

My National Board Story

Name: Beth Mears

Area of Certification: Early Childhood Generalist

Your Professional Title: Professional Development & Teacher Leadership Coordinator

School District: Urbana School District 116

Year of Certification: 2006

Year of Renewal:2016

This is my 35th year as an educator and I have been fortunate enough to spend 32 of those years in the Urbana School District. Urbana is a multicultural and multilingual community which is celebrated in our schools. My journey in this district has taken me from a first grade teacher to a K-5 Instructional Coach and now to the PD & Teacher Leadership Coordinator for the district. Throughout this journey I continuously remind myself that what I do everyday is not about me, or my colleagues..it is about the students we are privileged to teach everyday.

I chose to certify at a time in my career when I was at a crossroads with my teaching practice. I felt as though I was just going through the motions of teaching and was looking for something that would help remind me of why I became a teacher. An NBCT colleague suggested that going through the National Board Process might be just what I needed as this process would give me the opportunity to analyze, think deeply and reflect on practice. I will forever be grateful for that colleague to push me to take on this process. It truly was the best decision of my teaching career and did transform my teaching. From my time in the classroom to my new role in the district, the 5 Core Propositions and the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching continue to be a natural part of my daily interactions with other colleagues.

National Board has given me many leadership opportunities within my district. I am able to not only share the benefits of my knowledge with colleagues but also learn from them as I facilitate our district National Board Professional Development Cohort. Also, in my role, I am able to facilitate many different types of professional development which are always planned through the lens of National Board.

I know that it is the mission of the Illinois NBCTs to “Collaborate, Elevate and Empower.” This slogan encompasses everything that represents National Board. It is my goal to model and instill a sense of collaboration among our teachers which can lead to elevated teaching practices which in turn will lead to our teachers having a sense of empowerment. As teachers collaborate with one another, this model of collaboration can be replicated with our students. This can lead to a sense of empowerment for our students which will ultimately elevate the learning of our students.