

My National Board Story

Name: Bonnie Zavoral
Area of Certification: EA Science
Your Professional Title: Retired teacher
School Name: Charleston Middle School
District: Charleston CUSD #1
Year of Certification: 2004
Year of Renewal: 2014



I certified while teaching at Charleston Middle School. It is a rural school in east central Illinois comprised of two 7th grade and two 8th grade teams with between 400-550 students in the school depending on the year. When the school was a junior high school, I taught both 7th and 8th grade science, but as a middle school teacher I taught 8th grade science and one section of another core subject (language arts for the last 10 years of my teaching career).

I attended a session about NBPTS at our regional institute in October of 2003 and decided to pursue certification. One of the incentives to certify was the stipend offered during the 10 years of certification (which ended up not being funded). While going through the process, I was reminded of all the best practices that I knew I should be using and would tell anybody that it was the best professional development I ever completed. After certifying, I mentored NBPT candidates by leading cohort meetings, reading entries, leading discussions to prepare for the assessment center tests, and as a Candidate Cohort Facilitator at Jasper County and now for ROE 11. I attended many different types of training with the National Board Resource Center. In addition, I co-taught a masters level class entitled "Professional Practices" at EIU twice. A significant part of the class was driven by NBPTS components. Because I felt driven to assist other teachers in the process, I chose to renew my certificate even though I was retired and had to borrow a classroom to do so.

National Board Certification pushed me to follow the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching, using my knowledge of students to plan and differentiate instruction, to provide inquiry-based hands-on learning, and to provide fair, equitable learning opportunities. I was constantly reflecting on lessons and when needed, would change plans to address areas of struggle. I worked with learning behavior specialists to determine appropriate learning goals and activities for students with IEPs. Students with mastery over content were provided with enrichment lessons to keep them engaged, while struggling students were provided alternative lessons to reteach content. The learning environment enabled all levels of students to succeed from non-verbal cross categorical students to gifted students (which I had in the same classroom).

My certification also pushed me to mentor other teachers. I provided formal and informal PD to teachers in my building, district, and the state. I led multiple presentations with our ROE for our

regional institute and through AIMS (Association of Illinois Middle Schools). Once I started mentoring other NBPTS candidates, I made connections with other like-minded teachers throughout the state and when meeting with other NB certified teachers, I would get recharged and excited about promoting best practices.