergo the certification process. In April of 2012, the National Board was pleased to present information about our efforts to the All Indian Pueblo Council. We have met with the Public Education Department and their office of Indian Education twice to provide information about Board Certification and to request assistance in providing funding and supports to teachers who work with Native American students to become Board Certified. In addition, we have worked with the administrations at Gallup McKinley Schools, Mescalero Apache Schools, the BIE offices in New Mexico, and public school systems throughout the state. Through the generosity of our funders, we were able to provide subsidy and scholarship funds to help teachers in these communities pursue certification.

I am very pleased to report that our direct outreach efforts have begun to show positive results. This past month, teachers who participated in the certification process during 2012- 2013 school year received the results of their efforts. New Mexico can celebrate two new NBCTs at

the Native American Community Academy Charter School in Albuquerque, as well a new NBCTs at the Santa Fe Indian School, and one at Mescalero Apache School. These teachers represent an important beginning towards reaching our goal of providing equal educational opportunity to all New Mexico students. We also want to highlight 7 new NBCTs in the Gallup McKinley Schools, 2 in Farmington Public Schools, and a teacher at Jemez Valley Public Schools. Albuquerque Public Schools gained 50 new NBCTs. These are important gains and the accomplishment of these teachers and their school communities should be celebrated. However, we have much work to do to ensure that Native American students have equal access to the many advantages of having a Board Certified Teacher in their classroom.

In order to achieve this goal, teachers and school communities will need to have the support of their administrations, their communities, the Public Education Department, Office of Indian Affairs, the BIE and the members of the legislature.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, we ask that you monitor the number of Board Certified teachers working with Native American Students and encourage the use of Professional Development funds to support teachers seeking certification. In addition, we would ask all

school systems to provide incentives for teachers who achieve certification in order to encourage Board Certified teachers to teach in and remain teaching in Native American school communities. The future of our communities depends on us providing the best educational opportunities to all of our children. The National Board looks forward to continuing to work with New Mexico's Native American school communities so that Board Certified Teachers are available in all communities to offer the best education to all students

Thank you for this opportunity to provide this information and I am happy to respond to your questions.