



Press Release

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Mississippi Classrooms Gain More Than 300 National Board Certified Teachers® in 2003 *State Ranks Seventh Nationwide in Certification Results*

(Arlington, Va.) – As part of Mississippi’s efforts to improve teacher quality and meet the federal requirements for a highly qualified teacher in every classroom, 301 state teachers earned their profession’s top honor this year by achieving National Board Certification®. With the new certificates, Mississippi now has a total of 1,764 National Board Certified Teachers® (NBCTs).

“With our ranking as sixth in the nation for the cumulative number of National Board Certified Teachers, Mississippi continues to be a leader in education,” says Gov. Ronnie Musgrove (D-MS). “These 301 teachers have worked hard to enhance their skills, which will have a direct impact on the students in their classrooms. Students will benefit from their hard work and I’m proud of the effort they’ve made to achieve this certification.”

This year, Mississippi ranks seventh in the number of NBCTs in the United States. Other leading states include North Carolina (1,522), Florida (1,448), South Carolina (867), California (689), Georgia (513), Ohio (383), Illinois (254), Oklahoma (226) and Kentucky (189). Nationwide, 8,195 teachers earned their profession’s top honor this year by achieving National Board Certification. This achievement brings the total number of NBCTs to 32,130.

“By successfully completing the process for National Board Certification, these exemplary educators have demonstrated their dedication and commitment to quality teaching in Mississippi classrooms,” says State Superintendent of Education Henry Johnson. “Our state appreciates their outstanding professional achievements and significant contributions to the children they teach.”

“The high number of Mississippi teachers participating in this program reflects their determination and commitment to strengthen education in our state,” says U.S. Rep. Roger F. Wicker (R-MS). “These teachers are playing a vital role in preparing our children for the future, and achieving the high standards set by the National Board represents another component in efforts to ensure our children have the best quality education available.”

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This project is funded in part with grants from the U.S. Department of Education and the National Science Foundation. Through September 2003, NBPTS has been appropriated federal funds of \$129.3 million, representing approximately 41 percent of the National Board Certification project. More than \$186.2 million (59 percent) of the project’s cost will be financed by non-governmental sources.

Founded 16 years ago, NBPTS is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and non-governmental organization dedicated to advancing the quality of teaching and learning. National Board Certification is the highest credential in the teaching profession. A voluntary process established by NBPTS, certification is achieved through a rigorous performance-based assessment that takes between one and three years to complete and measures what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.

“Teacher quality has never been more important, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is the only organization of its kind helping states to identify and certify highly accomplished teachers,” says NBPTS President Joseph A. Aguerrebere. “Through National Board Certified Teachers, states and communities are realizing the enormous benefits of using National Board Certification as a tool to attract, reward and retain highly accomplished teachers as required by the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*.”

“NBPTS celebrates and congratulates all teachers who went through the rigorous National Board Certification process,” says NBPTS Board Chair Roy E. Barnes. “This impressive achievement is widely recognized at the national, state and local levels as a benchmark for teacher quality. This is also an indication that policymakers, educators, business and community leaders, and parents recognize that when it comes to a quality education, quality teaching matters.”

Forty-nine states and more than 500 school districts across the nation have implemented policies and regulations to recruit, reward and retain National Board Certified Teachers. “In this environment of economic concern, the National Board is extremely grateful to the growing number of states, school districts and municipalities that support National Board Certification and the impact it has on the teaching profession and improved student learning,” says Barnes.

“It is important to understand that the National Board Certification process not only identifies accomplished teachers but also is a profound professional development experience,” says Aguerrebere. “This is a process that forces teachers to demonstrate how their activities, both inside and outside of the classroom, improve student achievement.”

In its effort to measure the impact of National Board Certification and the effects of NBCTs on the quality of teaching and student achievement in America’s schools, NBPTS has engaged in an independent, rigorous research agenda. There have been more than 140 studies, reports and papers commissioned on the value of the National Board Certification process, as well as its standards and assessments. Findings and results from a number of research studies are expected to be completed in 2004 and 2005.

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The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and nongovernmental organization governed by a board of directors, the majority of whom are classroom teachers. Its mission is to establish high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. For more information about NBPTS, please visit <http://www.nbpts.org>.

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