What is National Board Certification?
National Board Certification is a demonstration of accomplished teaching practice as measured against high and rigorous standards. Offered on a voluntary basis, the advanced system of National Board Certification complements, but does not replace, state licensing. National Board Certification is a means to professional growth and improvement. Candidates describe the process as one of the most meaningful professional development experiences they have ever participated in because it focuses on their teaching with their students.

How do I earn National Board Certification?
The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has developed an innovative, two-part assessment process to determine whether a teacher possesses the attributes of accomplished teaching based on the National Board’s standards. The first component of the assessment is done at a teacher’s school. A teacher shows evidence of good teaching practice by preparing a portfolio. The portfolio contains videotapes of classroom teaching, lesson plans, samples of student work and written commentaries in which teachers describe, analyze, and reflect on what they are doing and why. The second component includes exercises designed around content learning. Candidates complete six 30-minute assessments during one day at an assessment center.

Where is it happening?
Austin ISD has over 200 National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs). Each year AISD teachers in a variety of age and teaching fields are pursuing their candidacy with the support of AISD through the Office of Educator Quality. As a member of one of these cohort groups, candidates have the advantage of coaching and support by teachers who have been through the process.

How does AISD support staff pursuing National Board Certification?
AISD believes that participating in the National Board Certification process is high quality, rigorous professional development that strengthens an individual’s capacity to provide a rich learning environment. Each year AISD supports a cohort of candidates seeking certification by providing coaching, collegial support, and mentoring. AISD also pays each candidate’s $2500 fee to NBPTS and a $2000 per year stipend to those who achieve certification.

How do I apply for AISD’s NBPTS Cohort?
The application process begins very early in the second semester of each school year. Interested teachers, librarians, and counselors who have the required number of years of experience are encouraged to attend information sessions and complete an online application. The application is available via a link on the Educator Quality website in early January through the application closing date in mid February.

How much does it cost? How will I be supported?
Currently, the fee for application is $65 and evaluation of the portfolio is $2,500. Candidates are responsible for the $65 application fee. AISD will pay the remaining $2,500 for Cohort candidates who complete, and will also provide support and guidance as you develop your portfolio and prepare for the assessment center.

How much time does certification take?
Cohort candidates will begin initial preparation and planning in the spring along with limited work during the summer. Cohort candidates meet throughout the next school year to complete the process. Most teachers report spending between 300 to 800 hours on their portfolios.

How are assessments scored?
Scoring is done through the NBPTS by teachers who are extensively trained in evaluation by the NBPTS. Scoring is based on all of a candidate’s responses: videotapes, student work samples, candidate’s analysis and written responses to assessment center exercises. Scorers apply clearly expressed criteria and use scoring guides that are supplied to candidates when they begin their portfolios.

What if I don’t pass all parts the first time?
Teachers who do not earn the minimum passing score may resubmit any individual portfolio or assessment center entries that fall below standard. Candidates do not need to repeat successful entries. Candidates have two years in which to resubmit entries. A fee of $350 is required for each entry resubmitted.

How long is a National Board certificate valid?
Certificates are valid for 10 years. There is also a renewal fee of $1000. AISD supports NBCTs who wish to pursue renewal through a renewal cohort that meets throughout the process for coaching.

How does Austin ISD compensate National Board Certified Teachers?
Austin ISD provides an annual $2000 stipend to any AISD teacher who submits documentation verifying completion of the requirements for National Board Certification. A National Board Certified Teacher may also be selected to serve as a mentor for AISD National Board candidates or pre-candidates and earn an additional stipend.

What are the areas of certification available?
Age categories rather than grade levels organize NBPTS certification. The age categories are: Early Childhood (ages 3-8); Middle Childhood (ages 7-12); Early Adolescence (ages 11-15); Adolescence and Young Adulthood (ages 14-18+). You must be teaching the age child for the level of certification you are applying for. A listing of all areas of certification is available on the NBPTS website.

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