

A SURVEY OF ALABAMA SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE  
EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NATIONAL BOARD  
CERTIFICATION PROCESS

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Robert Alvin Griffin

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL:

---

Gerald Halpin  
Professor  
Educational Foundations,  
Leadership, and Technology

---

Glennelle Halpin, Chair  
Fraley Distinguished Professor  
Educational Foundations,  
Leadership, and Technology

---

Olin Adams  
Assistant Professor  
Educational Foundations,  
Leadership, and Technology

---

Stephen L. McFarland  
Dean  
Graduate School

A SURVEY OF ALABAMA SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS  
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CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Robert Alvin Griffin

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Date of Graduation

## VITA

Robert Alvin (Al) Griffin, son of Ben Harold and Phyllis (Brown) Griffin, was born October 1, 1969 in Ashland, Alabama. He graduated from Lineville High School in 1988. He attended Southern Union State Community College in Wadley, Alabama, for 15 months, then entered Auburn University in September 1989 and graduated *cum laude* with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Education in June 1991. He taught Agriscience Education at Smiths Station High School from July 1, 1991 to June 30, 1997. During this tenure, he received the degree of Master of Education from Auburn University in August 1992 and the degree of Educational Specialist from Auburn University in August 1995. He transferred to Beulah High School on July 1, 1997 and taught Agriscience Education there until June 30, 2004. During this tenure he completed Educational Administration certification at Auburn University in August 2000 and entered the Doctor of Education program at Auburn University in September 2001. He became the principal of the Troy-Pike Center for Technology and Career-Technical Education Director for the Pike County Board of Education and the Troy City Board of Education on July 1, 2004 and is still holding this position. He married Tiffany Dorr, daughter of Howard and Marie (Farrow) Dorr on November 2, 1990. They have two sons (Damon and Gabe) and one daughter (Kristen).

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT  
A SURVEY OF ALABAMA SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS  
OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NATIONAL BOARD  
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Robert Alvin Griffin

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(M.S., Auburn University, 1992)  
(B.S., Auburn University, 1991)

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The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is a voluntary documentation and demonstration process of an accomplished teacher's excellence in his or her discipline measured against rigorous standards and assessments, submitted in the form of portfolio and video entries that are evaluated by certified peers. NBPTS, created in 1987, is a by-product of the Carnegie Task Force, which recommended a higher standard for teachers' competence and ability and identified teachers meeting that standard.

Eligibility requirements include a baccalaureate degree in the academic field, a minimum of 3 years of teaching experience, and a valid teaching certificate. Applicants are required to complete four portfolio entries consisting of videotapes of instruction in progress, students' work samples, and instructional artifacts. Also, a 1-day assessment center exercise focusing on content and professional teaching knowledge is required after portfolio completion.

The NBPTS process has both advocates and critics. Advocates claim that completing the NBPTS process will improve a teacher's ability to plan and deliver instructional lessons, thus having a positive effect on student learning. Critics think the NBPTS process does not improve teaching and learning. They claim that those teachers who do so were superior teachers prior to their completing the process.

Evaluating the perceptions of the school leader may yield a quality indicator of the effectiveness of the NBPTS process. In this study, the perceptions of school principals in Alabama regarding the NBPTS process were explored. No such research study had been conducted in Alabama and few had been done in the United States prior to the completion of this one.

All principals in Alabama with at least one National Board Certified teacher on staff were given or mailed a survey and asked to rate all of their teachers on research questions related to the five core propositions of the NBPTS. According to the school principals in Alabama, the teachers possessing National Board Certification significantly excelled on all five core propositions when compared to teachers who did not possess National Board Certification. This study will serve as a reference for advocates of the NBPTS process.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
LIST OF TABLES .....		xi
I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	Overview of NBPTS .....	1
	Core Propositions.....	2
	Purpose of the Study .....	4
	Research Questions.....	5
	Null Hypotheses.....	6
	Limitations .....	7
	Delimitations.....	7
	Significance of the Study .....	8
	Definition of Terms.....	8
II.	REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	10
	Introduction and History .....	10
	NBPTS Certification.....	15
	Requirements .....	15
	Incentives .....	18
	NBPTS Advocates .....	20
	NBPTS Critics .....	30
	Impact of NBPTS Certification .....	37
	Summary of Review of Literature .....	44
III.	METHODS .....	45
	Population .....	45
	Research Instrument.....	47
	Sampling/Data Collection Procedures .....	48
	Reliability/Validity .....	51
	Data Analysis .....	53

IV.	RESULTS.....	54
	Overview.....	54
	Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Results.....	54
	Research Question 1 .....	54
	Research Question 2 .....	55
	Research Question 3 .....	57
	Research Question 4 .....	57
	Research Question 5 .....	58
	Research Question 6 .....	58
V.	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....	60
	Summary.....	60
	Discussion.....	63
	Recommendations.....	67
	REFERENCES .....	68
	APPENDICES .....	81
	Appendix A: Introductory Letter.....	82
	Appendix B: Survey Instrument.....	84
	Appendix C: Survey Cover Letter.....	89
	Appendix D: Auburn University IRB Letter .....	91
	Appendix E: Information Sheet.....	93
	Appendix F: Letter of Interest from NBPTS Director of Research.....	96
	Appendix G: Letter of Interest from State Department of Education .....	98
	Appendix H: Follow-up Letter .....	100
	Appendix I: Letter of Support from CLAS President .....	102
	Appendix J: Letter of Support from Alabama Director of Career-Technical Education.....	104

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample.....	46
Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Levels for Both NBCTs and Non-NBCTs on Measurements With the Five Dependent Variables.....	52
Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Significance for Each Dependent Variable .....	56

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Overview of NBPTS

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is a documentation and demonstration process of an accomplished teacher's excellence in his or her discipline measured against rigorous standards and assessments, submitted in the form of portfolio and video entries that are evaluated by certified peers. NBPTS was created in 1987 as a response to a report produced by the National Commission on Excellence in Education entitled *A Nation at Risk* (1983), which concluded that America's schools were not properly preparing young people for the future (NBPTS, 1999). NBPTS is a by-product of the Carnegie Task Force's *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (1986), which recommended a higher standard for teacher competence and ability and identified teachers meeting that standard. Eligibility requirements include a baccalaureate degree in the academic field, a minimum of 3 years teaching experience, and a valid teaching certificate. Applicants are required to complete four portfolio entries consisting of videotapes of instruction in progress, students' work samples, and instructional artifacts. In addition to the portfolio, a 1-day assessment center exercise focusing on content and professional teaching knowledge is required after portfolio completion (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards [NBPTS], 2002a).

NBPTS is voluntary process by which experienced teachers establish advanced standards in subject matter. NBPTS is a symbol of excellence developed by teachers for teachers (NBPTS, 1999), and it provides teachers with an opportunity to reflect and offer self-examination based on standards developed by peers (NBPTS, 1994). The NBPTS requirements represent what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do, develop a voluntary system to assess teachers who meet these standards, and advocate educational reform by integrating NBPTS in America's schools so students may capitalize on the expertise of these teachers. The NBPTS process consists of standards which are based on five core propositions. (NBPTS, 1999).

### Core Propositions

The first core proposition states, "Teachers are committed to students and their learning." This proposition concludes that National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) treat students equitably, recognize individual differences, and adjust teaching styles so students can effectively reach their potential (NBPTS, 2002a). NBCTs learn from experiences obtained by listening to students, watching students interact with peers, and grading the students' assignments to enhance the students' general knowledge of subject matter (NBPTS, 1999).

The second core proposition states, "Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to the students." This proposition concludes that teachers have a thorough knowledge and understanding of subject matter, a fluency which results in multi-modality instructional methods that promote students' mastery of the discipline.

NBCTs possess an appreciation of how knowledge in the subject matter is created and how to link this subject matter to other disciplines. Their lessons develop a conceptual subject-matter understanding by requiring students to think analytically.

The third core proposition states, “Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring students’ learning.” This proposition concludes that teachers use a variety of instructional resources to accommodate varying instructional methods that keep students involved and focused on learning. NBCTs promote student interaction by developing lessons that encourage cooperative learning activities. These teachers also assess student progress through a variety of evaluation methods to provide constructive feedback to students as well as other educational stakeholders.

The fourth core proposition states, “Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.” This proposition concludes that NBCTs conduct research to stay abreast of up-to-date subject matter data as well as current learning theories and instructional strategies. These teachers also examine lessons and find ways to expand their instructional skills and incorporate new findings. NBCTs consult colleagues and experts in the subject-matter area for advice and resolve to find ways to improve educational practices. These teachers continually make difficult choices related to their curricula to meet the needs of their students. This is possible only when the educator possesses a thorough knowledge of where the students are and where they need to go.

The fifth core proposition states, “Teachers are members of learning communities.” This proposition concludes that NBCTs collaborate with

teacher-colleagues, students, parents, and business and industry leaders to determine and develop instructional methods that will potentially improve students' learning. NBCTs utilize all resources possessed by educational stakeholders to enhance lessons and improve students' understanding of concepts (NBPTS, 2002a).

The NBPTS began certifying teachers in the mid-1990s, and currently 49 states offer financial support to teachers and 37 states pay incentives to teachers for being certified by the National Board. For example, Alabama offers a \$5,000 per year raise for 10 years and a one-time \$5,000 grant for the certified teacher's classroom. The NBPTS certificate is valid for 10 years, and the teacher must be re-certified at that time. Also, many states allow greater opportunities for interstate mobility for NBCTs (NBPTS, 2001c). Possibly the greatest advantage of NBPTS is the fact that NBCTs meet the definition of highly qualified. Federal legislation, entitled *No Child Left Behind*, requires that a highly qualified teacher be in every classroom by 2006 (U. S. Department of Education, 2002).

### Purpose of the Study

There are both advocates and critics of the NBPTS process and its effectiveness. Discussed in the review of the literature are studies that proclaim both sides of the NBPTS debate as to whether the National Board Certification process helps teachers improve and positively affects students. In many of these studies, test scores of students taught by NBCTs are compared to test scores of students taught by teachers not

possessing National Board Certification (non-NBCTs) using instruments such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

These are quality studies, no doubt; however, the views of the chief instructional officers within schools are imperative when evaluating the effectiveness of such a certification process. School leaders have the liberty of day-to-day contact with these certified teachers and their students so a quality perception of the effectiveness of the process is possible. As a result of this fact, the school leaders in Alabama should be able to reach a reputable conclusion about the effectiveness of the NBPTS process using the five core propositions of the NBPTS as dependent variables.

There have been few, if any studies, related to NBPTS in Alabama. Furthermore, there is little research related to school leaders' views concerning the NBPTS process. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the National Board Certification process based on the perceptions of school principals in the State of Alabama.

### Research Questions

The following research questions will be investigated in this study. Based on the perceptions of (K–12) school principals in Alabama:

1. Do the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff differ significantly from non-NBCTs on a weighted combination of these variables: commitment to student learning, knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it, management and assessment of student learning, systematic thought about practice, and membership in learning communities?



2. Do the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff differ significantly from non-NBCTs on commitment to student learning?
3. Do the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff differ significantly from non-NBCTs on knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it?
4. Do the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff differ significantly from non-NBCTs on management and assessment of student learning?
5. Do the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff differ significantly from non-NBCTs on systematic thought about practice?
6. Do the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff differ significantly from non-NBCTs on membership in learning communities?

#### Null Hypotheses

The research questions led to six null hypotheses based on the perceptions of (K-12) school principals in Alabama that were also used to guide this study.

1. The NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on a weighted combination of these variables: commitment to student learning, knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it, management and assessment of student learning, systematic thought about practice, and membership in learning communities ( $p < .05$ ).
2. The NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on having a commitment to student learning ( $p < .05$ ).

3. The NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it ( $p < .05$ ).

4. The NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on management and assessment of student learning ( $p < .05$ ).

5. The NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on systematic thought about practice ( $p < .05$ ).

6. The NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on membership in learning communities ( $p < .05$ ).

#### Limitations

This study was completed in Alabama, a state possessing a moderate number of NBCTs. As a result of the study's small sample size and location, one could conclude that the study has limited transferability. The perceptions of only one subset of educators (principals) were measured. This fact also limits the transferability of the study. Further, no survey can address every possible perception of the population members.

#### Delimitations

The delimitations of this study were as follows:

1. The participants identified for this study were school leaders (principals) in the State of Alabama who have at least one NBCT among their instructional staff.

2. School leaders' views were determined through the use of a survey consisting of questions that measured five dependent variables based on the five core proposition of the NBPTS.

### Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the school leaders' perceptions of the NBCTs as compared to non-NBCTs. Results should help determine if NBCTs are excelling in the educational arena. Results of this study should also provide insights regarding the effectiveness of the NBPTS process. If the study reveals positive results for the NBPTS process, then the process might be utilized more often as professional development. Local school systems might provide more support for and encourage potential NBPTS candidates.

### Definitions of Terms

The following terms related to NBPTS were identified and defined in this study:

*ABCTE (American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence):* An alternative to the NBPTS certification process that creates routes for professionals to enter the teaching field, establishes national teaching credentials, and attempts to identify teaching practices that lead to gains in student achievement.

*Advocate:* A supporter of NBPTS.

*Assessors:* Certified individuals who evaluate and score the NBPTS portfolios and assessments.

*Candidate:* A teacher making application for NBPTS certification.

*Commentaries:* A series of written comments in which the NBPTS applicant explains how he or she has adhered to the NBPTS standards.

*Core propositions:* The five visions of the educational process that form the foundation for the NBPTS.

*Critic:* An opponent of NBPTS.

*Highly qualified teacher:* An educator who meets the standards necessary to comply with the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001.

*NBCT:* A teacher certified by the National Board.

*National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS):* A voluntary and documentation process of an accomplished teacher's excellence in the classroom, school, and community.

*National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE):* A group that works with colleges in order to align programs with NBPTS standards.

*No Child Left Behind Act:* Federal legislation that was enacted in 2001 requiring that a highly qualified teacher be in every classroom in the United States.

*Non-NBCT:* A teacher who does not possess National Board Certification.

*Portfolio:* A collection of educational artifacts and written commentaries serving as documentation related to the core propositions of the NBPTS.

*Washington Initiative (WI):* Created in 2001 as an effort to help strengthen education reform in the state of Washington by addressing and improving teacher quality through the use of the National Board Certification process.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Introduction and History

During the first term of the Ronald Reagan administration, a federal report produced by the National Commission on Excellence in Education and entitled *A Nation at Risk* (U. S. Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) resulted in a public concern about the state of American education. At this time in American history, inflation was at an all-time high, unemployment was above 10%, interest rates were at 21%, and the total number of computers had increased within the previous year by a multiple of 10. A conclusion in this report was that America's schools were not training young people to keep pace with a changing global society (NBPTS, 1999). As a result of this document, a mass of reform initiatives engulfed the education community because teachers, parents, business leaders, and policymakers demanded improvement in America's educational system (Isenberg, 2003).

The Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession produced *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (1986), which proclaimed that America's schools were not producing students functionally literate enough to compete and succeed in society in order to become productive citizens. This group foresaw that the schools needed to be the place where students would develop the required knowledge needed to compete and succeed in an economy based on people required to think for a living. Their

leading recommendation was the establishment of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS, 1999).

The Carnegie Task Force wanted NBPTS certification to attract first-rate individuals to become classroom teachers due to the mobility, opportunities for advancement, salary compensation incentives, and recognition of accomplishments that would be the benefits of possessing this coveted certification. This progressive group also hoped that the NBPTS process would restore public confidence in schools by prompting justification for teacher hiring, stimulating the design of more rigorous teacher education programs, and preparing young people for an information age that is making the world smaller as a result of science and technology (“Why America,” 2002).

Founded on the belief that rewarding accomplished teachers is the best way to improve education in the United States (NBPTS, 2001c), “the National Board has as its mission to advance the quality of teaching and learning by maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do” (NBPTS, 1999, p.1). In order to achieve this mission, the National Board developed a voluntary teacher certification process with the goal of reforming education by improving student learning as a result of the expertise gained by teachers who complete the certification process (NBPTS, 1999).

In 1987, the year following the Carnegie Task Force’s document, a 63-member board consisting mostly of teachers (two thirds) along with delegated officials, parents, and business leaders (one third) founded an independent, non-profit organization known as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS, 1999). This group

formed the NBPTS on the premonition that if the United States was going to have world class schools, it must have world class teachers. NBPTS certification is intended to complement, not replace, required state teaching certification and holds the promises of improving schools, improving teaching, improving students' learning, and improving students' prospects for the future ("Why America," 2002).

NBPTS issued *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do* (1999), a document which served as a basis for the standards development work conducted by the National Board. This document informed members of the education community who had an interest in strengthening the initial and on-going education of America's teachers about the NBPTS process. The pamphlet also forged a new consensus on accomplished practices for teaching (Isenberg, 2003). This group developed standards for 27 certificate areas among varying subject areas at different developmental levels (NBPTS, 1994). There are four developmental levels which include early childhood (ages 3 to 8), middle childhood (ages 7 to 12), early adolescence (ages 11 to 15), and adolescence and young adulthood (ages 14 to 18+). Due to the fact that the four developmental levels overlapped, teachers could choose the division that made up the majority of their students (NBPTS, 2002b). The NBPTS standards are also centered around five core propositions.

The first core proposition states, "Teachers are committed to students and their learning." This proposition concludes that NBCTs treat students equitably, recognize individual student differences, and adjust teaching styles so students can effectively reach their potential (NBPTS, 2002a). This proposition also declares that a NBCT needs to understand how students grow and mature during developmental levels and have a sound

knowledge of students' interests, viewpoints, and communities (NBPTS, 1999). The NBCT should know the varying tools and support his or her students' need to learn effectively while developing character, aspirations, and civic virtues (NBPTS, 2002a). NBCTs learn from experiences obtained by listening to students, watching students interact with peers, and grading the students' assignments to enhance the students' general knowledge of subject matter (NBPTS, 1999).

The second core proposition states, "Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to the students." This proposition concludes that teachers have a thorough knowledge and understanding of subject matter, a fluency that yields multi-modality instructional methods that promote student mastery of the discipline (NBPTS, 1999). These teachers possess a repertoire of analogies, experiments, tasks, and metaphors that help students recognize key concepts and grasp new knowledge. They also possess a special knowledge on how to convey a particular subject to students and find alternative instructional strategies for students requiring special services (NBPTS, 2002a). NBCTs possess an appreciation of how knowledge in their subject matter is created and how to link this subject matter to other disciplines. Their lessons develop a conceptual subject-matter understanding by requiring students to think analytically (NBPTS, 1999).

The third core proposition states, "Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning." This proposition concludes that teachers use a variety of instructional resources to accommodate varying instructional methods that keep students involved and focused on learning (NBPTS, 2002a). These teachers recognize teachable



moments and seize these opportunities while creating an environment that fosters democratic values. All students are allowed to make contributions, and their mistakes become opportunities for learning due to the fact that self-evaluations are encouraged among the students. Much time is spent planning for instruction, and the pace of this instruction is regulated by grouping students in a non-biased manner within the classroom (NBPTS, 1999). NBCTs promote student interaction by developing lessons that encourage cooperative learning activities. These teachers also assess student progress through a variety of evaluation methods to provide constructive feedback to students as well as other stakeholders (NBPTS, 2002a).

The fourth core proposition states, “Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.” This proposition concludes that NBCTs conduct research to stay abreast of up-to-date subject matter data and current learning theories and instructional strategies. These teachers also examine lessons and find ways to expand their skills and incorporate new findings (NBPTS, 1999). Critical examinations of practice along with self-evaluations and edits of curricula in order to deepen knowledge, expand skills, and incorporate new findings into practice are also attributes they possess. NBCTs respect the cultural and family differences of their students and utilize a variety of instructional resources in order to accommodate (NBPTS, 2002a). NBCTs consult colleagues and experts in the subject-matter area for advice and resolve to find ways to improve educational practices. These teachers continually make difficult choices related to their curricula to meet the needs of their students. This ability is only possible when

the educator possesses a thorough knowledge of where the students are and where they need to go (NBPTS, 1999).

The fifth core proposition states, “Teachers are members of learning communities.” This proposition concludes that NBCTs collaborate with teacher-colleagues, students, parents, and business and industry leaders to determine and develop instructional methods to improve student learning (NBPTS, 2002a). Attributes to look for include mentoring, giving presentations, serving on a task force, and/or serving on a committee. These teachers actively seek partnerships with community groups and businesses and work creatively with students’ parents in order to enhance learning opportunities for students (NBPTS, 1999). NBCTs utilize all resources possessed by the stakeholders to enhance lessons and improve students’ understanding of concepts (NBPTS, 2002a).

## NBPTS Certification

### *Requirements*

The NBPTS certification process provides distinction for accomplished educators through a rigorous set of requirements based on the five core propositions of the NBPTS. First, the candidate must hold a baccalaureate degree and have a minimum of 3 years of either public school or private school teaching experience. The teacher must also have held a valid state teaching license during his or her tenure in education (NBPTS, 2001c).

NBPTS applicants must also demonstrate knowledge and skill through performance-based assessments. This two-step process takes approximately 200 to 400

clock hours or 6 to 18 months to complete and costs approximately \$2,300 for the initial submission and \$300 for all resubmissions. The first step of the NBPTS process involves the submission of four portfolio entries. These entries consist of student work samples, videotapes of the candidate in the classroom, and various instructional artifacts related to lesson plans. This documentation is supported by 10-page maximum commentaries where the teacher reflects on the effectiveness of lessons, the goals and objectives of the lessons, and the rationale of the lessons (NBPTS, 1999).

The first section of the portfolio involves the analysis of students' work. The candidate must analyze the strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of the lesson; analyze the learning processes demonstrated by the students; and determine what caused any errors that might have occurred. The second section of the portfolio involves a 20-minute videotaped lesson of students working in small-group collaborations. In this section, it is imperative that the teacher act as an observer and facilitator rather than as a presenter. Lastly, the teacher must defend the rationale as to why the lesson was most effective taught in a small group format (NBPTS, 2001c).

The third section of the portfolio involves a 20-minute videotape of a demonstration lesson. Again, the teacher needs to serve as a facilitator for the lesson, not a presenter. The scoring in the third section relies on the direct impact the lesson had on student learning as well as how the lesson promoted student involvement. The fourth section of the portfolio involves a teacher's achievements in the areas of professional growth, community involvement, and leadership in educational arenas. All data in this section must have a direct impact on student learning and achievement (Apley, 2002).

After the submission of the portfolio, assessors trained and certified by the National Board complete the scoring based on the standards set by the National Board (NBPTS, 1999). Buday and Kelly (1996) proclaimed the portfolio went beyond technical rationality and is an innovative method for collecting evidence of a teacher's capabilities through his or her thinking and reflective processes.

The second step of the NBPTS process involves an assessment center exercise at one of over 300 sites nationwide. This 1-day process involves candidates' responses to questions and scenarios related to content and knowledge in the subject-matter area utilizing six 30-minute assessments. These exercises involve responses to written questions related to implementing class activities and addressing current issues in the subject matter area (NBPTS, 2002a). According to Barringer (1993), the NBPTS written assessment exercises are rigorous and capture the richness and complexity of the teaching profession.

There are multiple avenues by which one can meet the standards on the assessment exercise (NBPTS, 2001c). These multiple avenues are due to the fact that the National Board acknowledges and takes into account diversity in teaching methods (NBPTS, 1999). The National Board also expects the potential NBCTs to emphasize the use of technology and multiple teaching contexts within their assessments (NBPTS, 2002a).

Applicants must meet a performance standard of a total of 275 points in the sections of the process in order to become certified. On average, the first-time passing rate for the NBPTS process is 48% (Vandervoort, Amrein-Beardsley, & Berliner, 2004).

“Applicants may bank all sections passed for 36 months and resubmit those sections not meeting performance standards” (“So You,” 2003, ¶ 3).

### *Incentives*

The NBPTS began certifying teachers in the mid-1990s, and currently 49 states offer financial support to teachers. Most states pay incentives to teachers for being certified by the National Board in 27 different certification areas. For example, Alabama offers a \$5,000 per year raise for 10 years and a one-time \$5,000 grant for the candidate’s classroom. The NBPTS certificate is valid for 10 years, and the teacher must be re-certified after that time (NBPTS, 2001c). All NBCTs will have the opportunity to renew their NBPTS certification after 10 years for a fee of \$1,150 and the submission of required documentation (“Standards and,” 2004).

According to Keller (2005), re-certification is far less grueling because it requires only four pieces of documentation of professional growth experiences and one video of a recent lesson. It is graded as pass or fail, while allowing two attempts, and it has an 88% pass rate for first-time submissions. Next, many states allow greater opportunities for interstate mobility for NBCTs (NBPTS, 2001c). Possibly the greatest advantage of NBPTS is the fact that NBCTs meet the definition of highly qualified. Federal legislation entitled *No Child Left Behind* requires that a highly qualified teacher be in every classroom in the United States by 2006 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

The NBPTS process offers an excellent professional development experience. In fact, over 80% of all NBCTs claim the National Board Certification process was their best professional development experience. NBPTS certification also has a positive effect

on teaching quality by helping teachers gain insight into their teaching (Goldhaber, Perry, & Anthony, 2004). Also, over 90% of all NBCTs stated that the process had a positive effect on teaching, with 83% having become more reflective about teaching (“The Impact,” 2002). In addition to serving as an excellent professional development tool, NBPTS certification also improves the chance that a teacher will receive teaching positions for which he or she may have applied. According to Gerald N. Tirozzi, Executive Director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, “National Board Certification can be used as a reliable measure to inform hiring decisions as well as an effective professional development tool” (“Principals’ Associations,” 2004, ¶ 7).

Graduate credit is available for all educators who participate in and/or complete the NBPTS process. The American Council on Education (ACE) reviewed the NBPTS process and recommends that participants be awarded three semester hours of graduate credit, while an additional three semester hours are awarded for those who achieve certification. This opportunity will save employers millions of dollars in tuition reimbursements and NBCTs thousands of dollars in tuition costs (“Graduate Credit to,” 2003).

All NBCTs who began the process during or after 1996–1997 are eligible for graduate credit after they submit an application and pay the \$100 fee. The National Board has an advocacy team to work with universities to help ensure that graduate credit will be awarded (“Graduate Credit,” 2004). “These ACE graduate credits are recognized by over

1,200 colleges and universities across the nation and may be used toward degree requirements, license renewals, and salary stipends” (“Graduate Credit,” 2004, ¶ 1).

According to research, NBPTS has had a positive influence on students and leads to positive interactions with other stakeholders. Sixty-nine percent of all NBCTs claim there has been improvement in their students’ achievement, engagement, and motivation. Also, many of these educators claim they have received increased recognition and respect among fellow educators, school administrators, and local communities (“The Impact,” 2002).

NBPTS leads to opportunities for leadership. “On average, NBCTs are involved in 10 leadership activities, and 99.6% of NBCTs are involved in at least one leadership activity” (“Accomplished Teachers,” 2004, ¶ 2). Ninety percent serve as mentors for NBPTS candidates, 83% serve as mentors for new teachers, and 68% serve their schools or districts on leadership committees. These leadership activities also increase a NBCTs desire to continue teaching. In fact, 94% experience career satisfaction, while 91% feel more significant in the profession and have more confidence in their teaching ability as a result of the NBPTS process (NBPTS, 2001b).

#### *NBPTS Advocates*

As stated earlier, NBPTS was created in 1987 by the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching. “This panel felt that rewarding accomplished teachers and creating a certification to improve teacher effectiveness were the best ways to improve education in the United States” (“Colleges Aligning,” 1997, ¶ 6). One year later, Darling-Hammond (1988) contended that NBPTS would cause the professional status of teachers to rise in

the eyes of the public because teachers would be given opportunities to provide leadership in instructional policy through NBPTS.

Shapiro (1994) supported the NBPTS process so strongly that she predicted the process would have such an impact that colleges and universities should reshape their curricula for teacher preparation programs to be more compatible with NBPTS standards. Shapiro also felt that the NBPTS assessments were up-to-date methods that were sensitive to the complexities of exemplary practice. Baker (1994) stated that colleges and universities should pattern their educational programs after the NBPTS standards, because such a program could offer the quality assistance needed to help teachers develop the skills that they will be expected to demonstrate for teacher certification. Shapiro (1995) predicted NBPTS would eventually surpass 30 subject areas and felt that the process displayed a level of accomplishment that surpasses basic state licensing requirements.

As of 2001, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), along with NBPTS, is working with colleges and universities in an effort to modify their master's programs so the curricula align with NBPTS standards ("Colleges Aligning," 1997). "NCATE and NBPTS desire that these educational programs link experienced teachers to the practice of accomplished teaching and help teachers learn the skills, knowledge, and judgment that characterize accomplished teaching" ("Colleges Aligning," 1997, ¶ 6).

According to Isenberg (2003), NBPTS can address some of the issues associated with many master's degree programs by offering state departments of education an



opportunity to advance the development of high quality programs for teachers. Guskey (2003) noted that using NBPTS standards in designing degree programs will offer new forms of professional development for teachers during this age of accountability for students' learning.

The University of North Carolina–Greensboro's Center for Educational Research and Evaluation conducted a study comparing 31 NBCTs to 34 unsuccessful NBPTS applicants. This study indicated that NBCTs were higher in 11 of 13 qualities considered essential for good teaching. These qualities include knowledge of subject matter, ability to improve instruction, and ability to promote academic achievement (Bond, Smith, Baker, & Hattie, 2000). Student work samples were examined in both groups, and the results indicated that almost 74% of the students taught by NBCTs demonstrated higher levels of comprehension in the concepts taught compared to 29% among students taught by teachers not achieving NBPTS certification (NBPTS, 2001d).

In order to remove any bias, the student work samples included multiple lessons from a single academic goal collected over a period of several weeks (Vandevoort et al., 2004). These work samples were then evaluated by a team of teachers having no knowledge of the certification status of the teachers ("Teachers with," 2000). According to Betty Caster, President of NBPTS, "This study tells parents, the community, educators, and policymakers National Board Certification is a distinction that really matters" ("Teachers with," 2000, p. 8).

A 2002 survey of almost 2000 teachers (both NBCTs and non-NBCTs) yielded interesting results. This study found that NBCTs were more likely to believe that each

child could be taught successfully regardless of his or her socioeconomic status and less likely to believe that external factors could have a permanent detrimental effect on a school. This study also indicated that NBCTs had a greater commitment to learning for their careers and displayed greater professionalism than the non-NBCTs (Whitman, 2002). Ralph (2003) conducted a study of 239 NBCTs in Florida and concluded on the basis of the results that NBCTs had a greater desire for leadership activities than did non-NBCTs. The NBCTs also indicated that they experienced the goals and objectives of the NBPTS, identified elements of a professional culture, and had an overall positive view of the NBPTS standards as they completed the process.

In a research study led by labor economist Dan Goldhaber of the University of Washington Center for Reinventing Public Education and the Urban Institute, the results indicated that, between NBCTs and teachers who submit for but fail NBPTS certification, NBCTs are more effective at raising student achievement, have a greater impact with younger students, and have a greater impact with students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (“Students Learn,” 2003). This large-scale study used standardized test results to link NBCTs and student achievement. Students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 taught by NBCTs improved an average of 7% more on annual math and reading tests than students of teachers attempting but failing NBPTS certification (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004).

The most profound improvement in the Goldhaber study occurred among younger and low-income students where improvements were as high as 15% or more on the math and reading tests (“Students Learn,” 2003). Goldhaber was able to link the records of more than 600,000 students in math and reading to individual teachers. The results of the

pretests and posttests indicated that NBCTs do a measurably better job in the classroom (“Independent Study,” 2004). According to NBPTS Board Chair, Roy E. Barnes, “The study provides state and national policymakers with proof that National Board Certification is a smart investment” (“Kids Learn,” 2004, ¶ 11).

In a study funded by the U.S. Department of Education, researchers concluded that students learn more from NBCTs. The researchers used North Carolina state test scores from 1996 through 1998 and developed controls for student backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, teacher backgrounds, school characteristics, and community factors. The study included third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade test scores from 1996 to 1998. The NBCTs data were drawn from the study, and the data concluded that NBCTs contribute to raising standard achievement test scores (“Students Learn,” 2003). Taylor (2000) conducted a study in Colorado on the changes experienced by 11 NBCTs upon completing the NBPTS process. These teachers had re-examined their previous teaching strategies and/or had designed new and more innovative ways of assessing students.

Bond et al. (2000) conducted a study designed to measure the differences between NBCTs and non-NBCTs and their impact on student learning and growth. The components of this study were 15 attributes of teaching excellence used to identify teachers whose students excelled in profound ways. The results of this study indicated that NBCTs overwhelmingly exceeded the non-NBCTs when using the 15 attributes as units of measurement. As a result of the study, this group felt compelling evidence had been offered that NBCTs were having a positive impact on the levels of accomplished teaching.

According to Stokes, St. John, Helms, and Maxon (2004), the Washington Initiative (WI) was created in 2001 utilizing \$4.1 million of grant funds acquired through commitments from the Stuart Foundation, Washington Mutual, and the Gates Foundation. WI's primary purpose is to strengthen education reform in the State of Washington by addressing teacher quality using two broad strategies for accomplishing this purpose. These strategies are to increase the number of NBCTs in the State of Washington and promote NBCTs as agents for school reform. Assumptions are that teachers gain greater professional status, become more effective in the classroom, gain enhanced career satisfaction, develop new professional relationships, and raise the standard of professionalism in education by completing the NBPTS process. WI conducted a study and concluded that 75% of all NBCTs completed the NBPTS process in order to achieve personal growth as a teacher. As a result of WI's use of grant funds to support National Board Certification, the State of Washington was to have at least 250 new NBCTs by 2004–2005.

An impact study was conducted related to the effects of the NBPTS Pilot Project in Iowa. The study involved 1,018 teachers who were NBCTs, those nearing the completion of NBPTS, and those who had not been involved in the NBPTS process. Also, 287 principals of teachers involved in the NBPTS process were surveyed. Of the 564 teachers responding to the survey, almost all of the NBCTs and those nearing the completion of NBPTS rated this experience as either excellent or good and would recommend the process to their colleagues. Also, almost all surveyed agreed they had

developed stronger curricula and had improved ways of evaluating student learning while increasing the levels of engagement by students (Dethlefs et al., 2001).

Hiebert (1999) feels these advances in teachers' professional knowledge will enhance what students learn and what students have the opportunity to learn. The Iowa study differs from this research study due to the fact that it involved mostly teachers and only some principals and rated the experiences of those who had either completed or who were near completing the NBPTS process as well as those that witnessed the completion of the process. This research study will measure the principals' comparisons of NBCTs and non-NBCTs using the core propositions as standards of measurement.

Next, two thirds of the Iowa respondents agreed or strongly agreed they more often collaborated with parents, community members, school leaders, and other stakeholders about teaching issues and student learning as a result of the NBPTS process. Of the 134 principals responding to the survey, 40% perceived there had been an increase in student learning in the classrooms of the NBCTs. Also, more than half of these principals felt their NBCTs were more innovative as a result of the NBPTS process (Dethlefs et al., 2001).

The Education Commission of the States stamped their approval of the NBPTS process by responding to a recent study by Professor J. E. Stone at East Tennessee State University. Based on his results, Stone claimed that 16 students of NBCTs indicated little or no improvement in performance. The Education Commission of the States claimed that Stone's sample size was too small and involved only one geographical area [Tennessee] (Vandervoort et al., 2004). As a result of these facts, it would be unfair to

base recommendations about the entire NBPTS process (Jacobson, 2004). There are also concerns about the study, based on the fact that Stone is an active opponent of NBPTS and Tennessee has a low number of NBCTs for comparisons (Keller, 2002). Lastly, Cavaluzzo (2004) concluded that Stone's study did not report statistical significance utilizing any of the traditional tests.

Research conducted in 14 Arizona school districts with third, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders compared SAT-9 scores of students in classrooms taught by NBCTs with those students in classrooms taught by non-NBCTs. The results of the research indicated that students taught by NBCTs scored higher in 35 of 48 (almost 75%) key measures in reading, math, and language arts (Vandervoort et al., 2004). The researchers also calculated cost-effectiveness of the NBPTS process. The average gains of the students taught by NBCTs were equivalent to a little over a month of additional schooling. Arizona spends nearly \$7,000 per year per student. This additional schooling provided by the NBCTs resulted in over \$700,000 worth of instruction (NBPTS, 2004a).

In addition to student achievement, Vandervoort et al. (2004) also evaluated the perceptions of the school principals of these Arizona teachers possessing NBPTS certification. Eighty-five percent of the principals surveyed concluded that the NBCTs on their instructional staff were among the best teachers they had ever supervised, while 91% of the principals felt that the NBPTS process improves teacher quality ("Principals' Associations," 2004). Jana Miller, Desert Willow Elementary School principal in Cave Creek, Arizona, concluded,

I am working to encourage business leaders in our community to embrace and endorse the National Board Certification process in order to increase the number of candidates pursuing certification. NBCTs are among the best teachers out there, are natural reflectors, and want to continue to better their practice.

(“Principals’ Associations,” ¶ 10)

Former Georgia Governor Roy Barnes stated, “Children taught by NBCTs receive the equivalent of 25 additional days of instruction at no cost to the taxpayers” (NBPTS, 2004a, ¶ 3). Hanushek (1992) agreed with Barnes, proclaiming that a high quality teacher can provide one full year’s difference in the learning of a class of children in comparison to a low quality teacher. Moss et al. (2004) feel that the portfolio and assessments only give a brief glimpse of the capability of these teachers and the process has made positive contributions to the teaching practice of NBCTs.

In the Miami-Dade Public Schools, Cavalluzzo (2004) conducted a study that suggested students of NBCTs did a measurably better job on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test than did the students of non-NBCTs. In fact, the coefficients for the NBCTs were high, positive, and statistically significant, while the coefficients for the non-NBCTs were low, negative, and statistically insignificant (NBPTS, 2004b).

Cavalluzzo, chief investigator of the study and senior researcher stated, “Parents want their child in a class taught by a NBCT because her group had found robust evidence that National Board Certification is an effective indicator of teacher quality” (NBPTS, 2004b, ¶ 3).

Two recent research studies have shown the strengths of NBCTs compared to non-NBCTs related to student assessment and classroom practices. The first study was conducted by researchers from the University of North Carolina, the Western Region Education Service Alliance, and the Assessment Training Institute. The researchers concluded that student assessments used by NBCTs were more closely tied to the goals and objectives of instructional units than were the student assessments of the non-NBCTs. The second study was conducted by researchers from Appalachian State University. The researchers reported there was a statistically significant difference between the depths of learning achieved by the students of NBCTs and the depths of learning achieved by the students of teachers who had attempted and not received NBPTS certification (“Studies Show,” 2005).

In Jefferson County, Alabama, County Commission President Larry Lankford has requested \$5 million divided over a 5-year period to fund NBPTS certification for many of the 7,213 teachers in the county’s 12 school districts. The ultimate goal for the County Commission is to see all the teachers in the 12 school districts NBPTS certified. Currently, about 3% of the county’s teachers are NBPTS certified and the Jefferson County Schools Public Education Foundation feels, based on observations of the current NBCTs, that the rigorous process helps teachers master the subjects they teach and apply this knowledge in the classroom (Wright, 2005).

The County Commission will require that each participant commit to work for their current school system for a minimum of 5 years. This rule is due to the fact that these teachers will comply with *No Child Left Behind’s* highly qualified teacher status



and that the school administrators feel students are given a second chance when the best-qualified teachers are in the classrooms (Wright, 2005). The Governor's Congress on School Leadership in Alabama also cited their faith in the NBPTS process when funding was requested in the group's action plan for a recognition program for principals similar to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards ("Governor's Congress," 2005).

Brotherton (2002) reported that the Board of Directors for the NBPTS is making attempts to address concerns related to the low passing rate percentage of African American applicants. The Board of Directors is working with the HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) Organization to align the schools' teacher education curriculum with the standards of the NBPTS process. Also, a partnership with school districts is in effect to recruit African American teachers for NBPTS certification and to develop programs that provide teacher support throughout the completion of process.

#### *NBPTS Critics*

Although the NBPTS process has much support and statements of accomplishments, Raspberry (1992) stated that the process does not improve teaching and relies on formal measures rather than the needs of the individual school. Parker (1993) feels that quality licensed teachers would be replaced by higher paid NBCTs and fears that the NBPTS plan goes against the historical tradition of teacher training programs in colleges. Tracz et al. (1995) noted that the rigorous NBPTS process was time consuming, might not represent the highest caliber of education, and had a negative impact on the self-esteem of non-certified teachers. Kowalski, Chittenden, Spicer, Jones,

and Tocci (1997) fear the negative stereotypes that would result if a teacher were unsuccessful in completing the NBPTS process.

Due to the prerequisites to apply for and the rigorous process to achieve NBPTS, a new organization called The American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) has been developed. ABCTE creates alternative routes for professionals to enter the teaching field, establishes national teaching credentials, and serves as a system for identifying outstanding veteran teachers and teaching practices that lead to documented gains in student achievement (NBPTS, 2004c). Unlike NBPTS, ABCTE is available to entry level teachers, requires no teaching certificate, and requires no portfolio or analysis of documentation. Instead, ABCTE requires a content exam in one of three areas related to the specific field of the ABCTE candidate (NBPTS vs. ABCTE, 2003).

These ABCTE assessments are designed to validate the expertise of each applicant and claim to be an accurate reflection of the NBPTS process. These ABCTE exams are machine scored, thus eliminating any potential bias by the so-called “assessors” provided by NBPTS. ABCTE plans to require expenses less than \$2,300 for submission and less than \$300 for resubmission (NBPTS vs. ABCTE, 2003). Lastly, ABCTE plans to distribute salary bonuses for certified teachers, resulting from the fact that \$40 million of federal government support has been received from 2001 through 2005 and another \$8 million were allocated in President Bush’s 2006 budget. In fact, this funding has encouraged ABCTE officials because there has been no support for NBPTS during the George W. Bush administration including the 2006 budget (“In the News,” 2005). This opposition is likely due to the fact some state policymakers are concerned

that they may not be getting a return on the money they have invested by supporting NBPTS (“National Opposition,” 2004).

Currently, there appears to be a surge in the ABCTE format, as suggested by the fact that it is being funded by discretionary funds from the U.S. Secretary of Education and is being honored in Florida, Idaho, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania. At this rate, ABCTE is expected to continue to grow especially given that it offers a fast-track for teachers to demonstrate the subject-matter knowledge required to be labeled as highly qualified (“National Opposition,” 2004). The Fordham Foundation (1999) has also proposed a manifesto wherein teachers would make higher salaries if they could prove their students had made gains in achievement and/or they taught in a subject area where there was a shortage of certified teachers.

According to Holland (2003), Professor J. E. Stone, founder of the Education Consumer Clearinghouse and professor at East Tennessee State University, completed a study of 16 of Tennessee’s 40 NBCTs. The results of Stone’s study claimed that in all 16 cases, the student achievement gains under the NBCTs were no greater than the gains made under other teachers (Holland, 2003). “When a certification process is checked 16 times and found wrong in every instance, any reasonable person would say it isn’t trustworthy regardless of what might be inferred about others who have been certified by the same process,” Stone commented (Holland, 2003, ¶ 11).

Stone (2002) also criticized the study by the Center for Educational Research and Education at the University of North Carolina–Greensboro, which compared 31 teachers who were awarded NBPTS certification to 34 teachers who applied and were not

awarded NBPTS certification. This study indicated that the NBCTs were higher in 11 of 13 qualities the NBPTS considers essential to good teaching (NBPTS, 2001d). Stone (2002) claimed that the student work samples were chosen by the participating NBCTs, resulting in a biased measure. Stone (2002) also pointed out the findings of his studies presented a serious challenge to the NBPTS process and feels that teacher bonuses should be suspended until NBPTS certification delivers what it promises.

In 2003, the Center on Reinventing Public Education conducted research regarding the NBPTS process. The disturbing conclusion was that there may be gender bias, given that women are 75% more likely to apply for and 30% more likely to gain NBPTS than are men. Racial bias was also a concern after the study because the results concluded that African American teachers are 30% more likely to apply for NBPTS but 70% less likely to be certified than their White counterparts. In fact, the results indicated that an African American scoring a full standard deviation above the mean would have the same chance of being certified as a White applicant scoring a full standard deviation below the mean ("Making the Grade," 2003). Goldhaber et al.(2004) also conducted a study and concluded that young, African American females who score well on standardized tests are more likely to apply for NBPTS certification, that African American (male and female) teachers and male teachers are less likely to achieve NBPTS certification, and that teachers who score well on standardized tests are more likely to achieve NBPTS certification.

Bond (1998), prior to this research, had noted that African American teachers were failing to achieve NBPTS certification in disproportionate numbers. Irvine and

Fraser (1998) also revealed some disturbing data that indicated only 11% of African American applicants achieve NBPTS certification on the first submission compared to 45% for White applicants. They felt that these figures indicated a narrow and standardized view of teaching. Irvine and Fraser (1998) went on to state, “Standards aimed at increasing teacher quality and accountability has ignored the cultural and pedagogical style and beliefs that African American teachers bring to their classrooms” (p. 42).

Socioeconomic concerns related to NBPTS certification that resulted from this study were that the successful applicants teach fewer children in poverty, fewer minority children, more students with college-educated parents, and students from neighborhoods with high median home values. Lastly, the data show that applicants who score high on standardized tests such as the Praxis and SAT are more likely to apply for NBPTS certification and become certified (“Making the Grade,” 2003).

Burroughs, Schwartz, and Hendricks-Lee (2000) conducted a study of four NBPTS candidates and performed a case study on these individuals’ perceptions of the process. These teachers claimed they had difficulty portraying their teaching in a written form and felt the NBPTS valued the ability to write, not the ability to teach. Pool, Ellett, Schiavone, and Carey-Lewis (2001) evaluated the way NBPTS certified candidates by utilizing small samples of NBCTs to help determine if this was a valid way to measure teaching. This group discovered that the quality of teaching and learning taking place in the classrooms of these teachers varied greatly. The researchers felt these discrepancies resulted from the candidates’ giving the NBPTS evaluators “false positives” in the

written portion of the portfolio (narratives) and during responses to the questions on the assessment exercises. According to the group, this explanation appears to be the only one for how the NBCTs ranged from novice to expert related to years of experience in the classroom.

Stephens (2003) conducted a study comparing the performance of 154 students of NBCTs and 669 students of non-NBCTs utilizing South Carolina's Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test as an assessment instrument. Although this study was not statistically sophisticated, the results reveal that there were no significant differences in the two groups in 87% of the cases. Ballou (1998) expressed concerns with the NBPTS process claiming it was too subjective in nature and too vague. He also questioned the validity of the opinions of a panel of educators on what an accomplished teacher should know and be able to do and felt that the NBCTs were initially superior teachers, and this fact was not a result of completing the NBPTS process.

McDonald-O'Brien (1995) expressed concern about the lack of voice from the teachers in the assessment process and had concerns about the candidates' lack of feedback throughout the process and opportunity for discussion of documentation with assessors. Thirunarayanan (2004) feels an accomplished teacher should hold a doctorate in his or her area of expertise, should have at least 5 years of classroom experience, and should be able to document significant gains in student achievement. He also feels that fiscally awarding too many novice teachers will result in society paying billions of dollars for a tax hoax.

Marshall (1996) expressed concern that the NBPTS process would create a competitive environment rather than the collegial environment that it proclaims. King (1994) concluded that educational institutions would become informal hierarchies and the process would divide, not unite, educators and would have detrimental effects on the pedagogical process due to the vagueness of the NBPTS standards, which in his opinion, amounted to no more than a slogan system. This division was discussed by Burroughs (2001) in an article depicting the NBPTS process experiences of a teacher from an upper-middle class area compared to a teacher from an underclass area. The teacher from the more prominent area found much more local support and much less animosity among peers than did the teacher from the less prominent region. This article indicated that there is more division among NBCTs and non-NBCTs in less affluent neighborhoods.

Petrosky (1994) had the original contract for the NBPTS assessments. He proposed a scoring system that relied on extensive training of scorers to support the reliability of the assessment results. Petrosky's system proposed that in-depth interpretive summaries be written by the judges regarding each candidate's score. The NBPTS Board of Directors in Detroit, Michigan, determined that the assessment plan proposed by Petrosky was not cost efficient and issued a new contract to Educational Testing Service. As a result of this fact, Delandshere and Petrosky (1994) stated that the NBPTS had chosen a less complicated, less expensive, and less time consuming assessment process so judges could be trained in 3 or 4 days resulting in scores assigned that would yield a type of "canned feedback." Serafini (2002) noticed there was an obvious tension between Petrosky and the NBPTS and their processes. Serafini has expressed some of the same

concerns as Petrosky and stated that the NBPTS accuses Petrosky of exhibiting “sour grapes.”

Podgursky (2001a) declared that any studies related to the 13 dimensions of teaching expertise (University of North Carolina-Greensboro) were not of quality and he claimed that the 13 dimensions were vague. He also maintained that the studies contained possible bias due to a lack of controls for academic history, socioeconomic status, and/or demographics. Podgursky (2001b) also faulted NBPTS for not using input from parents and/or principals as a portion of the assessments. He went on to claim that the entire NBPTS process was a product of teacher unions’ dissatisfaction with merit pay and many applicants had passed the certification process despite having grammatical errors in documentation.

#### Impact of NBPTS Certification

NBPTS conducted several surveys during 2001 in order to produce research that documented how the certification process impacts a teacher’s ability to teach and interact with stakeholders. A survey of candidates in September of 2001 resulted in several key findings. Ninety-two percent of those surveyed said the NBPTS process made them a better teacher while 96% rated the NBPTS process as a positive professional development experience. Eighty-nine percent of the candidates claimed that the process helped them create stronger curricula and helped improve evaluation techniques while 82% claimed that the process enhanced interactions with students and parents. Eighty percent of the candidates said they received high levels of support from principals, 86%



claimed they received support from teacher colleagues, and 63% received support from central office staff (NBPTS, 2001a).

Two other surveys conducted in 2001 involved teachers who had successfully completed the NBPTS process and teachers who were serving as assessors for the NBPTS process. Eighty percent of the NBCTs and assessors said their experiences were better than other professional development activities they had participated in prior to this experience. Sixty-one percent of the NBCTs claimed that the process had a greater impact on them than receiving the certification itself. Eighty-six percent of the assessors claimed it was useful for them to work with their peers while 89% of them said they would work as assessors again. Ninety-one percent of the NBCTs said the NBPTS process had positively affected their teaching practices, 75% of the NBCTs said they had incorporated new instructional techniques into their curriculum, and 83% of them said they had become more reflective about their teaching practices. Seventy-five percent of the NBCTs said the NBPTS process had changed how they interact with students, 69% of the NBCTs reported positive changes in student achievement and motivation, and 74% reported they were serving in additional professional roles and activities within their school systems (NBPTS, 2001e).

The Indiana Professional Standards Board (IPSB) has completed a study regarding NBCTs impact on education in its state. This study was conducted as an informative measure about NBPTS for state government officials, educational professionals, and the general public in the State of Indiana. The IPSB found that 62.5% of NBCTs have been offered leadership roles within their schools, 19% have been invited

to be guest speakers, and 16% have been selected to become members of Disney American Teacher review committees. Twenty-five percent of the members of the IPSB believed NBCTs liked challenge, while 22% believed NBCTs were lifelong learners. Overall, there was a general consensus that the NBPTS process made the teachers more effective in the educational environment (“Status of,” 2004).

The results of these studies clearly establish that the NBPTS process is an excellent professional development opportunity, that it potentially improves teaching practices, that it leads to increased professional recognition, and that it improves student attitudes about learning (NBPTS, 2001e). Nancy Flanagan (2003), an NBCT, claims that the NBPTS process is a transformative process. The NBPTS process takes candidates on an interactive and unpredictable journey through their teaching practice. The NBPTS process takes teachers away from less productive methods of teaching toward motivation and accomplishment related to their subject areas. Deborah Cole, a NBCT from Mississippi, said the NBPTS process gave her a chance to prove to herself that her classroom activities were actually meaningful to students (NBPTS, 2000).

In a 2004 study in Arizona, students taught by NBCTs outperformed students taught by non-NBCTs in almost 75% of reading, math, and language arts measures (NBPTS, 2004a). As a result of this study, Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano said, “National Board Certification improves teacher effectiveness and student achievement and this is why I plan to help grow the number of Arizona teachers who are National Board Certified” (NBPTS, 2004a, ¶ 7). NBPTS President Joseph Aguerrebere stated, “These are encouraging results for school systems working to raise student achievement,

comply with the requirements of the federal *No Child Left Behind* Act and do it all in tight budgetary times” (NBPTS, 2004a, ¶ 12).

The results of this study yielded the views of Arizona school principals whose staffs included NBCTs. Eighty-five percent of the principals stated that NBCTs were among some of the best teachers they had ever supervised. Seventy-five percent of the principals observed positive changes in the practices of teachers pursuing NBPTS, while 91% of the principals said that the NBPTS process improves teacher quality (Vandervoort et al., 2004).

Margaret Bates, an NBCT and assistant superintendent of education in charge of leading a school restructuring effort in the State of Washington said, “I began to see beyond a school, beyond a district, and ultimately beyond a state through National Board Certification” (Bankston, 2003, p. 5). Bates also said that the NBPTS process broadened her view of the teaching profession, compelled her involvement in school reform efforts, and demonstrated for her the power of teachers working together (Bankston, 2003).

Principal Jo Haney has noticed teachers growing professionally, reflecting on their teaching practices, refining their instructional techniques, and developing friendships with colleagues as they work through the NBPTS process (NBPTS, 2000). These types of feelings must be common nationwide due to the fact that the total number of NBCTs in America is estimated to rise from just over 16,000 in 2001 to over 100,000 in 2006 (Harmon, 2001). This potential for growth is evident due to the fact that there were over 40,000 NBCTs nationwide in March of 2005 (“NBCTs by,” 2005).

The impact of the NBPTS process in many educational settings has resulted in the support of school leaders. Sharon Buddin, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) 2002 Principal of the Year, leads a staff of 120, 13 of whom are NBCTs. The Columbia, South Carolina, native and Principals Advisory Board for NBPTS member believes that the NBPTS process gives teachers a chance for self-examination. She also believes that as the number of NBCTs at her school increases so will her student achievement test scores (“South Carolina’s,” 2002).

David Coley, a veteran principal of three different schools from Cary, North Carolina, concluded that NBPTS encourages collegiality across the staff, creates bonds across departments and disciplines, improves morale, and encourages teamwork. Any of Coley’s teachers who apply for NBPTS are given a laptop computer to take home and use, are given access to all the materials needed to compile the portfolio, and are given a video camera to use for all of the taped lessons. Coley has also convinced his current school district to go beyond the North Carolina incentive with an additional \$500 bonus (“South Carolina’s,” 2002).

Kevin McHugh, the 2002 NASSP National Middle Level Principal of the Year, believes the NBPTS process engages educators in high quality learning and self-reflection about the teaching and learning process. McHugh also believes NBPTS could be a catalyst to support many initiatives for improving student learning and feels that fellow principals would benefit from having a NBCT on the staff (“South Carolina’s,” 2002).

School superintendents across the country are encouraging their teachers to complete the NBPTS process because of the results they are seeing in the classroom. Superintendent John Deasy of California bases his support of NBPTS on the achievement rates of English Language Arts students taught by NBCTs compared to those students who were not taught by NBCTs. Deasy feels that NBCTs are top quality people who have gone through a rigorous process to demonstrate high levels of mastery (“Superintendent’s Support,” 2001). Deasy commented, “The National Board Certification process is the single best professional development opportunity available and concludes that a teacher cannot complete the process and not be a better teacher” (“Superintendent’s Support,” 2001, p. 1).

Dr. Daniel Domenech, a superintendent in Virginia, has witnessed a strong correlation between NBCTs and student achievement. At Riverside Elementary, a low-performing school, fifth graders taught by new NBCTs increased their passing rate on the writing section of the Virginia Standards of Learning exam by 23.5% when compared to the previous year’s scores. There were also noticeable improvements in the areas of science, history, and mathematics. Dr. Domenech offers a \$4,000 stipend to all NBCTs willing to mentor potential candidates. As a result of these efforts, the total number of NBCTs has increased from 10 to around 100 during Dr. Domenech’s tenure (“Superintendents Support,” 2001).

Dr. Rudy Castruita, California’s 1992 Superintendent of the Year and current superintendent of the San Diego County Schools, values NBPTS and what it does for student learning. This feeling is partly due to the fact that in the classrooms he observes

being taught by NBCTs, the students are on-task and academically engaged and higher-order reasoning and learning are taking place. Dr. Castruita advises fellow superintendents to praise the efforts of NBCTs and support them by working with the state legislature to provide financial support for them. Dr. Castruita envisions a time when the majority of the teachers in the 42 separate school districts he oversees are NBCTs. He communicates to his local communities that NBPTS is on his agenda and he is committed to the process of increasing the number of NBCTs (“San Diego,” 2002).

South Carolina’s State Superintendent of Education, Inez Tenenbaum, summed up her support of NBPTS by commenting, “Simply stated, it works” (“South Carolina’s,” 2002, p. 6). Tenenbaum’s feelings are based on the evidence she sees indicating that NBPTS is an excellent professional development opportunity that recognizes accomplished teachers and helps them become more proficient in the classroom and that it is helping accomplish South Carolina’s goals for teacher quality. Tenenbaum has continued to support her NBCTs yearly bonus of \$7,500 despite budget shortages. In fact, she has applied for research grants so she can accumulate more data to back up what she already sees as true (South Carolina’s, 2002). She commented, “I have no doubt that NBCTs have had positive impacts on student achievement. Just sitting in a room with NBCTs and listening to their conversations about their students and teaching will convince you of that” (“South Carolina’s,” 2002, p. 6).

## Summary of Review of Literature

NBPTS was developed in 1987 by the Carnegie Task Force in response to *A Nation at Risk* (1983) with a focus on raising standards to strengthen teaching in order to improve schools and student learning. This group has developed standards for 27 certificate areas centered on five core propositions. NBPTS is a voluntary and rigorous process available to all educators who possess a baccalaureate degree, have a minimum of 3 years of teaching experience, and hold a valid teaching license.

NBPTS applicants must develop a portfolio consisting of four sections and complete six 30-minute assessment exercises. NBPTS offers several incentives for prospective teachers including salary bonuses, graduate school credits, and the highly qualified status. Based on preliminary research, NBPTS has made an impact in educational arenas. There are both advocates and critics regarding the NBPTS process. This review of literature gave a thorough overview of both of these NBPTS points of view based on current research. Regardless of the varying opinions, NBPTS realizes that the future of our nation depends on the quality of our educational system and is trying to raise the standard to ensure success.

### III. METHODS

#### Population

The population for this study was school principals in the State of Alabama having at least one NBCT on his or her instructional staff for a minimum of 1 school year. Since the entire population was surveyed, the sample consisted of those members of the population that volunteered to complete and return the survey. Population members were identified utilizing the NBPTS website ([www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org)) to find every NBCT in Alabama and the school where he or she teaches. Next, the Alabama State Department of Education website ([www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu)) was used to determine the name and contact information for each NBCT's principal, and this individual became a population member.

There were 402 schools in Alabama having at least one NBCT on the instructional staff. However, first-year principals were not selected due to the fact that they would have been the supervisor of the NBCT(s) for only a short period of time and would not possess enough working knowledge of the NBCT(s) to make a fair evaluation on a survey. There were 74 new principals of NBCT(s) in Alabama and 20 schools in Alabama lost the only NBCT on the instructional staff to either retirement or transfer, thus leaving a total of 308 population members. Of the 308 population members, 277 completed the survey, resulting in a participation rate of 89.93% and a sample of 277.



Table 1 provides the demographic characteristics of the 277 respondents. The sample consisted of 147 males and 130 females with a mean experience as a school principal of 9.13 years. There were 229 Whites, 45 Blacks, and 3 others who had served an average of 9.10 years at their current school with an instructional staff averaging 2.24 NBCTs and 42.87 non-NBCTs.

Table 1  
*Demographic Characteristics of the Sample*

Characteristic	NBCT and Non-NBCT (n = 277)
Gender:	
Male	147
Female	130
Race:	
White	229
Black	45
Other	3
Years of experience:	Mean principal experience of 9.13 years
Number of NBCTs:	Mean of 2.24 NBCTs per principal
Number of non-NBCTs:	Mean of 42.87 non-NBCTs per principal
Years served at current school:	Mean of 9.10 years

## Research Instrument

The research instrument was designed to assess perceptions of both NBCT(s) and non-NBCTs. The five core propositions of the NBPTS were the constructs measured: commitment to student learning (items 1 through 15), knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it (items 16 through 24), management and assessment of student learning (items 25 through 35), systematic thought about practice (items 36 through 46), and membership in learning communities (items 47 through 59). The NBPTS created the core propositions that serve as the standards for the process. Each core proposition consists of a list of qualities that each NBPTS candidate must meet in order to become certified. These qualities became the 59 survey items.

To provide demographic information, six questions were placed at the end of the survey. Demographic data collected included gender, race, the number of years experience as a principal, the number of NBCTs on the instructional staff, the number of non-NBCTs on the instructional staff, and the number of years served at the current school.

Based on research, the scalar categories for each of the items were designed to run in the same direction throughout the survey in order to provide consistency and prevent confusion (Dillman, 2000). The instrument was developed in an easy-to-follow format with the items clearly stated under subheadings for each dependent variable. According to Dillman, Sinclair, and Clark (1993), organized surveys in easy-to-follow formats can improve response rates. The topic for this study had salience (value or importance) for

the population because each of them had at least one NBCT on his or her instructional staff.

A 5-point Likert scale was used for the core proposition items. Response choices were *strongly disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *neither agree nor disagree* (3), *agree* (4), and *strongly agree* (5). The 5-point (odd numbered) Likert scale was chosen in order to provide a neutral option which helped eliminate forcing the respondents to give an opinion and potentially skewing the data ("Surveying Response," 2000). Chang (1994) claimed that reliability is maximized by 7-point, 5-point, or 3-point Likert scales. Chang (1994) further stated that as the number of response options on a survey increase, the greater the likelihood of error due to the fact that differences are likely on the respondents' personal definitions of the endpoints of the scale. Chang's research led to the use of a 5-point Likert scale for this study given that variability would have been limited with the 3-point scale

#### Sampling/Data Collection Procedures

A letter introducing the study (Appendix A) was sent by the US Mail to each member of the population a week prior to the anticipated date that the population member would receive the survey. The survey (Appendix B) was sent to each member of the population by the US Mail. The survey was mailed to each member of the population along with a return envelope both addressed and return-addressed to the researcher's home address, to ensure that the respondent's data would remain completely anonymous. In addition to the survey and the return envelop, a cover letter (Appendix C) was included

that introduced the study, explained the importance of the study, assured that all data collected would remain anonymous, and gave appreciation to the principal for participation. Also enclosed was the letter of approval for the study from the Auburn University Institutional Review Board (Appendix D), an information sheet on Auburn University letterhead (Appendix E) addressing the benefits of the study and assuring the population member that all data collected would remain anonymous, a letter of interest for the study from the NBPTS Director of Research (Appendix F), and a letter from the Alabama State Department of Education supporting the study (Appendix G).

A pre-stamped post card was also included with a mailing label to the researcher and a return label for the population member so that members of the population who had not completed and returned the survey could be identified. The post card was mailed by the respondent separately from the survey, protecting the identity of the respondent. Hand-written directions for the post card were placed on an attached note complete with the population member's first name and the researcher's original signature. The note was attached to develop personalization of correspondence and exhibit the dedication of the researcher for the study. According to Dillman (2000), personalization gives a study the look and feel of being generated by a real person instead of a computer and can increase response rates by up to 11%. A total of 146 surveys were received as a result of the initial mailing.

Two weeks after the survey and return envelopes were mailed, a follow-up letter (Appendix H) was sent by US Mail to each member of the population both to serve as a reminder for those who had yet to complete and return the survey and thanking those who

had already completed and returned the survey. According to a study by Heberlein and Baumgartner (1978), salient surveys yielded a 35% higher response rate than did non-salient surveys. Heberlein and Baumgartner (1978) also found that three population contacts yielded over a 34% increase in response rates than did using only one population contact and that salience combined with multiple contacts will account for over 50% of the variance in response rates regardless of the design and layout of the survey. A total of 32 surveys were received as a result of the follow-up mailing.

Beyond these methods of data collection, the survey was administered to population members at conventions/or meetings where population members were in attendance. Sixty-six surveys were administered on June 27, 2005, at the annual Council for Leaders in Alabama's Schools (CLAS) convention in Mobile. As a packet of information containing the survey was administered to a population member, his or her name, school, and school system was documented in order to remove him or her from the mailing list. The separate list also protected the identity of the respondent. A letter of support from the president of CLAS (Appendix I) was included in this packet of information. The same scenario was repeated at the annual Alabama Association of Career-Technical Educators (ACTE) convention in Birmingham on July 26, 2005 as 33 more surveys were administered. A letter of support from the Alabama Director of ACTE (Appendix J) was included in the packet of information.

## Reliability/Validity

Reliability is an estimate of whether a survey yields consistent results. Validity is an estimate of whether a survey yields accurate results. The statement, “Reliability is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for validity,” describes the relationship between reliability and validity (Huck, 2004). Due to the fact that research data can be reliable without being valid, both reliability and validity are addressed in this study (“Reliability and,” 1985).

The method used in this study to estimate reliability was internal consistency. A single measurement instrument is administered to a group of people on one occasion. Internal consistency reliability is an estimate of how well survey items uniformly address the same construct (Huck, 2004).

The most common internal consistency reliability estimation, Cronbach’s alpha, was computed in this study. Cronbach’s alpha measures the extent to which a series of items in an instrument measure an individual variable (Cronbach, 1951). Alpha coefficients theoretically range in value from 0.00 to 1.00. The higher the score, the more consistent (reliable) the scale is. An alpha coefficient of .70 or higher is considered acceptable in most educational applications (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Table 2 displays Cronbach’s alpha levels for both NBCTs and non-NBCTs on the five survey scales. The alpha levels exceeded .70 on all scales for the NBCTs and all but one for the non-NBCTs. In fact, alpha levels were at or above .90 in 7 of 10 cases. The results in this table indicate a sufficient level of reliability for this study.

Table 2

*Cronbach's Alpha Levels for NBCTs and Non-NBCTs on the Five Survey Scales*

Scale	Alpha	
	NBCTs	Non-NBCTs
Commitment to student learning	.94	.91
Knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it	.93	.69
Management and assessment of student learning	.94	.91
Systematic thought about practice	.93	.90
Membership in learning communities	.88	.89

The substantive stage of research involves the procedures used to define the construct of a study and determine the variables measuring the construct. This study applied the substantive stage (both the theoretical domain and the empirical domain) by defining the construct, determining the variables to measure the construct, and determining the ways these variables will be measured by conducting and reporting the results of intensive research on existing literature related to NBPTS (Benson, 1998).

The five core propositions of the NBPTS became the variables defining the construct of interest in this study, the NBPTS process. Much information about each

variable from the research literature led to the survey items logically related to each variable. Construct validity deals with the logic of survey items measuring variables. A balanced Likert rating scale for the instrument was used to measure the variables defining the construct. According to Ray (1982), the results of a study he conducted suggested that balanced scales result in more construct validity than scales that are not balanced.

### Data Analysis

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine if the school principals rated the NBCTs and the non-NBCTs differently on a weighted combination of the following variables: commitment to student learning, knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it, management and assessment of student learning, systematic thought about practice, and membership in learning communities. Pillia's Trace served as a multivariate test of significance of the difference between the means of the two groups. Eta squared yielded the proportion of variance in the variables that could be explained by the differences between the teacher groups (Green & Salkind, 2003). The multivariate analysis of variance yielded results for Research Question 1.

Univariate *t* tests were used to determine if the principals rated the means of the NBCTs and the non-NBCTs differently on each respective survey variables (Green & Salkind, 2003). The *t* tests yielded results for Research Questions 2 through 6.



## IV. RESULTS

### Overview

A survey was used to assess the effectiveness of National Board Certification process based on the perceptions of school principals in the State of Alabama. The significance of the difference between their mean ratings for the NBCTs and the non-NBCTs on survey items related to teacher commitment to student learning, knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it, management and assessment of student learning, systematic thought about practice, and membership in learning communities was determined.

### Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Results

#### *Research Question 1*

Do the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff differ significantly from non-NBCTs on a weighted combination of these variables: commitment to student learning, knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it, management and assessment of student learning, systematic thought about practice, and membership in learning communities?

The null hypothesis stated the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on a weighted combination of these variables: commitment to student learning, knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it,

management and assessment of student learning, systematic thought about practice, and membership in learning communities ( $p < .05$ ).

The results of the multivariate analysis used to address Research Question 1 indicated that the NBCTs did differ significantly from the non-NBCTs on a weighted combination of the dependent variables. The null hypothesis stating that NBCTs do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on a weighted combination of these variables: commitment to student learning, knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it, management and assessment of student learning, systematic thought about practice, and membership in learning communities ( $p < .05$ ) was rejected based on the statistical results:  $F(1, 276) = 126.74, p < .001, \eta^2 = .315$ .

#### *Research Question 2*

Do the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff differ significantly from non-NBCTs on commitment to student learning?

The null hypothesis stated the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on commitment to student learning ( $p < .05$ ).

A univariate  $t$  test was used to compare the mean of the NBCTs to the mean of the non-NBCTs on survey items 1 through 15. Results are reported in Table 3. As can be seen, the mean on commitment to student learning was significantly higher for the NBCTs than for the non-NBCTs. The null hypothesis stating that the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on commitment to student learning was rejected because the observed significance level was ( $p < .05$ ).

Table 3

*Mean, Standard Deviation, and Significance for Each Dependent Variable*

Scale	Mean		Standard Deviation		t	df
	NBCTs	Non-NBCTs	NBCTs	Non-NBCTs		
Commitment to student learning	4.32	3.98	.54	.44	9.75*	276
Knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it	4.34	3.83	.59	.59	11.34*	276
Management and assessment of student learning	4.33	3.91	.57	.50	10.99*	276
Systematic thought about practice	4.21	3.76	.62	.51	10.82*	276
Membership in learning communities	4.12	3.75	.64	.48	9.37*	276

\*  $p < .001$

### *Research Question 3*

Do the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff differ significantly from non-NBCTs on knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it?

The null hypothesis stated the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it ( $p < .05$ ). A univariate  $t$  test was used to compare the mean of the NBCTs to the mean of the non-NBCTs on survey items 16 through 24. Results are reported in Table 3. As can be seen, the mean on knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it was significantly higher for the NBCTs than for the non-NBCTs. The null hypothesis stating that the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it was rejected because the observed significance level was ( $p < .05$ ).

### *Research Question 4*

Do the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff differ significantly from non-NBCTs on management and assessment of student learning?

The null hypothesis stated the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on management and assessment of student learning ( $p < .05$ ). A univariate  $t$  test was used to compare the mean of the NBCTs to the mean of the non-NBCTs on survey items 25 through 35. Results are reported in Table 3. As can be seen, the mean on management and assessment of student learning was significantly higher for the NBCTs than for the non-NBCTs. The null hypothesis stating that the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on

management and assessment of student learning was rejected because the observed significance level was ( $p < .05$ ).

*Research Question 5*

Do the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff differ significantly from non-NBCTs on systematic thought about practice?

The null hypothesis stated the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on systematic thought about practice ( $p < .05$ ). A univariate  $t$  test was used to compare the mean of the NBCTs to the mean of the non-NBCTs on survey items 36 through 46. Results are reported in Table 3. As can be seen, the mean on systematic thought about practice was significantly higher for the NBCTs than for the non-NBCTs. The null hypothesis stating that the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on systematic thought about practice was rejected because the observed significance level was ( $p < .05$ ).

*Research Question 6*

Do the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff differ significantly from non-NBCTs on membership in learning communities?

The null hypothesis stated the NBCT(s) on their instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on membership in learning communities ( $p < .05$ ). A univariate  $t$  test was used to compare the mean of the NBCTs to the mean of the non-NBCTs on survey items 47 through 59. Results are reported in Table 3. As can be seen, the mean on membership in learning communities was significantly higher for the NBCTs than for the non-NBCTs. The null hypothesis stating that the NBCT(s) on their

instructional staff do not differ significantly from non-NBCTs on membership in learning communities was rejected because the observed significance level was ( $p < .05$ ).

Results from the analysis of the data did support the rejection of each null hypothesis. The school principals rated the NBCTs higher than the non-NBCTs on all core propositions of the NBPTS to a statistically significant extent.

## V. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V is divided into three sections. The sections are Summary, Discussion, and Recommendations. The summary provides an overview of the study along with the results. The discussion of results describes the principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the NBPTS process based on the analysis of the data from this study and references similar studies. The recommendations for future research are suggestive given the results of this study.

### Summary

Examined in this study were school principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the National Board Certification process. NBPTS is a voluntary documentation and demonstration process of an accomplished teacher's excellence in his or her discipline evaluated by certified peers against rigorous standards and assessments, submitted in the form of portfolio and video entries (NBPTS, 2002a). NBPTS, created in 1987, is a by-product of the Carnegie Task Force's *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (1986), which recommended a higher standard for teachers' competence and ability, as well as the identification of teachers meeting this standard of excellence.

There are both advocates and critics of the NBPTS process, and millions of dollars are spent annually both to fund the NBPTS process and to compensate teachers

possessing National Board Certification. Teachers possessing National Board Certification receive significant pay increases, a one-time grant for the classroom, certification to teach in any state in the United States, and highly qualified teacher status that complies with the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act of 2001.

A survey instrument was developed consisting of 59 questions based on the five core propositions of the NBPTS. These core propositions represent the competencies and skills that NBPTS applicants should attain as a result of completing the process. All school principals in the State of Alabama who had one or more NBCTs on his or her instructional staff were surveyed. The only stipulation was that the principal had to have been the administrator of the NBCT(s) for a minimum of 1 academic year.

At the time of this study, there were few research studies related to the effectiveness of the NBPTS process in Alabama and none based on the perceptions of the school principals. The researcher anticipated that measuring the effectiveness of the NBPTS process based on the five core propositions would yield uniquely informative and relevant results. This study went beyond just comparing evaluation data and measured the perceptions of individuals who evaluate a variety of teachers and have a working knowledge of whether NBCTs are excelling in the educational arena. In order to make this a comparative study, the principals were asked to rate both NBCTs and non-NBCTs, using the 59 survey items.

Each survey item was set up on a Likert scale using response choices *strongly disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *neither agree nor disagree* (3), *agree* (4), and *strongly agree* (5). Principals were administered the survey both at state-mandated conferences and via



the US Mail. The principals took an interest in this study due to the fact that an unprecedented 90% (277 of 308) of them participated by completing the survey.

The summary of the results of this study are as follows:

1. When compared to non-NBCTs, the NBCT(s) significantly excelled on a weighted combination of these variables: commitment to student learning, knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it, management and assessment of student learning, systematic thought about practice, and membership in learning communities.

2. When compared to non-NBCTs, the NBCT(s) significantly excelled on having a commitment to student learning ( $p < .001$ ). NBCTs had a mean rating of 4.32 on this scale with an internal consistency of .94, while the non-NBCTs had a mean rating of 3.98 with an internal consistency of .91.

3. When compared to non-NBCTs, the NBCT(s) significantly excelled on knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it ( $p < .001$ ). NBCTs had a mean rating of 4.34 on this scale with an internal consistency of .93, while the non-NBCTs had a mean rating of 3.83 with an internal consistency of .69.

4. When compared to non-NBCTs, the NBCT(s) significantly excelled on management and assessment of student learning ( $p < .001$ ). NBCTs had a mean rating of 4.33 on this scale with an internal consistency of .94, while the non-NBCTs had a mean rating of 3.91 with an internal consistency of .91.

5. When compared to non-NBCTs, the NBCT(s) significantly excelled on systematic thought about practice ( $p < .001$ ). NBCTs had a mean rating of 4.21 on this

scale with an internal consistency of .93, while the non-NBCTs had a mean rating of 3.76 with an internal consistency of .90.

6. When compared to non-NBCTs, the NBCT(s) significantly excelled on membership in learning communities ( $p < .001$ ). NBCTs had a mean rating of 4.12 on this scale with an internal consistency of .88, while the non-NBCTs had a mean rating of 3.75 with an internal consistency of .89.

### Discussion

The results of this study yielded similar results to the Arizona study in which 85% of the principals surveyed indicated that the NBCTs on their instructional staff were among the best teachers they had ever supervised, while 91% of the principals felt that the NBPTS process improves teacher quality (“Principals’ Associations,” 2004). The present study was more in-depth and pertinent due to the fact that nine or more survey items were used to measure the principals’ perceptions on each of the core propositions of the NBPTS.

The Arizona study also revealed the views of Arizona school principals whose staffs included NBCTs. Seventy-five percent of the principals observed positive changes in the practices of teachers pursuing NBPTS, while 91% of the principals believe the NBPTS process improves teacher quality (Vandervoort et al., 2004). Principals perceived that there had been an increase in student learning in the classrooms of NBCTs and that NBCTs were more innovative as a result of completing the NBPTS process, based on the

impact study conducted during the NBPTS Pilot Project in Iowa (Dethlefs et al., 2001). According to the study, NBCTs excelled at serving as members of learning communities.

The results of the data from Alabama's principals are congruent with the perceptions of principals from other states. For example, Principal Jo Haney noticed teachers growing professionally, reflecting on their teaching practices, refining their instructional techniques, and developing friendships with colleagues as they worked through the NBPTS process (NBPTS, 2000). Principal Kevin McHugh believes the NBPTS process engages educators in high quality learning and self-reflection about the teaching and learning process. McHugh also believes NBPTS could be a catalyst to support many initiatives for improving student learning and feels that fellow principals would benefit from having a NBCT on the instructional staff. David Coley, a veteran principal of three different schools from Cary, North Carolina, concluded that NBPTS encourages collegiality across the staff, creates bonds across departments and disciplines, improves morale, and encourages teamwork ("South Carolina's," 2002).

There were similar results from a study conducted by the Indiana Professional Standards Board (IPSB) which found that 62.5% of NBCTs have been offered leadership roles within their schools, 19% have been invited to be guest speakers, and 16% have been selected to become members of Disney American Teacher review committees ("Status of," 2004). "On average, NBCTs are involved in 10 leadership activities, and 99.6% of NBCTs are involved in at least one leadership activity" ("Accomplished Teachers," 2004, ¶ 2). Ninety percent serve as mentors for NBPTS candidates, 83% serve

as mentors for new teachers, and 68% serve their schools or districts on leadership committees (NBPTS, 2001b).

The Indiana study also indicated that NBCTs significantly excelled on possessing the knowledge of subject matter required to teach effectively. According to Nancy Flanagan (2003), an NBCT, the NBPTS process is a transformative process that takes a candidate on an interactive and unpredictable journey through his or her teaching practice. The NBPTS process takes teachers away from less productive methods of teaching, toward motivation and accomplishment related to their subject areas. Also, Deborah Cole, a NBCT from Mississippi said the NBPTS process gave her a chance to prove to herself that her classroom activities were actually meaningful to students (NBPTS, 2000). Taylor (2000) conducted a study in Colorado on the changes experienced by 11 NBCTs upon completing the NBPTS process. These teachers had reexamined their previous teaching strategies and/or had designed new and more innovative ways of assessing students.

A study was conducted in the Miami-Dade Public Schools that suggested a similar conclusion. In this study the NBCTs excelled at possessing a commitment to student learning. The results of the Miami-Dade study indicated that the students of the NBCTs did a measurably better job on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test than did the students of the non-NBCTs (NBPTS, 2004b). In fact, the coefficients for the NBCTs were high, positive, and statistically significant, while the coefficients for the non-NBCTs were low, negative, and statistically insignificant (Cavalluzzo, 2004).

Alabama's principals also concluded that NBCTs excelled on thinking systematically about their practice to learn from experience. Goldhaber's research yielded similar conclusions. According to Goldhaber (2004), over 80% of all NBCTs claim the National Board Certification process was their best professional development experience. Goldhaber (2004) also claimed that NBPTS certification has a positive effect on teaching quality by helping teachers gain insight into their teaching. Another research study led by Goldhaber indicated that NBCTs are more effective at raising student achievement, have a greater impact with younger students, and have a greater impact with students from low socioeconomic backgrounds ("Students Learn," 2003).

The present study also indicated that NBCTs excelled on managing by monitoring student learning. This finding is congruent with a study conducted by The University of North Carolina-Greensboro's Center for Educational Research and Evaluation comparing 31 NBCTs to 34 unsuccessful NBPTS applicants. Student work samples were examined in both groups, and the results indicated that almost 74% of the students taught by NBCTs demonstrated higher levels of comprehension in the concepts taught compared to 29% levels of comprehension among students taught by teachers not achieving NBPTS certification (NBPTS, 2001d). Goldhaber conducted a study among younger and low-income students where improvements were as high as 15% or more on the math and reading tests ("Students Learn," 2003). Goldhaber was able to link the records of more than 600,000 students in math and reading to individual teachers. The results of the pretest and posttest scores indicated that NBCTs do a measurably better job in the classroom ("Independent Study," 2004).

This study has not documented causation due to the fact that there was no cause and effect relationships, no random group selections, and no experimental or control groups. The results of this study, indicated by the perceptions of the school principals in the State of Alabama, simply suggest that the NBPTS process potentially helps an individual become a better teacher. The data supported this contention.

### Recommendations

As a result of the findings obtained in this study, the following recommendations for future research are presented:

- 1) Replicate this study with a larger sample size that will include assistant principals, central office staff, and post-secondary personnel.
- 2) Replicate this study with participants from more than one state.
- 3) Replicate this study with the same 277 participants at a later date as the number of NBCTs increases and the principals' familiarity with the NBPTS process is enhanced.
- 4) Replicate this study after the NBPTS process has been used more as a professional development tool in educational arenas, school systems are providing more support and encouragement for potential NBPTS candidates, and/or the findings of the present study are given to decision makers.
- 5) Replicate this study to address NBCTs in particular certification areas.

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P. A2.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
INTRODUCTORY LETTER

*Troy-Pike Center for Technology*  
*285 Gibbs Street*  
*Troy, Alabama 36081*

*Al Griffin, Director*

*Phone: 334-566-5395*  
*Fax: 334-566-1690*

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August 22, 2005

Dear Principal:

Within the next two weeks, you will receive a request to complete a survey evaluating Alabama school principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the National Board Certification process.

Attached to the request, you will find a survey for you to rate your perceptions of the National Board Certification process based on questions related to the core propositions of the certification process.

The results of this study will aid in determining if the National Board Certification process in Alabama has had a positive impact on teaching and learning, is an effective professional development tool, and/or is fiscally effective due to the revenue our state has allocated for this process.

This survey is important to you due to the fact that you have a National Board Certified teacher on your instructional staff and important to the educational leaders in Alabama due to the fact that there is no prior studies in Alabama related to school principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the National Board Certification process.

I will greatly appreciate your taking the few minutes necessary to complete and return this survey. All postage will be paid and all return envelopes provided so there will be no expense to you. There will also be no risk(s) to you for participating in this study because all data retrieved will be anonymous.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

Al Griffin, Principal/Director

APPENDIX B  
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

## Survey of Alabama School Principals' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the National Board Certification Process

This survey assesses Alabama school principals' perceptions related to the effectiveness of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) as compared to teachers not certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (Non-NBCTs). Your perceptions related to the National Board Certified Teacher(s) on your staff are elicited along with your perceptions of the teachers not possessing National Board Certification (Non-NBCTs) on your staff.

To complete this survey, read each statement on the rating scale and circle the letter(s) that reflect your honest opinion about each statement. The letter(s) on the scale represent the following: SD= Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neutral), A= Agree, SA=Strongly Agree. Please be certain to answer each question, making a selection regarding your perceptions first of the NBCT(s) and then of the Non-NBCTs related to each statement. Following the final statement regarding NBPTS, some demographic data are requested. **If this is your first year serving as a school principal, please do not complete this survey.**

Please do not write your name on this document. This survey is to remain anonymous.

SD	Strongly Disagree	A	Agree
D	Disagree	SA	Strongly Agree
N	Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neutral)		

Question	Scale					
1. Teacher treats all students equitably:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA
2. Teacher recognizes individual student differences and adjusts teaching practices accordingly:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA
3. Teacher believes that all students can learn:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA
4. Teacher applies modifications for students with special needs:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA
5. Teacher learns by listening to students:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA
6. Teacher learns by watching students interact with peers:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA
7. Teacher uses multiple evaluation methods to enhance student knowledge:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA
8. Teacher strives to get to know each student as an individual:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA
9. Teacher understands how students grow and mature within a certain stage of development:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA
10. Teacher has a knowledge of students' communities:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA
11. Teacher is concerned with students' self-concepts and motivation:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA
12. Teacher develops an understanding of students by reading what they write:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA
13. Teacher is concerned with students' development of life skills:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA
14. Teacher knows students need varying tools and support to learn effectively:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA
15. Teacher extends beyond developing the cognitive capacity of students:	NBCT(s) Non-NBCTs	SD SD	D D	N N	A A	SA SA



16. Teacher stays abreast of emerging theories and debates in subject area through professional development:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
17. Teacher uses multi-modality instructional techniques:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
18. Teacher is able to link subject matter in his or her discipline to other academic subjects (integrated academics):	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>

<b>SD</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Agree</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neutral)</b>		

<b>Question</b>	<b>Scale</b>					
19. Teacher possesses a repertoire of instructional techniques that helps students recognize key dilemmas, and grasp important concepts, events, or phenomena:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
20. Teacher develops a conceptual subject matter understanding by requiring students to think critically:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
21. Teacher commands specialized knowledge on how to convey a subject to students:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
22. Teacher finds alternative instructional methods/strategies for struggling and students with disabilities:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
23. Teacher encourages students to question prevailing assumptions to help think for themselves by forming individual opinions:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
24. Teacher possesses such knowledge of the subject matter that they help their students develop higher order thinking skills (e.g., critical thinking):	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
25. Teacher uses a variety of instructional resources to accommodate multi modality instructional methods that keep students involved and focused on learning:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
26. Teacher orchestrates lessons that promote student interaction through cooperative learning activities:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
27. Teacher regularly utilizes a variety of evaluation methods to assess student progress and to provide constructive feedback to them as well as other stakeholders:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
28. Teacher creates an environment that encourages collaboration by fostering democratic values:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
29. Teacher promotes self-evaluations among students:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
30. Teacher is able to recognize teachable moments, and knows how to seize these opportunities:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
31. Teacher is able to group students in a non-biased manner in order to regulate the pace of instruction:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
32. Teacher establishes a classroom climate that is conducive to learning:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
33. Teacher allows each student to make a contribution:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
34. Teacher assures that students' mistakes are utilized as opportunities for learning:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
35. Teacher spends ample time planning for instruction:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
36. Teacher conducts research in order to stay abreast of emerging theories and debates in the subject area:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
37. Teacher evaluates lessons to find ways to expand skills and incorporate new findings:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>

38. Teacher seeks the advice of colleagues and experts in the subject matter to help improve his or her educational practices:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
39. Teacher edits curricula in order to meet needs of students:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
40. Teacher is a “reflective participant” who considers the daily events in the classroom in order to create learning and curricular experiences:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
41. Teacher respects the cultural differences students bring to the classroom:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>

<b>SD</b>	Strongly Disagree	<b>A</b>	Agree
<b>D</b>	Disagree	<b>SA</b>	Strongly Agree
<b>N</b>	Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neutral)		

<b>Question</b>	<b>Scale</b>					
42. Teacher critically examines his or her practice on a regular basis to deepen knowledge, expand skills, and incorporate new findings:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
43. Teacher uses today’s results to develop tomorrow’s lessons:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
44. Teacher incorporates new ideas from a variety of resources including students:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
45. Teacher continually faces and makes difficult choices that test his or her judgment:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
46. Teacher possesses a professional obligation to be a lifelong learner of their discipline:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
47. Teacher collaborates with educational stakeholders to determine instructional methods that improve students’ learning:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
48. Teacher utilizes all resources possessed by stakeholders to improve students’ understanding of concepts:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
49. Teacher contributes to the intellectual life of the school:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
50. Teacher presents, publishes, or serves in some capacity at the local state, or national level:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
51. Teacher actively seeks the development of partnerships with community groups and businesses:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
52. Teacher works creatively with students’ parents to improve learning opportunities:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
53. Teacher provides regular and innovative methods of communication for all stakeholders:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
54. Teacher creates ways to include stakeholders in lessons (e.g., guest speakers, demonstrations, field trips, etc.)	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
55. Teacher attends to issues of continuity and equity of learning experiences for students that require special services:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
56. Teacher actively participates in the coordination of all services to students:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
57. Teacher is aware of the learning goals/objectives adopted by educational agencies:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
58. Teacher stays up-to-date on educational legislation:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>
59. Teacher encourages accomplished teachers to remain in education, serving as a classroom teacher:	<b>NBCT(s)</b> <b>Non-NBCTs</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>SD</b>	<b>D</b> <b>D</b>	<b>N</b> <b>N</b>	<b>A</b> <b>A</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>SA</b>



APPENDIX C  
SURVEY COVER LETTER

*Troy-Pike Center for Technology*  
*285 Gibbs Street*  
*Troy, Alabama 36081*

*Al Griffin, Director*

*Phone: 334-566-5395*

*Fax: 334-566-1690*

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September 6, 2005

Dear Principal:

I am writing to ask your help in a study related to Alabama school principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the National Board Certification process. This study is in conjunction with Auburn University's Educational Leadership Department and the Board of Directors for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

It is my understanding that you have one or more National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) on your instructional staff. Input from each principal in Alabama with a National Board Certified Teacher on his or her instructional staff is being solicited. These principals will serve as the population members for this study.

Results from the attached survey will be used to help determine if the National Board Certification process is an effective professional development process and/or has a positive impact on teaching and learning. By considering your feelings and opinions, educational leaders and public officials will acquire a better understanding of the quality of this process and the fiscal effectiveness of this process.

Your responses will remain completely anonymous and will be used to compile quantitative data for a statistical analysis for this study. This survey is voluntary and will take between 10 and 25 minutes to complete. You can help me very much by sharing your input related to the National Board Certification process. You are not required to respond to the survey; however, not responding will seriously reduce the accuracy of the data.

Attached, you will find the survey composed of questions related to the five core propositions of the National Board Certification process. Please complete the survey as soon as possible and return it in the enclosed envelop that is provided with postage. Please return the enclosed post card with postage provided separately from the survey. If you have any questions or comments about this study, do not hesitate to contact me at (334)566-5395 or (334)268-2405 or e-mail at [agriffin@pikecountyschools.com](mailto:agriffin@pikecountyschools.com).

Thank you for your time and I look forward to receiving input from you.

Sincerely,

Al Griffin, Principal/Director

APPENDIX D

AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD LETTER

# Auburn University

Auburn University, Alabama 36849



Office of Human Subjects Research  
307 Samford Hall

Telephone: 334-844-5966  
Fax: 334-844-4391  
hsubjec@auburn.edu

May 25, 2005

MEMORANDUM TO: Robert A. Griffin  
EDLD

PROTOCOL TITLE: "Survey of Alabama School Principals' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the National Board Certification Process"

IRB File: #05-106 EX 0505

APPROVAL DATE: May 19, 2005  
EXPIRATION DATE: May 18, 2006

The referenced protocol was approved "Exempt" from further review under 45 CFR 46.101 (b)(1) by IRB procedure on May 19, 2005. You should retain this letter in your files, along with a copy of the revised protocol and other pertinent information concerning your study. If you should anticipate a change in any of the procedures authorized in protocol #05-106 EX 0505, you must request and receive IRB approval prior to implementation of any revision. Please reference the above IRB File in any correspondence regarding this project.

If you will be unable to file a Final Report on your project before May 18, 2006, you must submit a request for an extension of approval to the IRB no later than May 3, 2006. If your IRB authorization expires and/or you have not received written notice that a request for an extension has been approved prior to May 18, 2006, you must suspend the project immediately and contact the Office of Human Subjects Research for assistance.

A Final Report will be required to close your IRB project file.

If you have any questions concerning this Board action, please contact the Office of Human Subjects Research at 844-5966.

Sincerely,

Niki L. Johnson, JD, MBA, Director  
Office of Human Subjects Research  
Research Compliance Auburn University

cc: William Spencer  
Glennelle Halpin

APPENDIX E  
INFORMATION SHEET



# Auburn University

Auburn University, Alabama 36849-5221

Educational Foundations,  
Leadership, and Technology  
4036 Haley Center

Telephone: (334) 844-4460  
FAX: (334) 844-3072

## **INFORMATION SHEET for Research Study Entitled: “Survey of Alabama School Principals’ Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the National Board Certification Process”**

You are invited to participate in a research study evaluating Alabama school principals’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the National Board Certification (NBPTS) process. This study is being conducted by Al Griffin, Director/Principal of the Troy-Pike Center for Technology, under the supervision of Dr. Glennelle Halpin, EFLT Professor at Auburn University. I hope to learn if the NBPTS process has had a positive effect on teaching and learning (K-12) based on the perceptions of school principals in Alabama. You were selected as a possible participant because National Board Certified Teacher(s) serve on your instructional staff, and you serve as supervisor for these teachers and perform evaluations on these teachers.

If you decide to participate, I assure you that all data collected from you will remain completely anonymous and there is no possibility for me to identify you based on the results of your survey. I need you to complete the survey instrument only one time which should take no longer than 30 minutes.

There are no reasonable foreseeable risks associated with participating in the study.

If the results of the data analysis yield positive results for the NBPTS process, possible benefits of this study include the following: the use of NBPTS as a professional development tool due to the potentially positive effect(s) the process has on teaching and learning; the allocation of additional funding by state educational leaders and lawmakers for NBPTS certification, possibly resulting in additional NBPTS grant monies for individual classrooms; and the opportunity for the school principal to use the fact that National Board Certified Teacher(s) are on his or her staff as a public relations tool for the general public, as a recruitment tool for new teachers, and as a selling point for a school to the parents of new students. I cannot promise you that you will receive any or all of the benefits described for this study. I would like to also state that there is no possibility that participation in this study will result in any personal expenses for you as a participant.

Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous. Information collected through your participation may be used to fulfill educational requirements for an Ed.D in Educational Leadership at Auburn University and for publication(s) in a professional

HUMAN SUBJECTS  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH  
PROJECT # 05-106-EX-0505  
APPROVED 5-19-05 TO 5-18-06

Page 1 of 2

A LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY

journal(s), and/or presentations at a professional meeting(s). You may withdraw from participation at any time, without penalty; however, once anonymous information has been provided, you will be unable to withdraw this information related to the study since there will be no way for me to identify individual information.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the Department of Educational Leadership, and/or the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

If you have any questions I invite you to ask them now. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Al Griffin, study investigator, by phone at (334)-735-0057 or (334)-268-2405 or by e-mail at [agriffin@pikecountyschools.com](mailto:agriffin@pikecountyschools.com) and/or Dr. Glennelle Halpin, faculty advisor, by phone at (334)-844-3069 or by e-mail at [ghalpin@auburn.edu](mailto:ghalpin@auburn.edu).

For more information regarding your rights as a research participant you may contact the Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at [hsubjec@auburn.edu](mailto:hsubjec@auburn.edu) or [IRBChair@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBChair@auburn.edu).

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, THE DATA YOU PROVIDE WILL SERVE AS YOUR AGREEMENT TO DO SO. THIS LETTER IS YOURS TO KEEP.

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Investigator's Signature

---

Date

HUMAN SUBJECTS  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH  
PROJECT # 05-106EX0505  
APPROVED 5-19-05 TO 5-18-06

Page 2 of 2

APPENDIX F

LETTER OF INTEREST FROM NBPTS DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH



**National Office**

1525 W. Isom Boulevard, Suite 500, Arlington, VA 22209 • 703-465-2700 • fax: 703-465-2715  
[www.nbtps.org](http://www.nbtps.org)

Gov. Roy E. Barnes, *Chair*  
Rebecca Palacios, *Vice Chair*  
Joseph A. Aguerrebere, *President*  
Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., *Founding Chair*  
James A. Kelly, *Founding President*

April 28, 2005

Mr. Robert Alvin Griffin  
223 Oak Street  
Brundidge, AL 36010

Dear Mr. Griffin,

From its inception, the National Board has supported independent research. Thank you for informing us about your proposed study, *The Perceptions of School Principals in the State of Alabama Regarding the Effectiveness of the National Board Certification Process*. We hope that your analysis of principals' perceptions of National Board Certified Teachers will yield informative data and contribute to the growing body of research on educator quality. We wish you success and look forward to learning about the outcomes from this study.

Sincerely,

David F. Lussier  
Advisor to the President and Director of Research

APPENDIX G

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Joseph B. Morton  
State Superintendent  
of Education

Alabama  
State Board  
of Education

May 9, 2005

Governor Bob Riley  
President

Mr. Al Griffin  
223 Oak Street  
Brundidge, AL 36010

Randy McKinney  
District I

Betty Peters  
District II

Dear Mr. Griffin:

Stephanie W. Bell  
District III

The Alabama Department of Education is aware of the study that you are conducting concerning Alabama school principals' perceptions relative to the effectiveness of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards process. We understand that all the data collected by the survey will remain completely anonymous and that there is no threat to the participating principals.

Dr. Ethel H. Hall  
District IV  
Vice President  
Emerita

We will cooperate with you and Auburn University as needed to complete the data collection for this study.

Ella B. Bell  
District V

David F. Byers, Jr.  
District VI

Sincerely,

Sandra Ray  
District VII  
President Pro Tem  
and Presiding Officer

Eddie R. Johnson, Ph.D.  
Deputy State Superintendent of Education

Dr. Mary Jane Caylor  
District VIII

ERJ/RP

Joseph B. Morton  
Secretary and  
Executive Officer

Enclosure

APPENDIX H  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER

*Troy-Pike Center for Technology*  
*285 Gibbs Street*  
*Troy, Alabama 36081*

*Al Griffin, Director*

*Phone: 334-566-5395*  
*Fax: 334-566-1690*

---

September 20, 2005

Dear Principal:

A few days ago, I sent you a packet containing a survey related to Alabama's school principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the National Board Certification process.

If you have already completed and returned the survey, I thank you very much. The results of this study will aid in determining if the National Board Certification process in Alabama has had a positive impact on teaching and learning, is an effective professional development tool, and/or is fiscally effective due to the revenue our state has allocated for this process. The data you provide is very important to the accuracy of this survey.

If you have not yet had time to complete the survey, please do so as soon as possible. If you need another copy of the survey or have any questions related to the survey, please do not hesitate to contact me at (334)566-5395 or (334)268-2405 or e-mail at [agriffin@pikecountyschools.com](mailto:agriffin@pikecountyschools.com).

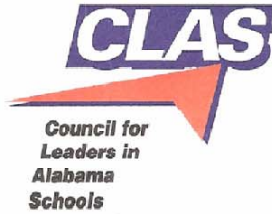
Sincerely,

Al Griffin, Principal/Director



APPENDIX I

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM CLAS PRESIDENT



May 9, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter authorizing Robert A Griffin to distribute a doctoral survey at the CLAS Convention. Mr. Griffin may make available a survey instrument for willing participants at the CLAS Convention in Mobile on June 27-29.

Sincerely,

Dr. John Draper  
CLAS Executive Director

450 N. Hull Street • P.O. Box 428 • Montgomery, Alabama 36101-0428 • Phone (334) 265-3610 • Fax (334) 265-3611 • (800) 239-3616 • [www.clasleaders.org](http://www.clasleaders.org)

AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

AASA, Alabama Association of School Administrators; AASSP, Alabama Association of Secondary School Principals; AAESA, Alabama Association of Elementary School Administrators; AASCD, Alabama Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; AACNPD, Alabama Association of Child Nutrition Program Directors; AAMLA, Alabama Association of Middle Level Administrators; ACTA, Association of Career Technical Administrators; AASBO, Alabama Association of School Business Officials; AAAS, Alabama Association of Attendance Supervisors; CASE, Council of Administrators of Special Education; AASPA, Alabama Association of School Personnel Administrators.

APPENDIX J  
LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM STATE CAREER-TECHNICAL  
EDUCATION DIRECTOR



STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Joseph B. Morton  
State Superintendent  
of Education

Alabama  
State Board  
of Education

Governor Bob Riley  
President

Randy McKinney  
District I

Betty Peters  
District II

Stephanie W. Bell  
District III

Dr. Ethel H. Hall  
District IV  
Vice President  
Emerita

Ella B. Bell  
District V

David F. Byers, Jr.  
District VI

Sandra Ray  
District VII  
President Pro Tem  
and Presiding Officer

Dr. Mary Jane Caylor  
District VIII

Joseph B. Morton  
Secretary and  
Executive Officer

May 9, 2005

Mr. Robert Alvin Griffin  
Career/Technical Administrator  
Troy-Pike Center for Technology  
285 Gibbs Street  
Troy, Alabama 36081-4704

Dear Mr. Griffin:

This is to confirm that you will be allowed to distribute your survey in preparation for your doctoral dissertation at the Alabama Professional Development Workshop on July 26, 2005. An appropriate time would be 4 p.m.

If you need more information, contact me at 334-242-9116.

Sincerely,

Nancy Beggs, Director  
Career/Technical Education

NB/JS