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National Board Certification: The Perceived Value and Renewal Rates of California National Board Certified Teachers

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NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION: THE PERCEIVED VALUE AND
RENEWAL RATES OF CALIFORNIA NATIONAL BOARD
CERTIFIED TEACHERS

A Dissertation
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership

by
Beverly Johnson Bricker

June 2015

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ABSTRACT

National Board Certification (NBC) offers the highest certification possible to teachers who can meet the rigorous standards of this process. This certification develops reflective practitioners through a series of components designed to be used in authentic settings with students. Previous research shows the value of employing National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) for raising student achievement, creating teacher leaders, and developing a reflective culture in schools. Increasing the number of NBCTs could have a profound impact in our schools. This study explored the renewal rates and the perceived value of California NBCTs who certified in 2005 & 2006 using a survey created from two existing instruments. Both qualitative and quantitative data concerning initial motivating factors, renewal decisions and the benefits of holding NBC were collected. The analysis of the results indicated financial incentives were the number one reason for renewing. Conversely, the cost and/or lack of financial incentives ranked highest on the list for not renewing. While financial incentives were identified most frequently as an original motivator, the NBCTs in this study reported professional development as the most powerful effect of being a NBCT. A study of the literature demonstrated that the NBC process contains all of the components of quality professional development programs supporting this benefit and providing a program for structured professional development for districts and schools seeking a positive change in instructional practice.

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DEDICATION

To my family.

Remember your dreams and fight for them.

You must know what you want from life.

There is just one thing that makes your
dreams become impossible: the fear of failure.

~Paulo Coelho

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

[A teacher] is not like a private soldier in an army, expected merely to obey, or like a cog in a wheel, expected merely to respond to and transmit external energy; he must be an intelligent medium of action.

John Dewey, 1895 (as cited Goldstein, 2014).

Teachers are the backbone of every classroom. Equipping teachers with the best resources from facilities, to materials or training is of extreme importance for the students we serve in our schools. The knowledge and abilities of our teachers directly impacts student learning and achievement. The teaching force in America is often solely held accountable for the academic placement of our students in world rankings (Rhee, 2013). There are others who would cite society's failures such as children living in poverty, as having an impact on student achievement (Layton, 2015). Both sides hold some level of accuracy, but it is interesting that rarely is the teachers' opinion sought out when policy is developed concerning k-12 education. It is often those outside of the educational community that make policy decisions about this profession.

The idea of recognizing the various roles of teachers including that of teacher leaders as advocates is emerging (Crowther, 2009). Expanding the accepted and expected positions of teachers is difficult, with some teachers resisting additional responsibilities for speaking out. The National Board for

Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is one organization seeking to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) to advocate for the profession. Interestingly, in the educational community, educators are expected to hold a variety of advanced certifications and degrees. Research showing a positive impact of these requirements on teaching practice is not consistent (Whitehurst, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 1999). However, National Board Certification is one certification shown through research to make a difference. Strangely it is not widely accepted with only 6,249 of California's nearly 300,000 teachers holding National Board Certification (NBPTS, 2015). Helping teachers evolve from leading in their classrooms, to leading in their departments, schools, districts and states requires acknowledging their professionalism, expertise and worth. Recognizing and elevating their value to the educational system, may prove to be one of the most difficult tasks of all. Yet, if teachers do assume a leadership role, policies that stem from the financial sector or from flawed theories will continue to be thrust upon the K-12 educational system in our country.

Background

Negative ideas concerning teachers are perpetuated even though Berliner and Glass (2014) reveal that commonly held beliefs about education are myths. The eight beliefs outlined in their recent book, *50 Myths and Lies that Threaten American's Public Schools: The Real Crisis in Education*, range from the

teacher's influence on a student's education, to the importance of funds for public education, to the influence of merit pay on the work habits of teachers. Some would say that schools are held accountable for factors which are out of the school's control. Taylor (2005) found that the results of poverty such as low birth weight, hunger, poor nutrition, and a lack of parent participation influenced a school's performance as well. The concern over the negative effects of poverty drove the historic Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965 (Toch, 2011). The ESEA increased federal spending on education from \$1.5 billion to \$4 billion and thus established the Federal Government as a stakeholder in the education of America's children (Hanna, 2005).

Since President Johnson, successive presidents have championed education reform through government-led initiatives. Until recently, the reforms have focused on leveling the playing field for students while allowing education professionals to retain control of the content and the delivery of knowledge. President Reagan's reform consolidated the various federal programs funding education like Title I, and his reform pushed for testing. With President Reagan, control shifted to outside forces that dictated the scholastic curriculum. When his Secretary of Education, T. H. Bell, created the National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1981, he "hoped the commission would produce a sort of Marshall Plan for school reform" (Goldstein, 2014, p. 169).

One of the most dramatic changes in education occurred nearly 20 years later in the legislation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) which was passed in 2001.

This act expanded ESEA's testing requirements and introduced a far more aggressive push at the federal level to hold states and school districts accountable for student performance (Robelen, 2005). Additionally, the legislation provided professional development resources to school districts.

Despite these recent federal programs, another solution, established in 1989, exists for educators: the National Board Certification. The creators of the National Board Certification hope that the certification will be accepted as the 'gold standard' for they believe that holding high standards for teachers will translate to deeper learning for students (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2007; Cavalluzzo, 2004). The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), otherwise known as the National Board, was created in response to the publication of the Carnegie Foundation report, *"A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century"* (1986). This report called for better training and support for the nation's teachers. Included in the report were "specific suggestions for strengthening standards in teaching and professionalizing the teaching workforce" (Carnegie Foundation, 1986).

The National Board was created 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" ("Mission", n.d., para 1). These higher standards encouraged better training and support in order to create a quality teaching force. The original National Board Certification has resulted in a

program that not only awards advanced certification, but provides teachers with professional growth opportunities.

Overview of Study

Statement of Problem

While teachers with a National Board Certification have a positive effect on student achievement (Gaudreault & Woods, 2012; Park, Oliver, Johnson, Graham & Oppong, 2007), the certification has not achieved widespread acceptance as the gold standard of teacher certification. To date, of the 3.7 million teachers in America, only 110,000 are National Board Certified ("Certification Day", 2014. para. 3). Recruitment efforts continue, but teachers balk at the process for the certification lasts only ten years. In order to ensure the success of the program, we must learn why teachers become certified and renew their certification. This information would allow the National Board Certification program to launch a more robust recruitment campaign that would attract all teachers, administrators, and policy makers.

Purpose of Study

My study will identify the factors that motivate teachers to renew their National Board Certification as well as the perceived value of possessing a National Board Certification from California National Board Certified Teachers. By identifying these factors, school districts can alter practices to encourage teachers to renew. If current districts do not recognize the National Board

Certified Teacher as a valuable component, this study will reveal the value of having a certified teacher as a resource for the education community.

Additionally, there is value to be gained from this study for National Board Certified Teachers. Being a part of a continually growing and changing community of educators necessitates improvement and growth. As the community grows, a teacher's impact increases. Keeping National Board Certified Teachers in this community will benefit all segments of education.

Importance of the Study

A genuine trust in and respect for educators could dramatically change the achievement levels of millions of students. All levels of government focus on America's educational system, including the federal level. After a decade of standardized testing and the increase of for-profit charter schools using public tax dollars, American students have not improved their ranking on international testing scores. The question is, why has there been no change? *Ineffective teacher* has become the term to encapsulate all problems with education in America. Goldstein (2014) summarizes the description of "the ineffective tenured teacher who has emerged as a feared character, a vampiric type who sucks tax dollars into her bloated pension and health care plans, without much regard for the children under her care" (p. 5). The media's narrow focus on the teacher is misdirected.

Americans are aware of the power of a team in overcoming obstacles; our society readily embraces strong sports teams. Rarely though, do we Americans

transfer that idea to our professions. Sahlberg (2011) acknowledges the power harnessed when groups work together; he explains the fallacy of thinking that the sum of the educational system cannot exceed the abilities of the teachers within the system. He acknowledges that the culture of a school is as important as the quality of the school. When teachers are able to work together, the system improves. The work of Dufour and Eaker (1998) in professional learning communities has revealed the power of a team effort in a school setting.

In *Teacher Wars*, Goldstein (2014) chronicles the history of public education and refers to teachers as "America's most embattled profession." Teachers in American have struggled since the nineteenth century. From the influx of immigrants from Europe and the end of child labor, to the integration of schools following *Brown v. Board of Education* and the devastating effects of poverty on students, teachers have proposed solutions to help schools change to fit the needs of our society. Nevertheless, teachers have rarely been heard (Goldstein, 2014). Moreover, those in power have found it easy to place the blame on teachers when education had not solved the challenges inherent within society. While Goldstein (2014) reports that "teacher quality advocates estimate that somewhere between 2 and 15 percent of current teachers cannot improve their practice" (p. 6), she also reports that teachers who remain at a school site for years are more effective than teachers who rotate in for short stints with the hope of revitalizing high-poverty schools. The narrative of quality teaching must

be told. Too often the attack is not on the teaching quality but on the teacher quality.

As technology shrinks the world, comparisons are made between countries fueled by results from international assessments such as Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) or Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). America's competitive spirit emerges when results show that our students are not scoring high; often, teachers are cited as the cause. Ravitch (2013) offers another set of data that suggest America's public school system is doing a much better job than reported in America's media. The analysis provided by the media suggests a deeper undercurrent of political and financial gain resulting from the privatization of our educational system. In order to promote the improving public school system, the teaching force needs to be supported (Ravitch, 2013).

It is this last reform that drives this study through an examination of the process of attaining National Board Certification. Could this certification be seen as a professional action for improving, empowering and professionalizing the teaching profession, not just by those in leadership, but by the teachers working in the field?

This study will detail the motivating factors for renewing National Board Certification. This information can be used by districts and the National Board when encouraging National Board Teachers to renew. If the National Board's mission is to make National Board Certification the 'gold standard', this

information will help guide their agenda of representing National Board Certification as a strong measure of ability and skills. If National Board Certified Teachers have not found a professional benefit in attaining this certification, policy makers may use this information to create stronger policy language to promote and reward those who attain National Board Certification.

Methodology

NBCTs from 2005 & 2006 will receive a fourteen question electronic survey created for this study which will provide both qualitative and quantitative data. The creation of the study and discussion of these measures is described in detail in chapter 3 and the results are presented in chapter 4.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: Why do National Board Certified teachers renew or not renew their certification?

H1: Financial incentives are not a motivator for renewing National Board Certification.

H2: Teachers seek out National Board Certification to enhance their own abilities.

Research Question 2: How do National Board Certified teachers perceive the value of their National Board Certification?

H3: The expected leadership opportunities because of National Board Certification have not been provided to Board Certified Teachers by their school sites or districts.

Definition of Terms

1. *National Board Certification* (NBC): the certification presented to a teacher who successfully completes four components demonstrating the skills and knowledge of an accomplished teacher.
2. *National Board Certified Teacher* (NBCT): a preK-12th grade teacher who has attained National Board Certification.
3. *The Renewal Process*: completed in the eighth or ninth year of National Board Certification. This process also referred to as a Profile of Professional Growth includes three components that demonstrate an on-going focus on student learning through professional activities.
4. *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards* (NBPTS): an independent, nonprofit and nonpartisan organization established in 1987 working to advance accomplished teaching for all students. The mission of this organization is to maintain high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do by providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards while advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers ("Mission", n.d., para 1).

5. *Five Core Propositions*: provide the basis for National Board

Certification of what teachers should know and be able to do. They include a commitment to students and their learning, a requirement to know the subjects and pedagogy of how to teach as well as the ability to measure the growth of students and adapt instruction to ensure a stronger impact on student learning. These propositions also expect that teachers will be reflective practitioners who work in learning communities.

6. *Professional Learning Communities*: educators who work collegially to ensure students are learning while supporting, sharing and reflecting as a team on effective instructional practices.

Assumptions

It is assumed that the National Board Certified Teachers participating in this study will provide honest, thoughtful feedback about what factors prompted each individual to certify and what influenced each individual's decision to renew or not renew. Additionally, it is assumed that the National Board Certification process has had a positive impact on student achievement and on the instructional practice of each of the teachers who participate in this study. Finally, it is assumed that the survey is constructed in such a way to illicit the

necessary information to answer the research questions in the most efficient manner possible.

Limitations

This study is limited by several factors. First, the criteria for participation is limited to only those California National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) who received certification in either 2005 or 2006. This will limit the possible number of participants and will provide a smaller number of responses than if opened to all of California's NBCTs. Second, the information listed for National Board Certified Teachers on the NBPTS website will only be updated if the NBCT chooses to do so, so it may be out of date information. Finally, the survey consists of multiple choice and open-ended questions. Some participants may find the format limiting as they were allowed to construct answers on only three questions.

Scope of the Study

Only National Board Certified Teachers in California were provided the link to the survey. Furthermore, I attempted to limit the participants to only those whose certification was about to expire as a decision to renew would be required in the near future for each of them. These NBCTs would have certified in 2005 or 2006. To encourage participation, the survey included only fourteen questions. Research from previous studies provided categories in which the survey choices were grouped.

Organization of the Study

This research study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the literature surrounding the topic of professional development and National Board Certification. Chapter 3 explains the research design and methodology used during the analysis of the data gathered from the survey. Chapter 4 shows the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data collected for this study using tables and graphs. Chapter 5 covers the conclusions drawn by the researcher as well as offers the researcher's suggestions for National Board Teachers and recommendations for those continuing this research.

Encouraging National Board Certified Teachers to maintain a certification that has been shown to positively impact student achievement, as well as, influence quality teaching practices will benefit schools and students. Determining the motivating factors and the value gained from those who have held this Certification for ten years will provide valuable information for those seeking to improve the quality of our K-12 educational system. Financial incentives and the desire to continually improve practice are powerful factors that are worth exploring in greater detail.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Need for Highly Qualified Teachers

Many in America believe that teachers are important. The education reform moving across the nation stems from a shift in the belief of why we educate our citizens. From America's earliest days of "preserving our newly formed democracy," to preparing "everyone for a vocation" in the early 1900s, to the most recent goal of being college and career ready upon graduation from high school, American society continues to hold high expectations for our public school system (Christensen, Horn & Johnson, 2011, p. 53). Focusing on the best method to accomplish this task has brought attention to the teachers who lead every classroom. Many agree with Education Secretary Arne Duncan's comments to the 2014 National Convention of the Parent Teacher Association:

Great teachers and great leaders matter more than anything else in school. I think everyone here would agree that we must do even more to respect, reward, and retain them. We have to stand up for great teachers. We have to celebrate them and create pathways and opportunities for them to shape and nurture the next generation of teacher talent. While we know that, as a nation, we don't always act on those beliefs. If we did, we would provide teachers with better resources. We would pay them a lot more. And we would train and support them better (Strauss, 2014. para.79).

Given their importance in the educational system, teachers are at the center of reform; they must execute the demands of high standards in the classroom (Cuban, 1990). Thus, the success of ambitious education reform initiatives hinge, in large part, on the qualifications and effectiveness of teachers. As a result, teacher professional development is a major focus of systemic reform initiatives (Corcoran, Shields, & Zucker, 1998; Corcoran, 1995).

Professional development activities for teachers become important components of improving the student learning in the classroom. In fact, the American Educational Research Association (Resnick, 2005) increasingly recognizes that professional development needs to be more systematic; professional development must focus on both the subject matter that teachers will be teaching and on how students learn the particular subject matter (pedagogical content knowledge). The focus on subject matter and how students learn are foundational components to National Board Certification (NBC), the highest credential available to teachers. The process of achieving NBC requires a teacher to be in an actual classroom, teaching a specific subject matter, designing curriculum and using instructional strategies that will meet the needs of the students. Integral to this process is the ability to explain and justify instructional decisions as well as the ability to alter and improve upon what was created. Research supports NBC as a powerful way to positively impact student learning.

Lustick and Sykes (2006) state:

If teacher learning is considered an important component to improving teacher quality and ultimately student achievement, then these results point to the possibility that the process of Board Certification may positively impact the quality of instruction (as defined by the National Board) and students' learning experiences regarding two vital areas of instruction. (p. 30)

This review of the literature on maintaining a strong teaching force will provide information surrounding the National Board Certification (NBC) process and its role in developing and defining the characteristics of highly qualified teachers. This review will also demonstrate how the NBC process fits all criteria inherent within a quality professional development program. The guiding focus for the review is to explore and examine the reasons why National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) decide to renew this ten-year certification and of what benefit having National Board status has provided them.

Federal Mandates to Ensure Quality Teachers

Since the publication of *A Nation At Risk* (Gardner, 1983), the goals of public education, exemplified by the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2001 and 2010, have shifted. This report provided recommendations over five areas including: the hours of the school day, required years of study in the subject areas, higher standards and expectations, teacher preparation and quality and fiscal support for our schools. The most

recent reauthorized version of ESEA legislation, commonly known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), included an intense focus on the types of funding, testing, and accountability of students, not just on teaching quality. The major shift in NCLB legislation was the introduction of the required use of student achievement as a measurement of teacher, school and district quality. Additionally, the NCLB included clear guidelines for training current teachers. Now, we know that exercising mandates over testing, curriculum, and methods of instruction have not been entirely successful. However, having a prepared teaching force has been shown to be an important component of quality educational systems. "Ultimately, a well-designed state and national infrastructure that ensures that schools have access to well-prepared teachers and knowledge about best practices is absolutely essential" (Darling-Hammond, 2013, p. 197).

With the enactment of NCLB, the U.S. Department of Education introduced new requirements for teacher training and qualification. NCLB legislation defines highly qualified teachers as individuals who: 1) have a bachelor's degree, 2) have full state certification or licensure, and 3) prove that they know each subject they teach (Programs, 2014. para 3). This NCLB definition of a quality teacher offered minimal requirements and contrasts with research that reveals the importance of the work completed by teachers (Rockoff, 2004; Guskey, 2002). To comply with NCLB, states needed to verify the qualifications of current teachers ("Highly Qualified Teachers", 2005. para 2). Many practicing teachers needed a provision to initially meet these requirements.

As a result the alternative was created in the High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE). This option provides for teachers who do not possess enough college credits for certification in middle and high school special settings, to use professional development training as verification of competency. In order for a teacher to qualify, the training requirement states, "At least 36 hours is required to substantively address subject matter content" (Code, 2003). Additionally, NCLB (2002) mandates professional development money be spent by districts or schools when sanctions for failing to meet achievement levels are imposed. When a district or an individual school fails to meet student achievement goals, NCLB required a district/school plan to improve student achievement. An explanation of how the district or site will spend 10% of federal funds received on professional development activities had to be included in this plan (NCLB, 2002). Professional Development must include activities that:

- Improve and increase teachers' knowledge of academic subjects and enable teachers to become highly qualified;
- Are an integral part of broad school-wide and district-wide educational improvement plans;
- Give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging state academic content standards and student academic achievement standards;
- Improve classroom management skills;

- Are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom;
- Are not one-day or short-term workshops or conferences;
- Support the recruiting, hiring, and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through State and local alternative routes to certification;
- Advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are:
 - o based on scientifically based research
 - o strategies for improving student academic achievement or increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers
- Are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrator ("Title IX Provisions", 2004. para 23).

The creators of NCLB assumed that these activities would ensure that teachers were qualified and would improve current teaching practices. These ideas are rooted in research but the implementation of these activities was not well conceived. Rarely were all constituent groups: teachers, principals, parents and administrators involved in the development. These requirements raised the level of federal government involvement as education is generally accepted to be a State's right and responsibility.

Issues in Developing Quality Teachers and Teaching

Sullivan (1999) found a connection between teacher quality, professional development, and student success. This connection supports the professional development requirement of NCLB to create competent and qualified teachers. Sullivan writes that the limitations to improving teacher quality are traced to ineffective professional development. Many of the professional development programs recently developed do not include the elements identified as being integral to professional development programs (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). As a result, many professional development trainings do not achieve their intended results. For example, the delivery of PD has been at a knowledge or comprehension level, while participants are expected to deliver instruction at an analytic or evaluative level (Harwell, 2003).

Elements of Effective Professional Development

There are quality professional development programs that do positively impact teachers and their instructional practice. Numerous researchers (Blank, de las Alas & Smith, 2007; Lieberman & Wood, 2002; Cohen & Hill, 2001; Saxe, Gearhart & Nasir, 2001; Carpenter, Feneman, Peterson, Chiang, & Loef, 1989) have found that changes in professional practice occur when professional learning opportunities focus on improving the educator's knowledge of the subject matter and the educator's instructional practices. Wallace (1998) suggests that teachers should be involved in action research while Darling-

Hammond (2013) explains a teacher's development must be continuous in order to improve instructional practice.

Teachers gain expertise by having quality interactions and relationships with other teachers (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). These interactions involve feedback and reflection. Hargreaves and Fullan state that "individuals won't change [their practice] in large numbers, unless development becomes a persistent collective enterprise" (p. 3). Schön (1983) believes that peer reflective practice is at the very heart of professional development. When educators are able to develop relationships with peers that involve professional learning, the effects of that learning are stronger: "personal and social development are intertwined, personal development precedes the professional development, the pace of personal development influence the pace of professional development" (Bell & Gilbert, 1996, p. 35).

Classroom instructors are often encouraged to use formative assessment techniques which require students to engage in self-reflection on their own progress. The National Research Council states, "In order for learners to gain insight into their learning and their understanding, frequent feedback is critical: students need to monitor their learning and actively evaluate their strategies and their current levels of understanding" (National Research Council, 2004, p. 78). When students are asked to be active in their own learning, their understanding of the content deepens and gaps in their knowledge are exposed. This practice provides the teacher with a clear picture of the students' progress. Teachers use

this information to further instruction, to create activities that aid a student's comprehension, and to guide the student's next steps (White & Frederiksen, 1998; Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Self-reflection on learning can also benefit the teachers in their own professional development. However, rarely do these reflective practices on personal learning or practice occur in an adult professional development setting. Lustick & Sykes (2006) found deeper reflection spurs deeper learning on the part of the teacher and his/her students when working with science teachers. Reflection causes the teachers to "rethink, reconsider, or reassess particular assumptions, ideas, or beliefs about teaching and learning science for their students." (Lustick & Sykes, 2006, p.143).

Since teaching is not one dimensional, it can be strengthened by the social, human, and decisional capital of those in the profession. Utilizing all three types of capital may help bring the teaching profession in line with other professions. There are certain habits taken from other professions that would benefit teachers. Hargreaves & Fullan (2012) describe meta-analyses as "one of the most trusted sources of knowledge and education and medical research" (p. 51). They suggest that self-reflection and group reflection can be a valuable learning process for future actions. Moreover, analyzing and reflecting upon the research of others affords teachers the opportunity to find the best instructional strategies for impacting student learning. The NBC experience emphasizes and requires reflective activities in which the teacher identifies effective and ineffective practices in their own instruction (Sato, Chung & Darling-Hammond,

2008, p.696). This reflection has been shown to be an effective practice for professional development (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Wilson & Berne, 1999; Fullan & Miles, 1992).

Additionally, "reflecting on one's beliefs about teaching and learning activities for adults and school students, the status of knowledge and learning styles can be seen as an aspect of metacognition that is important to the teacher development process" (Bell & Gilbert, 1996. p. 61). When teachers engage in the practice of reflection and analyze their impact on student learning over a prolonged period of time, they will change their instructional practice:

"Professional expertise is not just about having the evidence or being aware of it. It's also knowing about how to judge the evidence in knowing what to do with it" (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 54).

Danielson (2009) stresses the importance of reflective conversations that occur between professionals:

Of all the approaches available to educators to promote teacher learning, the most powerful (and embedded in virtually all the others) is that of professional conversation. Reflective conversations about practice require teachers to understand and analyze events in the classroom. In these conversations, teachers must consider the instructional decisions they have made and examine student learning in light of these decisions. (p. 5)

Professional dialogue between peers can strengthen the instructional practice of the teachers involved in the conversations. Arlin (1990) noted that the

conversations students have with teachers allow them to "create and to coordinate relationships," which eventually will develop into a deeper learning for the students. Indeed, students discover concepts through guided conversations with the teacher. This is what can occur when teachers support and guide other teachers as they explore quality instruction and improve their professional practice. It appears that approaches that involve the individual analyzing his/her own practice instead of mirroring back another's practice would provide more meaningful changes in instruction (Putnam & Borko, 2000).

Practices that Lead to Well-Prepared Teachers

Developing well-prepared teachers takes time. Research shows that the complex task of teaching takes years to master. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) found that expert teachers require up to eight years to hone their craft, and as they strive to become quality teachers, educators follow a specific continuum. This is consistent with Gladwell's observations (2008) of 10,000 hours of practice is needed for mastery. Given the important role teachers have in student achievement, it is vital that we ensure all classroom teachers are well-trained experts in their content, and that they are capable instructors. It is reasonable to suggest that quality professional development activities must be provided to increase the probability of their success.

Teacher Collaboration. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2013), professional capital is "the combination of human capital (the talent of individuals); social capital (the collaborative power of the group); and decisional

capital (the wisdom and expertise to make sound judgments about learners that are cultivated over many years)" (p. 37). A positive school culture that includes collaboration among teachers creates professional capital which can be a powerful quality of an effective teacher. According to Bell and Gilbert (1996), "Social development as part of teacher development involves the teachers contributing to the renegotiation and reconstruction of what it means to be a teacher" (p. 69). Leana (2011) found that when teachers worked together their collective impact on students' achievement was higher than when they worked alone. This study also revealed that teachers who had weaker skills produced higher student gains through collaboration efforts than their stronger counterparts who worked alone. Hargreaves & Fullan (2012) call this "collective capacity" a byproduct of social capital. Another important aspect to this support system is that professional learning would be a key element of the school reform effort (Harris & Jones, 2010; Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007). In fact, these ideas have been a basic part of education research for years because researchers found a positive relationship between student achievement and safe, encouraging working conditions for teachers. Taylor & Bogotch (1993) found positive work environments were the first step in turning around low performing schools. Once a school supports a collaborative PLC atmosphere, the support for reforms focused on student achievement increases (Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1994).

Futernick (2007) found that working in collegial relationships, having a belief in one's own efficacy, and being involved in valuable decision making, provides teachers with personal satisfaction. Those teachers with a strong sense of efficacy are more likely to adopt new instructional practices and are more likely to stay in the profession (Harris & Jones, 2010). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) explain the importance of a trusting school culture: "a basic platform of secure relationships has been established that will open these teachers up rather than shut them down" (p. 113). Therefore when acknowledging that "the quality of an educational system cannot outperform the quality of its teachers" (Harris & Jones, 2010, p.174), developing a school culture in which teachers move from isolated positions to collaborative ones would benefit both teachers and students.

Recognizing Quality Teaching Through the National Board Certification Process

The National Board published *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do* (1989) introducing the Five Core Propositions. These propositions are the basis of the certification process and continue to drive the certification process today. Stanford professor and chair of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, Darling-Hammond (2013) recognized the importance of the Five Core Propositions when she wrote, "to ensure high-quality instruction, it is important to attend to both *teacher* quality and *teaching* quality" (p. 11). These Propositions express the common characteristics of accomplished teachers:

Proposition 1: Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Proposition 2: Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

Proposition 3: Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

Proposition 4: Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

Proposition 5: Teachers are members of learning communities (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards [NBPTS], 2014. p. 1).

To achieve NBC, candidates must demonstrate their knowledge of pedagogy through portfolio entries and assessments. Because it is completed individually and features the work done in each classroom, NBC exemplifies differentiated professional learning. However, while NBC is an individualized certification process, educators have created support systems to provide support, guidance, and feedback while a teacher completes the process. While support systems are not formally endorsed by the National Board, the Board recognizes their importance and the value they bring to the process ("Getting Board Certified", n.d., para 1). Certainly, educators can complete this professional learning process on their own, but when a support group has been used, "many find that participation helps keep them focused and motivated, and enhances their understanding of their teaching practices and the decisions they make in the classroom" ("Support", n.d. para 1). When candidates are involved in support

groups or Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), the NBC process and the standards used within it are strengthened.

Successful attainment of National Board Certification by an educator indicates completion of a rigorous, standards-based assessment process, in which the knowledge of content and pedagogy, use of high-quality instructional practices, and involvement in professional activities has been shown (Cavalluzzo, 2004). The NBC process allows for individuals to pick from sixteen different subject areas and 25 different certificates. The NBPTS realized that factors such as time and money affect a teacher's decision to attempt NBC. In 2014, the NBPTS announced the first revision and redesign to the certification process in fourteen years allowing for lower costs and more flexible and efficient methods for completing certification such as electronic portfolio submission ("Revisions to the Certification Process", n.d., para. 3). Full board certification is currently open to educators with three or more years of experience ("Value for Teachers", n.d., para 5).

The process still provides a structure for educators to plan for and support the needs of individual students. Also, it permits teachers to work towards achieving specific learning outcomes such as improving students' learning, setting quality instructional goals, and justifying instructional practices. All parts of the process are linked to professional teaching standards. During the revision process, candidates may take up to three years to complete the process. The first two components, which involve content knowledge and differentiation of

instruction will be released in 2014-2015. The first component requires the candidate to explain not only how to teach and work with students, but what to teach for the certificate area each has chosen. The certificate area also covers an age range of students, which the candidate must also address. ("Certificates, Standards", n.d., para 1). This component uses computer-based assessments, which includes a 45-question assessment and three constructed-response questions. The second component requires the candidate to create and deliver instruction based on the both the strengths and needs of the students for the purpose of increasing student knowledge and achievement ("Revisions to the Certification Process", n.d., para. 3).

The third component will be released in 2015-2016 with the fourth and final component available in 2016-2017. These final two components will be patterned after previous portfolios. The third component entitled: *Teaching Practice and Learning Environment*, will require candidates to record a lesson with students in the room and then reflect on the design, implementation, and outcome of the lesson. The final component: *Effective Reflective Practitioner* allows for the candidate to select and reflect on professional accomplishments that demonstrate that teacher's impact on student learning. This individualized approach motivates educators as it allows them to demonstrate their mastery of working with students (Pink, 2010).

National Board Certification and Professional Development

If the purpose of professional development is to "alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understanding of school persons toward an articulated end" (Griffin, 1983, p. 2), then finding effective ways to complete that task is important. Webster-Wright (2009) claims "Professionals learn, in a way that shapes their practice, from a wide range of activities, from formal PD [professional development] programs, through interaction with work colleagues, to experiences outside work, and in differing combinations and permutations of experiences" (p. 705). The NBC process offers an approach to alter instructional practices because teachers must analyze instructional practices and student progress, and alter their practices as needed. Rather than arbitrary content, the National Board process requires teachers to have access to a classroom for working directly with students, authentically measuring student needs, and defining and justifying the instruction that has been used (NBPTS, 2014).

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC), now known as Learning Forward, has created an updated list of standards to be included in quality professional development acknowledging that the purpose is to increase educator effectiveness and student achievement (Learning Forward, 2015). The standards include:

- Learning Communities: professionals joining together to improve their practice so that they might improve student achievement.

- Leadership: applies to all educators and expects an ability to build capacity, advocate, support and take responsibility for being effective in raising student achievement.
- Resources: all forms of resources should be provided and distributed appropriately.
- Data: using multiple sources (quantitative and qualitative) to analyze performance of students and teachers.
- Learning Designs: requires the application of new learning and engagement of participants.
- Implementation: should show a change in instructional practice and improved student achievement.
- Outcomes: increases in teacher effectiveness and improved student mastery. ("Standards for Professional Learning", 2015)

The detailed process for completing the National Board Certification (NBC) process is supported by this research and others identifying the elements of quality professional development (PD) activities (Darling-Hammond et.al, 2009). Joyce and Showers (2003) found that when learning is a common or shared experience, teacher beliefs are more likely to change. To encourage shifts in beliefs, research supports utilizing the idea of social persuasion or peer pressure (Bandura, 2001; Zimmerman & Ringle, 1981). Harwell (2003) suggests that taking time to cooperatively study in groups, sharing instructional methods, and peer coaching provides a richer learning environment for teachers.

Additionally, the level of application required in the PD also impacts the value. Joyce & Showers (1980) state that a change in a teacher's belief and an impact on student learning can only be expected when professional development activities move to application and problem-solving. Passive learning will not result in lasting change. Professional development activities that provide authentic opportunities to practice new techniques are far more effective than typical professional development programs in which participants listen but do not practice.

Table 1 below shows the best practices for PD activities and compares each to the NBC process. One of the strengths of the NBC process is the strong tie between it and research which support the practices and procedures required to successfully certify. The NBC process requires the candidate to work with students in an actual classroom setting (Fullan & Miles, 1992), follow a student for a minimum of eight weeks (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Garet, et.al, 2001), and then reflect on the instructional practices and decisions made by the teacher (Brookfield, 2005; Katz, Sutherland, & Earl, 2005; Brockbank, McGill, & Beech, 2002).

Table 1

Comparison of Best Practices for Professional Development and National Board Certification

<u>Best Practices for PD</u>	<u>Supporting Research</u>	<u>NBC Process</u>
Long term and is best situated within a community that supports learning	Stoll et.al. 2006; Hord, 2004; Garet et al., 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1996	Process takes up to 3 years.
Critical reflection through challenging implicit assumptions and questioning	Katz, Sutherland, & Earl, 2005; Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, Stiles, 1998; Loucks-Horsley, Harding, Arbuckle, Murray, Dubea, Williams, 1987	Portfolio guidelines provide questions and structure for completion.
Continuing, active, social, and related to practice	Wilson & Berne, 1999;	Candidates work in real classrooms with students.
Seen as a process, not an event		
Learning designs, specific, concrete, and practical ideas that directly relate to the day-to-day operation of their classrooms.	Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon. 2001; Fullan & Miles, 1992	Involves analysis of actual classroom activities including instruction and interactions with students.
Teachers commit to the new practices only after they had actively engaged in using them in their classrooms	Crandall, 1983	Portfolios involve tracking students' process over an extended period of time.

Professional development that includes a coach, debriefing with peers or is located in a setting that provides extended support results in a more effective professional experience (Garet, et.al, 2001). Teachers actively working together is in stark contrast to past descriptions of the teaching profession. In 1991, Rudduck wrote "education is among the last vocations where it is still legitimate to work by yourself in a space that is secure against invaders" (p. 31). Working in isolation should no longer be the norm. As a result, educators are now asked to collaborate on data analysis, lesson plans, and teaching assignments. If a teacher is not strong in technique or skills, a peer group can help the teacher overcome that weakness. Darling-Hammond (2013) supports a more sustained approach to professional development, utilizing teacher collaboration and coaching. Professional development opportunities that are "intense, sustained and continuous over time," have been shown to be effective (p. 100).

Altering the Change Model

Unless professional development is carefully designed to deliver useable information for what teachers need to know and what is applicable to the classrooms and schools, instructional practice and student achievement will not improve (Fullan & Steigelbauer, 1991). The common method for change in educational settings is the introduction of a new program to meet an identified need. The first step is to convince those involved of the need for a change, then provide a new method or idea and allow those involved to interact, experience and accept the change. This agreement in the quality of the proposed change is

expected to facilitate the acceptance of the change in belief and practice. Finally, the 'new' change will become accepted practice (Lewin, 1947). However, convincing educators of the need to alter practice for the purpose of improving the quality of instruction is not so easily done.

Guskey (2002) argues "What attracts teachers to professional development, therefore, is their belief that it will expand their knowledge and skills, contribute to their growth, and enhance their effectiveness with students" (p. 382). Further, Guskey (2002) suggests a different model for the education profession that has at its foundation the outcome of improved student achievement. Teachers are motivated to change their instructional practice when they notice improvements in student learning, not because they have been told the new program or technique will work. This is what will change the teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and practices.

The National Board Certification Process Supported in Research

Many times, students' improvements require time to emerge, indicating that teachers require extended training time. In this manner, researchers have found that the NBC process has positively impacted student achievement, and that it therefore supports long-term changes in instructional practice (Gaudreault & Woods, 2012; Park, Oliver, Johnson, Graham & Oppong, 2007). Since teacher "attitudes and beliefs about teaching in general are largely derived from classroom experiences" research supports the NBC process' requirement that teachers work with students in an authentic setting (Guskey, 2002, p. 384).

Webster-Wright (2009) argues "...for the need to move beyond the current focus on how best to provide professional development activities toward understanding more about the fundamental question of how professionals learn" (p. 704). It is through a collective inquiry with a group of trusted peers that teachers see the value of improving and possibly changing their instructional practice.

Learning Within a Community That Supports Learning

When teachers share a task like learning new instructional strategies, they create a trusting relationship (Mayer et al., 1995). As a certain amount of risk is involved in learning new information, especially when a learner feels vulnerable, group work is a positive element to include in any professional development. The NBC process exposes the candidate to this vulnerable situation as each candidate is required to plan, apply, record and reflect on the instructional decisions made in the classroom. When candidates support each other by reading each other's portfolios and watching recorded lessons together, a trusting relationship is created and strengthened (Jones & George, 1998; Mayer et al., 1995). As they provide feedback, ideas, and assistance, they become better at instruction (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). When professional learning focuses on "concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation and reflection", change occurs (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, p. 598). In an analysis of school culture and student learning, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) found that it "was better to be collaborative than individualistic" (p. 106) when trying to improve the professional culture and the student achievement within a school.

Knowing that developing and maintaining a positive, trusting climate impacts student achievement (Tschannen-Moran, 2004), the focus in education policy is shifting, once again, to include not just student achievement, but creating positive, trusting environments for everyone at a school site, including staff and students. The research supporting a more collaborative educational system has existed for nearly fifty years. Interestingly, at the same time the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was established, Rosenholtz (1989) shared the discovery that "learning-enriched schools" were those where teachers and staff members shared a commitment to ensure that all students learn. Rosenholtz studied 78 schools and identified that the task of improving instructional practice was a joint effort. Successful schools did not allow individual teachers to struggle. It was teacher collaboration and specifically, a shared vision and shared goals that made the difference in these successful schools. The safe, trusting environment that allowed for action research and experimentation created an atmosphere in which teachers improved their professional practice. Collaboration is exemplified in an effective Professional Learning Community (Dufour, 2009). Dufour and Mattos (2013) note "The most powerful strategy for improving both teaching and learning, however, is not by micromanaging instruction but by creating the collaborative culture and collective responsibility of a professional learning community, (PLC)" (p. 37).

A description from Seashore, Anderson, and Riedel (2003) explains the importance of a professional learning community:

By using the term professional learning community we signify our interest not only in discrete acts of teacher sharing, but in the establishment of a school-wide culture that makes collaboration expected, inclusive, genuine, ongoing, and focused on critically examining practice to improve student outcomes. ...The hypothesis is that what teachers do together outside of the classroom can be as important as what they do inside in affecting school restructuring, teachers' professional development, and student learning. (p. 3)

Horn and Little (2010) determined that the "nature of the conversations" (p. 212) within the teacher groups influenced the importance given to issues and the overall support offered for remediation. Limitations for these teachers included the lack of a shared language, their frame of reference, experience, philosophy, and levels of group leadership. These limitations are mitigated in the NBC process because it is structured around reflective questions that guide the candidate through the process.

The NBC process provides structure for collaborating and building relationships among educators while focusing on the instructional impact of teaching on students. The sustained focus enables teachers to support growth and create a culture that provides feedback and offers time for peer observation. Teacher development is an on-going process, and teachers need to be

empowered and trusted to make critical decisions concerning the profession and the national educational agenda. The latter includes curriculum, instructional practices, and peer evaluation rubrics. As trust develops, social capital and group cohesion are strengthened. Baratz-Snowden (1993) agrees that "teaching as a collegial enterprise involving complex decision making" (p. 83), supporting the complexity of the daily professional work completed by teachers. For educators, this means working with other educators in a collaborative setting with larger communities of practice in schools (Knapp, 2003).

Summary

In a three year study of NBC candidates, (Sato et al. 2008) found that all candidates "cited the value of the collegial interactions that they had with other teachers in their National Board candidate support groups" (p. 24). Activities that encourage collaboration, reflections, and individual growth have been shown to increase student achievement. The NBC process study by Webster-Wright (2009) found that the certification process is a successful professional development experience because it combines a support group that collaboratively analyzes video-taped lessons, brainstorms instructional strategies, and reflects on instructional practice, creating a "camaraderie with like-minded teachers with similar goals" (p. 693). Serafini (2002) notes that "As individual teachers work through the certification process and begin to reflect on and critique their practice from different perspectives, they become more capable

of making appropriate decisions for the students in their classrooms" (p. 325). Because the elements of effective professional development are embedded in the existing process of certification, the NBC process can offer professional development at an advanced level.

Researchers have discovered an alignment of the NBC process with effective professional development models (National Staff Development Council, 2001; Hawley & Valli, 1999). The NBC process coupled with a PLC approach could involve an entire staff working on individualized professional development. This could result in a productive shifting of the culture of a school. This process provides "teachers and schools the tools to define and measure teaching excellence" ("National Board Certification", 2015. para 1). Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos (2009) share that:

While the impact on student achievement is a critical indicator of the effectiveness of professional development, we believe the impact of professional development on teacher knowledge and instructional practice is relevant, as these are worthwhile outcomes in themselves that support increased learning for students. (p. 9)

A direct correlation between increased student achievement and collaborative working conditions exists (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). Utilizing PLCs has altered teachers' practices and resulted in the creation of collaborative cultures that connect teachers as they work to improve learning for themselves and for their students.

It would appear that utilizing the NBC process as a professional learning program for schools would have positive consequences. First, it would move schools to a collaboration model; second, it would positively impact student learning (Sato et al., 2008); and third, it would differentiate each individual's learning and result in improved individual practice and collective morale (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). This process requires teachers to use their curriculum and their classrooms to plan, teach and reflect on their practices. Those candidates who are not in a classroom would be mandated to find a classroom in which they can complete the tasks. This requirement illustrates the importance of authentic practice and reflection within the NBC process. This process provides all candidates with opportunities to use methods that employ both higher-level implementation and thinking skills than are inherent within most professional development activities. If teachers were provided quality professional development activities that required not only authentic exercises but a reflective component, a deeper level of practice would be the result. This deeper level of practice would impact student learning and therefore, result in long term instructional changes (Guskey, 2002).

The NBC process does have its critics. Burroughs (2001) claims this process is too focused on the writing process and not on the candidate's teaching abilities. The NBC process requires the use of three types of writing infrequently used by practicing teachers: descriptive, analytic, and reflective analysis. Certainly, the certification rate of 45% on the first attempt would attest to the rigor

of the certification process and perhaps to the process itself (Martindale, 2011). One of the strengths of this certification process, however, is the active role the participants must assume. Exploring the contribution that teachers provide their peers in the form of social capital, Hargreaves & Fullan (2012) demonstrate that this type of support increases a teacher's effectiveness. The concept of teacher collaboration improving practice is supported by Darling-Hammond (2013). Research on effective professional development suggests that learning is stronger when the participants take an active role not only in learning but in thinking about the process.

In any profession, professional expertise in the form of decisional capital comes from making decisions and reflecting on the outcomes. When professional expertise is achieved, self-confidence increases. Hargreaves & Fullan (2012) argue that "When you know what you were truly capable of performing better, when you have the knowledge and the skills to reach your students to develop their own capacities far beyond what anyone first expected, this is invigorating" (p. 55). Couple this with the motivating draw of teachers to make a difference in students' lives, and self-confidence increases. The researchers further contend that, "The central principle remains important: you get better at making discretionary judgments when you have a lot of practice examining your own, and other people's judgments, with your colleagues, case-by-case. Practice, deliberately pursued, really does make perfect"(p. 94).

Through the creation of activities that are based on content and professional standards, the National Board process fits the criteria for quality professional development by providing voluntary opportunities for reflection and analysis over an extended period of time and in a variety of situations. Teachers have organized and supported others in this process, which is adaptable to a variety of educational settings. The impact on student learning (Sato et al., 2008; Cavalluzzo, 2004) has been shown; this is central to influencing a change in professional practice.

In the quest to provide quality teachers for the students served in our schools, not all agree the NBC process produces quality teachers or that the changes to their instructional practice are sustained beyond their certification attempt. However, Sato, Wei & Darling-Hammond (2008) and others have documented positive impacts to student learning and a sustained change in instructional practice. This review of the research on the contributory factors to quality teaching demonstrates that the processes and procedures that exist in quality professional development programs are found in the NBC process. The next logical step is to ask “What kind of teaching conditions and supports are needed for teachers to sustain practices that are learned in intense professional development experiences like National Board Certification?”

This study will fill a gap in the research concerning renewal of National Board Certification. As the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and various education stakeholders including the Secretary of Education, the

National Education Association (NEA) and California Teachers Association (CTA) work to transform the teaching profession, this information will provide information on the restrictive factors perceived by teachers concerning the National Board Certification renewal process. This study extends the two previous research studies: Petty, O'Conner and Dagenhart (2010) who sought feedback from teachers in North Carolina concerning their renewal of National Board Certification and Starnes (2013) examined the motivating and persistence factors for those initially going through the NBC process. Petty, O'Conner and Dagenhart found the cost and the loss of bonuses, the time-consuming process and the stress involved in completing the initial certification process were factors in making the decision to not renew (Petty, O'Conner and Dagenhart, 2010). Starnes found that improving in professional practice as well as financial incentives were strong factors in seeking certification. However, when analyzing persistence factors, the value was found in the NBC process itself. Through the support of a mentor, the importance of self-reflection and the awareness of what constitutes quality teaching emerged (Starnes, 2013).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In this study, California National Board Certified Teachers were asked to complete an online fourteen-question survey as their National Board Certification was about to expire. Each was asked to look back at motivating factors for originally seeking this Certification and reflect on what was gained by the process. These data were collected, coded and analyzed to establish the components of perceived value gained from the process and holding the Certification of The National Board.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to test several propositions as to why teachers choose to renew or not to renew their National Board Certification as well as challenge some of the previous research findings published on this topic. This research provides data on the various factors identified as important to the National Board Certified Teachers who chose to not renew. Ancillary factors were identified that inform on the perceived value of participating in the National Board Certification process.

Research Questions

The research questions are:

1. Why do National Board Certified teachers renew their certification?
2. What is the perceived value of National Board Certification to practicing National Board Certified teachers?

There are several informational hypotheses which guide this study:

Hypothesis 1: Financial incentives are not a motivator for renewing National Board Certification.

Hypothesis 2: Teachers seek out National Board Certification to enhance their own abilities.

Hypothesis 3: The expected leadership opportunities because of National Board Certification have not been provided to Board Certified Teachers by their school sites or districts.

Research Design

This chapter outlines the methods used to collect, analyze and organize the data gathered in this study. To complete this research, I considered both quantitative and qualitative methods. Pulling from the view of social constructivists and using a mixed methods approach allowed for the precision of quantitative study through numbers as well as supplying a narrative through a qualitative approach (Krathwohl, 2009. p 617). Using a quantitative approach which examined the relationships between and among variables provided a

method of analyzing the gathered information. To sort out the distinct components, this analysis required some degree of data quantification. I built protections against bias and managed the data for other possible discoveries (Creswell, 1998. p. 201). A qualitative approach component provided a structure which helped determine the meaning of every participant's response regarding their decision to seek or not to seek renewal of their certification (Creswell, 1998. p. 179). This method also provided a complete understanding of how various factors influenced the decision to renew National Board Certification.

The independent variable in this study was the National Board Certification process. Only National Board Certified Teachers were asked to participate. The dependent variable, which was measured, was the number of teachers who decide to renew their certification. This study was also ex-post facto as National Board Certified Teachers who chose to not renew were included in the survey. Controls were put in place to allow for analysis of these data as well as data from National Board Certified Teachers who certified less than eight years ago and are thus, not yet ready for the renewal process. Furthermore, drawing from the social constructivist view, in which individuals create their own meaning from experiences, this researcher acknowledges the importance of allowing the theory and meaning of how others interpret the value of National Board Certification to emerge rather than applying my own meanings to this study (Creswell, 1998. p. 209).

Participants

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2014) reports that California has nearly 6,000 Board Certified teachers with 565 teachers certifying in 2005 and 2006. Since there are several requirements that must be met before attempting National Board Certification, each of the participants in this study had at least a Bachelor's degree, three years of teaching experience and a valid teaching or counseling state license (NBPTS, 2014). Currently, National Board Certification is valid for ten years, but this provision will change in 2017 when National Board Certification will become a five-year certification (NBPTS, 2014. p. 16). The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards strongly encourages Board Certified teachers to begin the renewal process in their eighth or ninth year. This study sought those National Board Certified teachers who are nearing the final years of their certification. This information was available on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards website. This site lists the names of teachers who successfully earned National Board Certification by district, state, certification year as well as the certification area. Board Certified teachers were sorted by district and certification year by downloading the information from the website to Excel and organizing the information within the program. A search of school districts' websites provided the contact information for the Superintendent. Emails were sent to the Superintendent of school districts with National Board Certified Teachers from 2005 & 2006 requesting the survey link be forwarded to each of them.

The message was sent to Superintendents including an informed consent letter (Appendix C) and instructions for how to take the survey (Appendix D). The informed consent letter includes information on the purpose of the study, the participant's rights, the methods by which the results will remain anonymous, the potential risks and benefits of participation, and the researcher's contact information.

The Survey

Developed out of a compilation of previously tested instruments, the tool used in this study consisted of fourteen questions. According to Pierce (2009), "Using previously validated collection instruments can save time and increase the study's credibility" (p. 159). The instrument used by Starnes (2013) involved a 37-question online survey using Likert scale questions. The instrument from Petty, O'Connor and Dagenhart (2010) was a three-part ten-question survey in which participants constructed their answers. Petty, O'Connor and Dagenhart (2010) and Starnes (2013) provided permission to use these instruments (Appendix A). These instruments were combined and distilled to a final product.

Before the launch of the first email invitations, four National Board Certified Teachers provided feedback on the clarity of the survey using an adapted version of the "cognitive interview methodology" described by Desimone and La Floch (2004. p. 6). This method required the participants to think-aloud as each completed the survey; also, participants responded to probing clarifying

questions from the researcher. The researcher analyzed and categorized these thoughts and responses, and reworded or reconstructed questions to ensure that the true intent is clear to the National Board Certified Teachers who eventually participated in the survey.

The survey was based on the previous research of Petty, O'Connor and Dagenhart (2010) and Starnes (2013) and consisted of the following questions. The first six questions were multiple-choice. Questions 7-10 were based on the research of Starnes (2013) identifying four motivating themes for seeking NBC. Each question begins with the same direction of "Please select all that were a factor for you in deciding to become a National Board Certified Teacher." The response choices varied in each question depending on the theme: Teacher Leader, Financial Improvement, Professional Improvement and Recognition (Starnes, 2013). Question 7 corresponded to the theme of Teacher Leader. The five response choices for this question were: "I wanted to be a teacher leader, I wanted to prepare to be a department chair, I wanted to be a better curriculum writer, My administrator suggested I apply, I wanted to become an administrator." Question 8 response choices related to Financial Improvement. These choices were: "I wanted to strengthen my resume, I wanted to have a portable credential, I wanted the financial incentives offered by the State, I wanted financial incentives offered by my district." Question 9 provides response choices related to Professional Improvement. These choices were: "I wanted to collaborate with other teachers, I wanted to improve student achievement, I wanted to revitalize

my teaching skills, Certification was part of an advanced degree program in which I was enrolled." Question 10 provides choices related to Recognition. These response choices were "I wanted my teaching to be validated, I wanted to gain respect as a teacher, I wanted to be valued in my school community, I wanted to be evaluated by a national organization." Participants were allowed to pick all of the possible reasons for originally certifying for each of these questions.

Question 11 was a "yes" or "no" response which triggered a skip logic action taking them to the next appropriate question. These final three questions required a constructed response from the participant. A "yes" response to question 11 lead them to question 12 which asked " If you plan to renew or have already completed the renewal process, please indicate what prompted this decision." A "no" response to question 11 took the participant to question 13 which asked " If you do not plan to renew, please indicate what prompted this decision. The final question asked "In what ways has National Board Certification affected your career? The survey can be found in Appendix B.

Data Analysis Plan

Quantitative

The first step in the analysis process was to compute and present descriptive statistics for the participants' background characteristics. The background characteristics included current position, years of teaching

experience, the number of additional years that they plan to continue teaching, the year of certification, and the number of attempts made to become certified. Then, the research questions were answered and the hypotheses were evaluated.

There are several informational hypotheses which guided this study. The first hypothesis was: Financial incentives are not a motivator for renewing National Board Certification. This hypothesis was addressed by examining the percentage of participants who stated that financial incentives were important in their responses to the two constructed response questions used for the first research question (these questions were “If you plan to renew or have already completed the renewal process please indicate what prompted this decision,” and “If you do not plan to renew, please indicate what prompted this decision.”

The second hypothesis was: Teachers seek out National Board Certification to enhance their own abilities.” In order to answer this question, responses to Items 7, 8, 9, and 10 were evaluated. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were computed for each of the responses within each of these items to determine whether they desired leadership development. The research determined that a teacher desired leadership if the NBCT indicated in the response to Item 7 that he/she wanted to be a teacher leader, wanted to prepare to be a department chair, wanted to be a better curriculum writer, wanted to become an administrator, or that an administrator suggested that they apply. The research determined that a teacher desired financial improvement if he/she

indicated in response to Item 8 that he/she wanted to strengthen his/her resume, have a portable credential, wanted the financial incentives offered by the state, or by the district. The research determined that a teacher desired professional improvement if the NBCT indicated in the response to Item 9 that he/she wanted to collaborate with other teachers, improve student achievement, revitalize his/her teaching, improve his/her teaching skills, or that certification was part of an advanced degree program in he/she was enrolled. The research determined that a teacher desired that a teacher desired recognition if he/she indicated in response to Item 10 that he/she wanted his/her teaching to be validated, gain respect as a teacher, be valued in their school community, or be evaluated by a national organization.

In addition to answering the research questions and testing the three hypotheses of this study, supplemental analyses were performed to address additional issues. The data were analyzed to determine whether there was a relationship between the initial and renewal decision concerning NBC. In other words, did the "yes/no" responses to the four themes (leadership development, financial improvement, professional improvement, or recognition) chosen as a reason for originally certifying relate to the same responses for whether or not they planned to renew. The responses to Items 7 through 10 (whether or not they endorsed reasons within each of the four themes) were compared to the categorized responses to the open-ended questions about why they were or were not planning to renew their certification. Four chi-square tests were

performed to determine if there was a relationship between the original certification reason and the renewal reason for each of the four themes of response.

The researcher performed the second supplemental analysis to determine whether the number of attempts to certify has any relationship to the decision to renew or not. In order to address this issue, an independent sample test was performed comparing the participants who stated that they planned to renew with those who planned not to renew with the number of attempts to originally certify as the dependent variable.

Qualitative

Since “analysis is the process that facilitates making interpretations from fieldwork, observation and interviewing”, determining what data are significant becomes important (Krathwohl, 2009. p. 313). The qualitative data for this study were taken from the comment sections in the online survey. These data were reviewed for themes, coded and analyzed. Several steps are involved in the thematic analysis of the data. Codes were identified and adjusted through the multiple readings of the data. It was necessary to refine and revise the code names while keeping the sense of the participants' responses (Krathwohl, 2009. p. 317).

The first research question was: Why do National Board Certified teachers renew or not renew their certification? To answer this question, responses to two open-ended questions were examined. These questions were “If you plan to

renew or have already completed the renewal process please indicate what prompted this decision,” and “If you do not plan to renew, please indicate what prompted this decision.” The researcher examined and categorized the responses to these questions in order to determine why the participants would renew or not renew their certification.

The second research question was: “What is the perceived value of National Board Certification to practicing National Board Certified teachers?” In order to answer this question, responses to the open-ended question “In what ways has National Board Certification affected your career?” were evaluated. The open-ended responses were examined and categorized to determine the perceived value of the certification to the participants. The third hypothesis was: The expected leadership opportunities because of National Board Certification have not been provided to Board Certified Teachers by their school sites or districts. The researcher used the constructed responses to test this final hypothesis.

Summary

This study revealed and confirmed the variety of factors impacting the renewal rates for National Board Certified teachers. Previous research points to the financial burden of certifying (Petty 2007; Petty, O'Connor & Dagenhart, 2010). The recent cuts in funding public education have resulted in the elimination of many financial supports given to teachers who complete the

National Board Certification process. Since National Board Certification lasts for ten years, little attention has been focused on the renewal rates. New provisions that will shorten the certification period to half this amount, five years, make this information increasingly important (NBPTS, 2014). This study looked at the perceived value of being nationally certified through the eyes of teachers working in public schools. Pinpointing the connections to their reality versus the perception of what they had envisioned by becoming board certified may provide a change in the marketing of the certification process and in the treatment of future board certified teachers.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to test several propositions as to why teachers choose to renew or not to renew their National Board Certification as well as challenge some of the previous research findings published on this topic.

Two research questions were posed in Chapter 1:

1. Why do National Board Certified teachers renew or not renew their certification?
2. What is the perceived value of National Board Certification to practicing National Board Certified teachers?

In addition, three informational hypotheses were tested:

1. Financial incentives are not a motivator for renewing National Board Certification.
2. Teachers seek out National Board Certification to enhance their own abilities.
3. The expected leadership opportunities because of National Board Certification. have not been provided to Board Certified Teachers by their school sites or districts.

This chapter contains the results from the analyses performed in answer these research questions and tests these hypotheses. Initially, descriptive

statistics are presented for the participants' background characteristics. Then, the results from the analyses for the two research questions and three informational hypotheses of this study are presented, followed by the results from supplemental analyses performed to address two additional issues. The chapter ends with a summary of the key findings from this study.

Population

This study focused on the thoughts and perceptions of National Board Certified Teachers from 2005 & 2006. This limited target audience was chosen because National Board Certification is valid for ten years. These NBCTs would be receiving notice of the impending loss of certification and would be beginning the renewal process if keeping this certification was the goal. If NBC lapses, the teacher must begin the process from the very beginning, not merely renew. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' (NBPTS) website maintains a database indicating the certified teacher's name, district, certification area and date of certification. From this data base, it was determined there were 565 California teachers who received National Board Certification in 2005 & 2006. Candidates were contacted through their districts as shown on the NBPTS website. Several of these districts, including Los Angeles and San Francisco have NBC support centers created to assist their teachers in the process. These centers assisted the researcher in contacting NBCTs to participate as they maintain the listing of NBCTs for the districts.

Data Collection

Data collection began in late December 2014 and continued through to March 1, 2015. Emails were sent to superintendents of districts in which NBCTs indicated they were employed when they certified in 2005 & 2006. The emails included the informed consent letter (Appendix C) and the directions (Appendix D) for accessing the survey. Since the process started during the holiday break, additional emails requesting a reminder message be sent to NBCTs were sent to district superintendents on January 19, January 26 and February 19, 2015. It was assumed that districts monitored the names of NBCTs in their employ, so specific names were not sent to each district. Since many districts did not send to the target teachers of 2005 & 2006, some responses (31) were invalid. Of the 95 received responses to the survey, only 64 were from NBCTs who had certified in 2005 & 2006. This is 11% of the target population. Filtering was completed to ensure only NBCTs' responses from the target years of 2005 & 2006 were included in the analyzed data for this study.

Participants' Demographic and Background Characteristics

A total of 64 individuals participated in this study. Table 2 contains descriptive statistics for the participants' demographic and background characteristics. Most of the participants (71.9%) were regular classroom teachers. An additional 7.8% described themselves as teachers on special assignment and the remaining were in some other position (20.3%) including site

administrator, district office personnel, director of labor relations, music specialist, retired, structured English immersion teacher, literacy specialist, reading specialist, director (NBRC Stanford), on-site coordinator, resource specialist, union president, and itinerant teacher for the visually impaired.

The most common number of years of teaching experience was 21 to 25 years (34.4%) followed by between 16 and 20 years (31.3%). When asked how many years they intended to continue teaching, the most common responses were between 6 and 10 years (26.6%), between 16 and 20 years (20.3%), and between 1 and 5 years (18.8%). The sample was approximately evenly split between those who had originally been certified in 2005 (53.1%) and those who had originally been certified in 2006 (46.9%). Most of the participants (76.6%) had become certified on their first attempt while 17.2% had required two attempts and 6.3% had required three attempts.

Table 2

Participants' Demographic and Background Characteristics

	<i>n</i>	%
Current position		
Classroom teacher	46	71.9
Teacher on special assignment	5	7.8
Other	13	20.3
Years of teaching experience		
5-10	0	0
11-15	9	14.1
16-20	20	31.3
21-25	22	34.4
26+	11	17.2
Missing	2	3.1
Number of additional years planned to continue teaching		
1-5	12	18.8
6-10	17	26.6
11-15	11	17.2
16-20	13	20.3
20+	8	12.5
Missing	3	4.7
Year of certification		
2005	34	53.1
2006	30	46.9
Number of attempts to become certified		
1	49	76.6
2	11	17.2
3	4	6.3

Table 3

School Districts Employing NBCTs Represented in this Study

	<i>n</i>	%
Anaheim City Schools	2	.03
Berkeley Unified School District	1	.01
Carlsbad Unified School District	3	.04
Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District	2	.03
Fort Bragg Unified School District	1	.01
Long Beach Unified School District	4	.06
Los Angeles Unified School District	7	.10
Milpitas Unified School District	1	.01
Menlo Park City School District	1	.01
Moreland School District	1	.01
Mountain View-Los Altos Union High School District	1	.01
Oakland Unified School District	2	.03
Oceanside Unified School District	2	.03
Oxnard Elementary School District	2	.03
Palo Alto Unified School District	3	.04
Pasadena Unified School District	1	.01
Petaluma City Schools	1	.01
Poway Unified School District	2	.03
San Diego Unified School District	2	.03
San Francisco Unified School District	13	.20
San Leandro Unified School District	1	.01
Santa Ana Unified School District	1	.01
Sequoia Union Unified High School District	2	.03
Shasta Union High School District	1	.01
Snowline Joint Unified	1	.01
Sweetwater Union High School District	2	.03
Vallejo City Unified	1	.01
Whittier City	1	.01
Woodside Elementary	1	.01

Table 3 shows the school districts employing NBCTs that are represented in this study. These NBCTs represent 29 different districts in California. Many of these districts offer stipends or other support through the process including time to work on their submissions or access to candidate support centers. A complete listing of the districts that offer some sort of support to candidates is available in Appendix F.

Research Questions

The First Research Question. The first research question was: Why do National Board Certified teachers renew or not renew their certification? To answer this question, responses to two open-ended questions were examined. These questions were “If you plan to renew or have already completed the renewal process please indicate what prompted this decision,” and “If you do not plan to renew, please indicate what prompted this decision.” Responses to these questions were examined and categorized in order to determine why the participants would renew or not renew their certification. The themes were developed to coincide with the leadership development, financial improvement, professional improvement, and recognition themes (or lack thereof for the latter open-ended question).

Table 4

Themed Responses to the Question “If you plan to renew or have already completed the renewal process please indicate what prompted this decision”

Response category	<i>n</i>	%
Leadership development	3	7.3
Financial improvement	22	53.7
Professional improvement	20	48.8
Recognition	13	31.7

Note. Percentages are based on the 41 participants who stated that they planned to renew or had already completed the renewal process.

Table 4 shows the themed responses to the question for those who planned to renew or had already completed the renewal process. The most common responses were that the participants planned to renew or had already completed the renewal process for the financial improvements (53.7%). In the constructed responses, two different NBCTs mentioned specific monetary amounts as reasons for renewing. The first simply wrote, "district stipend of \$5,000" (NBCT 1). The second included, "I renewed to maintain my status as a NBCT and continue to earn 10% additional salary" (NBCT 33). Another NBCT shared that, "I need the financial benefits. Don't really want to go through it [the renewal process] though!" (NBCT 40). The second most frequent response was the professional improvement received by being a NBCT (48.8%). Six different

NBCTs included the statement: *Continued professional growth* as a reason for renewal. Comments like, "It was the most valuable professional growth experience I'd had so I wanted to renew" (NBCT 8) and "It's just the next step. Why wouldn't I renew?" (NBCT 9), illustrate the impact this process had on these individuals. Another NBCT shared, "I also like the process that forces me to evaluate where I am as a teacher and leader and where and how I want to grow" (NBCT 57). Providing these teachers with the opportunity to "examine my practice" (NBCT 40) and to continue to, "evolve as a teacher" (NBCT 26) points to the desire teachers have to, "stay fresh and keep myself accountable" (NBCT 47). Yet another NBCT wanted to, "reconnect with the principles of the accomplished teacher and reflect on my work since certification" (NBCT 58) showing the impact the initial process of certifying had had on this teacher's thinking.

A substantial number of participants indicated that they planned to renew or had already completed the renewal process for recognition (31.7%). Two NBCTs added comments that spoke to recognition as a reason to renew. They hoped to, "raise the professionalism of the teaching profession"(NBCT 14) and, "receiving validation from a national organization" (NBCT 38). Finally, a smaller number sought renewal for leadership development (7.3%).

Table 5 shows the themed responses for those who did not plan to renew their certification. The most common reason for choosing not to renew was that there had not been any financial improvements due to the certification (60.9%).

A detailed analysis of their comments provides a clearer glimpse into the motivating factors for renewing or not renewing NBC. The mention of an approaching retirement did not warrant the work of completing the certification process (NBCT 17, 20, 35, 36, 41, 42, 54, 63). The cost to certify was listed as a reason to not renew by (NBCT 3, 5, 7, 16,17, 20, 22, 23, 28, 35, 39,41, 42). Some participants also indicated that they did not plan to renew because they had not experienced any professional improvement (17.4%) or because they had not experienced any recognition (17.4%) from their prior certification efforts.

Table 5

Themed Responses to the Question “If you do not plan to renew, please indicate what prompted this decision”

Response category	<i>n</i>	%
Did not help with leadership development	0	0.0
Did not help with financial improvement	14	60.9
Did not help with professional improvement	4	17.4
Did not help with recognition	4	17.4

Note. Percentages are based on the 23 participants who stated that they did not plan to renew their certification.

Based on the results in Tables 4 and 5, the answer to the first research question of this study was that the most common reasons to renew were financial improvements and professional improvements, with a lack of financial improvements also being a key factor for those who decided not to renew. No real benefit in *any* form to National Board Certification was shared by 21.7% of those choosing to not renew (NBCT 3, 7, 11, 20, 60). The lack of any sort of recognition was a factor for 17.4% of these NBCTs. They shared "No recognition" (NBCT 3), "certification is not as valued in my community as I thought it would be" (NBCT 36), "and was only for the accolades of being nationally board certified" (NBCT 11).

An additional 13% of the NBCTs seemed to not understand the renewal process as they indicated, "I do not have the opportunity to be in a classroom situation that permits me to renew" (NBCT 6), "I plan to take a position as an administrator before retiring " (NBCT 50), and, "it is easier and less stressful to take the 30 units my district requires to stay at the top of the pay scale" (NBCT 19).

The Second Research Question. The second research question was: "What is the perceived value of National Board Certification to practicing National Board Certified teachers?" This question was designed to elicit the value each of the National Board Certified Teachers assigned to possessing this certification and was taken from the research of Petty, O'Connor and Dagenhart (2010). In order to answer this question, responses to the open ended question "In what

ways has National Board Certification affected your career?" were evaluated. Several themes emerged from these responses: improved practice, receiving recognition, financial rewards, career advancement, increased confidence, and leadership.

Improved practice. The theme of improved practice was shared by 21 of the 56 that chose to answer this question. NBCTs shared comments like, "...confirmed that I have skills" (NBCT 56), and made me, " Going through NB Certification made me a more reflective and accountable teacher. My students have all benefited greatly from how I grew as a teacher." (NBCT 23), and " I was exposed to inquiry strategies and student collaboration years ahead of the call for these practices under Common Core. It was the starting point to an inquiry approach in all of my work with students. " (NBCT 47).

Recognition. NBCTs shared comments that National Board Certification provided, "more respect in school community" (NBCT 52), "validation of teaching ability (NBCT 27), "this certification brings respect" (NBCT 39), "received increased respect" (NBCT 13), "greater respect" (NBCT 37), "increased parent and administrative respect for me as a classroom teacher" (NBCT 58) and "there is a level of respect and leadership that comes from being an NBCT" (NBCT 43).

Financial rewards. Career advancement is tied often to financial gain, although only six NBCTs specifically mentioned financial rewards as an effect of NBCT status on their career. These comments were, "more money" (NBCT 27), "improved salary" (NBCT 44), "increased salary" (NBCT 45) and, "it has given

me more money for 10 years" (NBCT 38). More general terms were also included like "helped my family financial" (sic) (NBCT 49) and "it has financial (sic) helped me and my children (NBCT 46).

Career advancement. The NBCTs who included a reference to career advancement explained the opportunities this Certification provided them. Statements like: " I have become a CSP and have supported many teachers at my site and in my district. " (NBCT 14), " The NBCT label provides me opportunities to speak at local district events as well as at the local State University in my community." (NBCT 32) and serving " It has given me so many connections to others in my district. I have been able to a part of leadership committees and taken on more responsibilities at my site." (NBCT 54) illustrate the extra opportunities. Other NBCTs listed this certification as having a more direct impact like, " It [NBC] opened some doors for me to my current TSA position" (NBCT 17) and " I've had opportunities outside of my district that I wouldn't have had without National Board Certification."(NBCT 41), and "Mentoring opportunities " (NBCT 23).

Increased confidence. Other benefits like, "confidence in my teaching" (NBCT 1), and, "[NBC greatly improved] the validity of and my confidence in my teaching decisions" (NBCT 43) were listed. Closely aligned with this benefit was the explanation of reflective practice required in the National Board Certification process. One NBCT (49) referred to the, "amazing reflective process" in the response and another shared "the power of self-reflection" (NBCT 25) as a

benefit. "It has caused me to reflect on everything I do in my classroom every day. It has helped me to improve every facet of my teaching." (NBCT 18) shared explaining how this certification had impacted all parts of her teaching practice.

Leadership. Stepping into leadership roles also was shown to be a benefit from National Board Certification. NBCTs listed help with "a better leader on my campus" (NBCT 41), and "empowered to advocate for student learning" (NBCT 57).

Table 6

Categorized Responses to the Question "In what ways has National Board Certification affected your career?"

Response category	<i>n</i>	%
No effect at all	9	14.1
Improved practice	21	32.8
Recognition	20	31.3
Financial benefits	14	21.9
Career advancement	9	14.1
Increased confidence in teaching	9	14.1
Better leader	4	6.3

Table 6 shows the categorized responses to this question. Only nine of the 64 participants (14.1%) stated that the certification had no effect at all on their careers. The most common types of effects were improved teaching (32.8%), recognition (31.3%), and financial benefits (21.9%). Other participants stated that the certification had provided career advancement opportunities (14.1%) or increased their confidence in teaching (14.1%), but only 6.3% stated that it had made them a better leader.

In summary, the responses in Table 6 indicated that the answer to the second research question of this study was that improved teaching, recognition, and financial benefits were the key benefits that had been derived from the certification.

Informational Hypotheses

Because the data are categorical, Chi Square analysis is used as the test of choice. The first informational hypothesis was: "Financial incentives are not a motivator for renewing National Board Certification". This hypothesis was addressed by relating the percentage of participants who stated that financial incentives were important in their responses to the two open-ended questions used for the first research question (these questions were, "If you plan to renew or have already completed the renewal process please indicate what prompted this decision," and "If you do not plan to renew, please indicate what prompted this decision."). Examining the results in Tables 3 and 4 provided the test of this hypothesis. These results showed that not only was financial improvement the

most common reason for renewing (endorsed by 53.7% of the participants), but a failure to receive financial benefits was the most common reason for not renewing (endorsed by 60.9% of the participants). Therefore, this informational hypothesis of this study was not supported and it was concluded that financial incentives were in fact a key motivator for renewing their certification.

The second informational hypothesis was: "Teachers seek out National Board Certification to enhance their own abilities". In order to answer this question, responses to Items 7, 8, 9, and 10 were evaluated. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were computed for each of the responses within each of these items to determine which of the four themes, leadership, financial improvement, professional improvement and recognition were motivating reasons for seeking NBC. There were five choices available for the participants related to leadership. Participants could pick all five or none of these choices before moving to the next question. Possible choices included: *I wanted to be a teacher leader, I wanted to prepare to be a department chair, I wanted to be a better curriculum writer, my administrator suggested I apply, or I wanted to become an administrator.* The next question dealt with financial improvement. There were four possible choices in this theme. *I wanted to strengthen my resume, I wanted a portable credential, I wanted the financial incentives offered by the state, or I wanted the financial incentives offered by their district.* Question 9 dealt with professional improvement. This theme had five possible choices: *I wanted to collaborate with other teachers, I wanted to*

improve student achievement, I wanted to revitalize my teaching, I wanted to improve my teaching skills, or certification was part of an advanced degree program in which I was enrolled. Finally, the theme of recognition was presented. Of the four possible choices, participants could pick all or none: I wanted my teaching to be validated, I wanted to gain respect as a teacher, I wanted to be valued in my school community, or I wanted to be evaluated by a national organization.

Table 7

Percentage of Participants Responding to Each of the Individual Responses for Originally Becoming Certified and Each Response Group

Response group/response	<i>n</i>	%
Leadership development	53	82.8
Wanted to be a teacher leader	48	75.0
Wanted to prepare to be a department chair	0	0.0
Wanted to be a better curriculum writer	15	23.4
Their administrator suggested that they apply	3	4.7
They wanted to become an administrator	5	7.8
Financial improvement	58	90.6
Wanted to strengthen their resume	41	64.1
Wanted to have a portable credential	35	54.7
Wanted the financial incentives offered by the state	27	42.2
Wanted the financial incentives offered by their district	36	56.3
Professional improvement	63	98.4
Wanted to collaborate with other teachers	28	43.8
Wanted to improve student achievement	45	70.3
Wanted to revitalize their teaching	48	75.0
Wanted to improve their teaching skills	57	89.1
Certification was part of an advanced degree program in which they were enrolled	7	10.9
Recognition	59	92.2
Wanted their teaching to be validated	46	71.9
Wanted to gain respect as a teacher	38	59.4
Wanted to be valued in their school community	38	59.4
Wanted to be evaluated by a national organization	27	42.2

Table 7 shows the percentage of participants who responded to each of the individual items and to each of the four themes of responses in terms of their initial reasons for becoming certified. For the four themes of responses, the most common was professional improvement for which a total of 98.4% of the participants endorsed at least one response within this response group. In terms of the individual responses, most were wanting to improve teaching skills (89.1%, within the professional improvement response group), wanting to revitalize their teaching (75.0%, within the professional improvement response group), and wanting to be a teacher leader (75.0%, within the leadership development response group). Based on these findings, the first hypothesis of this study was supported because professional improvement in teaching was the most common reason for going through the certification process when compared to leadership development, financial improvement, or recognition.

The third hypothesis was: "The expected leadership opportunities because of National Board Certification have not been provided to Board Certified Teachers by their school sites or districts". This hypothesis was addressed by evaluating the responses to the open-ended questions in order to determine whether the participants reported that their school sites or districts had failed to provide the support and opportunities for leadership. The three open-ended questions were, "If you plan to renew or have already completed the renewal process please indicate what prompted this decision," "If you do not plan to renew, please indicate what prompted this decision," and, "In what ways has

National Board Certification affected your career?" Few of the participants indicated in their constructed responses that their school or district had failed to provide leadership opportunities. No real benefit in *any* form to National Board Certification was shared by .07 % of those answering the survey (NBCT 3, 7, 11, 20, 60). Specific mention of leadership opportunities was not listed, but the statements indicating lack of recognition, value and limited accolades were taken as no opportunities. Based on this finding, the third hypothesis was not supported, as there were no clear indications that the schools or districts had failed to provide leadership opportunities.

Supplemental Analyses

The First Analysis. In addition to answering the research questions and testing the three hypotheses of this study, supplemental analyses were performed to address two additional issues. The first supplemental issue was to determine whether the yes/no responses to the four themes (leadership development, financial improvement, professional improvement, or recognition) for why they had originally become certified were related to the same responses for whether or not they will renew. The responses to Items 7 through 10 (whether or not they endorsed reasons within each of the four themes) were compared to the categorized responses to the open-ended questions about why they were or were not planning to renew their certification. Four chi-square tests were performed to determine whether there was a relationship between the original certification reason and the renewal reason for each of the four themes of

response. Tables 6, 7, 8, and 9 contain cross-tabulation tables for the teacher leadership, professional improvement, financial improvement, and recognition categories, respectively.

From Table 8 it can be seen that 12.5% of those who did not list leadership development and one of the initial reasons for becoming certified did list it as a reason to renew. However, 6.1% of those who did list leadership development as one of the initial reasons for becoming certified listed it as a reason to renew. This difference was not statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1) = .39, p = .530$.

Table 8

Cross-tabulation of Leadership Development Category for Initial Certification and Reasons for Recertifying

Leadership Development was a Reason for Originally Certifying	Leadership Development was a Reason for Renewal	
	No	Yes
No	7 (18.4%)	1 (33.3%)
Yes	31 (81.6%)	2 (66.7%)

Note. Percentages are based on the 41 participants who stated that they planned to renew or had already completed the renewal process.

Table 9 shows that among those who did not list professional improvement as a reason to initially certify, 50.0% listed it as a reason to renew. Of those who did list professional improvement as a reason to initially certify, 54.1% listed it as a reason to renew. This difference was not statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1) = .02, p = .877$.

Table 9

Cross-tabulation of Professional Improvement Category for Initial Certification and Reasons for Recertifying

Professional Improvement was a Reason for Originally Certifying	Professional Improvement was a Reason for Renewal	
	No	Yes
No	2 (10.5%)	2 (9.1%)
Yes	17 (89.5%)	20 (90.9%)

Note. Percentages are based on the 41 participants who stated that they planned to renew or had already completed the renewal process.

Table 10

Cross-tabulation of Financial Improvement Category for Initial Certification and Reasons for Recertifying

Financial Improvement was a Reason for Originally Certifying	Financial Improvement was a Reason for Renewal	
	No	Yes
No	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Yes	21 (100.0%)	20 (100.0%)

Note. Percentages are based on the 41 participants who stated that they planned to renew or had already completed the renewal process.

As can be seen in Table 10, among those who did list financial improvement as a reason to initially certify, 48.8% listed it as a renew, and this was also the case for those who did not list financial improvement as a reason to initially certify. Therefore, no relationship was established between the two groups in terms of whether they listed financial improvement as a reason to renew their certification, $\chi^2 (1) = .02, p = .877$.

Table 11

Cross-tabulation of Recognition Category for Initial Certification and Reasons for Recertifying

Recognition was a Reason for Originally Certifying	Recognition was a Reason for Renewal	
	No	Yes
No	3 (10.7%)	1 (7.7%)
Yes	25 (89.3%)	12 (92.3%)

Note. Percentages are based on the 41 participants who stated that they planned to renew or had already completed the renewal process.

Table 11 shows that among those who did not originally list recognition as a reason to renew, 25.0% listed it as a reason to renew. Among those who did list recognition as a reason to initially certify, 32.4% listed it as a reason to renew. This difference was not statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1) = .09, p = .762$. Based on these four chi-square tests, it was concluded that there was no relationship between the original reasons for certifying and the reasons for renewing certification.

Second supplemental analysis. The second supplemental analysis was performed to determine whether the number of attempts to certify has any relationship to the decision to renew or not. In order to address this issue, an independent sample test was performed comparing the participants who stated

that they planned to renew with those who planned not to renew with the number of attempts to originally certify as the dependent variable. Table 12 shows the mean number of attempts to certify for those who chose to renew and those who chose not to renew. The independent sample test was not statistically significant, $t(62) = .97, p = .335$. This indicated that those who chose not to renew did not appear to differ in terms of the number of attempts to certify ($M = 1.39, SD = .58$) when compared with those who were choosing to renew ($M = 1.24, SD = .58$).

Table 12

Mean Number of Attempts to Certify as a Function of Whether or Not They Planned to Renew

Plan to renew	Number of Attempts to Certify	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
No ($n = 23$)	1.39	.58
Yes ($n = 41$)	1.24	.58

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data gathered for this study are taken from the constructed responses of the final two questions of the electronic survey emailed to the 2005

& 2006 National Board Certified Teachers. NBCTs were asked why they chose to seek renewal or not and to explain what the benefits of having National Board Certification status were for them.

These data were printed out and studied using the constant comparative method (Krathwohl, 2009). Multiple readings, highlighting and color coding were used to determine common themes. Many of the responses were short phrases and simple sentences but each was compared seeking similarities of thought with comments from others.

Benefits of NBC. The final question on the survey was, "In what ways has National Board Certification affected your career? This question was designed to elicit the value each of the National Board Certified Teachers assigned to possessing this certification and was taken from the research of Petty, O'Connor and Dagenhart (2010). This was a constructed response question. Several themes emerged from these responses: mentoring, receiving recognition, improved and reflective practice, financial rewards, career advancement and leadership.

Reflective and Improved Practice. The theme of improved practice was shared by 13 of the 56 that chose to answer this question. NBCTs shared comments like, "...improve my teaching tremendously" (NBCT 56), and made me "better at identifying my strengths and areas of weakness" (NBCT 23), and has "made me a better teacher" (NBCTs 5, 10, 11, 20, 21, 39, 47). From this improved practice came other benefits like "confidence in my teaching" (NBCT

1), and [NBC greatly improved] the validity of and my confidence in my teaching decisions" (NBCT 43). Closely aligned with this benefit was the explanation of the reflective practice required in the National Board Certification process. One NBCT (49) referred to the, "amazing reflective process" in the response and another shared, "the power of self-reflection" (NBCT 25) as a benefit. "It has caused me to reflect on everything I do in my classroom every day. It has helped me to improve every facet of my teaching" (NBCT 18) shared explaining how this certification had impacted all parts of her teaching practice.

Career Advancement. The NBCTs who included a reference to career advancement provided examples of extra-curricular duties in which each was asked to add expertise. Statements like, "had opportunities to present workshops" (NBCT 1, 13), "rewrite a school plan" (NBCT 1) and serving "on district committees for development of math standards and curricula" (NBCT 54). Other NBCTs listed this certification as having a more direct impact like, "a promotion to program specialist, Common Core Demonstration Classroom Teacher" (NBCT 59) and being given "opportunities to contribute to educational TV program scripts" (NBCT 5), and "participating on a National Teacher Leaders Network" (NBCT 55). Being asked to work with peers was also listed as a benefit for NBCTs. They shared "mentoring opportunities" (NBCT 51), "working with new teachers" (NBCT 1), working as "a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) coach" (NBCT 53) and "get employment teaching college classes" (NBCT 29) as the effect of National Board Certification for them. Stepping into leadership roles also

was shown to be a benefit from National Board Certification. NBCTs listed help with "a better leader on my campus" (NBCT 41), and "empowered to advocate for student learning (NBCT 57).

Career advancement is tied often to financial gain, although only six NBCTs specifically mentioned financial gain as an effect of NBCT status on their career. These comments were "more money" (NBCT 27), "improved salary" (NBCT 44), "increased salary" (NBCT 45) and "it has given me more money for 10 years" (NBCT 38). More general terms included, "helped my family financial" (sic) (NBCT 49) and "it has financial (sic) helped me and my children (NBCT 46).

Respect and Recognition. NBCTs shared comments that National Board Certification provided "more respect in school community" (NBCT 52), "validation of teaching ability" (NBCT 27), "this certification brings respect" (NBCT 39), "received increased respect" (NBCT 13), "greater respect (NBCT 37), "increased parent and administrative respect for me as a classroom teacher" (NBCT 58) and "there is a level of respect and leadership that comes from being an NBCT" (NBCT 43).

Summary of Findings

This chapter contained the results from the analyses performed to achieve the purpose of this study. The first research question was: Why do National Board Certified teachers renew or not renew their certification? The results (Table 3) showed that the most common reasons to renew were financial

improvements and professional improvements and that a lack of financial improvements was also a key factor for those who decided not to renew (Table 4). The second research question was: "What is the perceived value of National Board Certification to practicing National Board Certified teachers?" The results (Table 5) showed that improved teaching, recognition, and financial benefits were the key benefits from the certification program.

The first hypothesis was, "Financial incentives are not a motivator for renewing National Board Certification". This hypothesis was not supported because financial incentives were an important motivator for renewing certification. The second hypothesis, "Teachers seek out National Board Certification to enhance their own abilities", was supported because professional improvement in teaching was the most common reason for going through the certification process. The third hypothesis was, "The expected leadership opportunities because of National Board Certification have not been provided to Board Certified Teachers by their school sites or districts". This hypothesis was not supported because none of the participants indicated that their schools or districts had failed to provide leadership opportunities.

The results from the supplemental analyses produced two additional findings. First, there was no relationship between the original reasons for certifying and the reasons for renewing certification. Secondly, those who chose not to renew did not differ in terms of the number of attempts to certify compared with those who chose to renew. In the next chapter, these results are discussed

in the context of past research and recommendations are offered for future research and educational practice.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Hattie (2003) summarizes the need for a focus on the teacher when trying to direct resources toward the best hope for improvement:

I therefore suggest that we should focus on the greatest source of variance that can make the difference – the teacher. We need to ensure that this greatest influence is optimised to have powerful and sensationally positive effects on the learner. Teachers can and usually do have positive effects, but they must have exceptional effects. (p.3)

Improving the quality of teaching delivered in our public schools has been a focus since the publication of *A Nation At Risk* in 1983. We all hope for a solution that could be spread across the country making all of our schools some of the best in the world. However, we are a diverse country and we are educating a very diverse group of students, so there is no panacea, no solution that will work everywhere.

Current federal policy requires focusing attention on the training of teachers in our classrooms with acknowledgement that each state has the responsibility to issue its own teaching credentials. With the establishment of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in 1987, a new National Certification was issued recognizing accomplished teaching skills. Teachers who voluntarily choose to participate in this certification demonstrate knowledge of

content and pedagogy through four different components adapted to meet the criteria of 25 different certificate areas. This program is already individualized for candidates and has been supported as a quality program through research into student achievement and leadership development. Multiple studies have found that NBCTs positively affect their students' achievement and positively impact the schools in which they work (Cavalluzzo, Barrow, Mokher, Geraghty & Sartain, 2015; Cowan & Goldhaber, 2015).

It is not uncommon to hear a National Board Certified Teacher reflect on the certification process positively. "The National Board certification process was the most meaningful, enriching and rigorous professional development in which I have ever participated" (Lynch, 2002. para 1) or "The National Board Certification process taught me that I can do something that I had almost given up on...Every teacher needs to do this!" (Hanish, 2003. para 1). A certification that was developed to "become the gold standard in teacher certification" ("Mission", n.d., para 1) and to "advance the quality of teaching and learning" ("Mission", n.d. para 1) has become regarded not only as a measurement of quality teaching, but as quality professional development as well.

Using National Board Certification not only as a certification tool, but as a delivery method for coaching and mentoring, planning and analyzing instruction and mastering reflective practice would be one solution to improving the quality of instruction in our schools. While the NBC process is a powerful one, the collaboration of NBCTs who created their own professional learning communities

to help them through the National Board Certification process has led to the development of Professional Capital (Hargreaves, 2012) which is a positive unintentional outcome of this process. Encouraging current NBCTs to retain this certification should also be an area of focus. With just over 110,000 teachers who are NBCT out of over 3 million in America ("Certification Day", 2014. para. 3) it would be wise to retain as well as recruit new teachers. Determining the factors that motivate NBCTs to renew as well as their perceptions of the value of holding NBC would help in retention efforts.

This study was designed to identify the value found in being a NBCT and the motivating factors for continuing this certification. By identifying these data, a more focused approach can be made in promoting the NBC process as truly the professional development program it is. The NBPTS has adapted and adjusted the program to address the concerns of teachers without weakening its value as a learning tool. Researchers will debate whether accomplished teachers are drawn to this process or whether the process develops accomplished teachers, but few dispute the outcomes of raised student achievement, effective mentoring of others and development of a community of learners by NBCTs across the country.

California NBCTs from 2005 and 2006 were recruited for this study. Of the 95 who responded to the electronic survey, 64 were shown to meet the criteria set forth for which sought to answer the following questions of:

1. Why do National Board Certified teachers renew or not renew their certification?
2. What is the perceived value of National Board Certification to practicing National Board Certified teachers?

This final chapter is organized into five sections. The introduction provides the organization and purpose of the chapter as well as a general overview of the study. An examination of the findings of this study are shared in the second section. Limitations of this research in relation to the findings are provided in the third section. The fourth section shares recommendations for future studies and implications for practice. The final section explores the conclusions drawn from this study in relation to district practices involving National Board Certified Teachers.

Findings

The focus of this study was to determine why California National Board Certified Teachers seek to renew their Certification. Given the previous research showing the impact NBCTs make on student achievement (Gaudreault & Woods, 2012; Park, Oliver, Johnson, Graham & Oppong, 2007), it is important to understand what motivates teachers to retain certification so that more can be encouraged to do so. This is important because teachers are once again being scrutinized, as it is perceived our students are not prepared to join the workforce

or attend higher education. The focus is directed back to the classroom, not at public policy, bringing the teacher back into the spotlight.

Four conclusions emerged from the data:

- Financial improvement does matter for initial decisions, renewal and non-renewal of NBC.
- Continued Professional Growth is important for initial and renewal decisions.
- While financial improvement was important as a motivator, the perceived value in NBCT status was the professional growth. So that NBCTs who initially sought monetary incentives for this certification found that the process which includes self-reflection became more important through their career.
- There were no significant relationships between reasons to renew or not and the original motivating factors selected for seeking Certification ten years ago.

Financial Incentives

The desire for financial incentives was the most mentioned item for those deciding to renew. In 2009, the State of California made the National Board Certification Incentive (\$20,000 over 4 years) a flexible item for districts and in 2013 all categorical requirements were removed from district budget allowing for local control of State funds received (California Department of Education [CDE], 2015). Now, the decision to incentivize National Board Certification through

stipends or salary schedule placement is a bargained and/or a district decision. District incentives vary from a percentage of salary (5% in Long Beach + 5% for conducting professional development; 7.5 % in Los Angeles + 7.5% for training others), to release time to work writing the entries and video support (CDE, 2015). While incentives are listed as important, other reasons seem to be equally as important when a decision is made not to renew.

These findings are consistent with the work of Petty, O'Connor and Dagenhart (2010) in reference to those who chose to not renew. Similar findings emerged from both studies. NBCTs who choose not to renew are not critical of the NBC process, but have other reasons for not renewing including retirement (34.7%), involvement in other avocations or no longer in the classroom (16%) or financial concerns which include not only the cost of certification (56.5%) but the lack of financial incentives (24%). Petty, O'Connor and Dagenhart (2010) also found the stress and time-consuming process to be an important reason for not seeking renewal. Only 3 NBCTs (13%) in this study referred to the time required as a reason to not renew.

These findings do not support the first informational hypotheses of this study. This hypothesis claimed that financial incentives are not a motivator for renewing National Board Certification. Both those who were renewing and those who were not, cited the stipends and expense as a component in making their decisions. Money matters. When teacher salaries are compared to other professions requiring similar education, certainly educators come up short

("Professional Pay", 2015). The State of California no longer offers any financial awards for those holding NBC. California also drastically altered the education funding it provides to school districts. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) grants each district complete authority over the programs it will offer removing all categorical identifiers on the funds each receives ("Local Control", 2015). Collective bargaining agreements (contracts) which stipulate NBC support would still be honored. Supporting teachers financially who are interested in National Board Certification would be one way to encourage participation.

Continued Professional Growth

As the national focus is directed more to the teacher in the classroom, it is important to note that *continued professional growth* was also chosen as an important reason for renewal. Twenty of the NBCTs (48.8%), indicate they would renew for this reason. Educators use professional development programs to improve their practice (Huberman, 1995; Fullan, 1993). Likewise, the research of Fullan & Hargreaves (1996), found that educators working to improve their practice have the desire to improve student learning outcomes. Certainly the comments the NBCTs shared underscore their understanding of the importance of evaluating and examining instructional practice to improve teaching skills for the purpose of improving students' achievement. The connection between improving teaching skills and student achievement was supported by the choices NBCTs made when originally certifying as well. The most frequently chosen reason for originally seeking National Board Certification was "*to improve my*

teaching skills" (89.1%) and "*improving student achievement*" was selected by 70.3% of the NBCTs. These findings support the hypothesis which stated: Teachers seek out National Board Certification to enhance their own abilities. Further, these findings support the premise that for professional development to improve instructional practice, the development must be on going throughout careers (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Leadership Opportunities

Closely aligned with continuous professional growth, leadership opportunities are becoming more important to NBCTs. Advancement opportunities for teachers are limited, especially if they want to stay in the classroom (Hall & Simeral, 2015). NBCTs responses illustrate the desire to be an advocate and support others in the profession. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) have found that teachers gain expertise by having quality interactions and relationships with other teachers that involve feedback and reflection and that "...individuals won't change [their practice] in large numbers, unless development becomes a persistent collective enterprise" (p. 3). Leading from a classroom has not been well defined in our current system, although responses from 14 % indicate this has been an outcome of NBC. *Serving on school or district curriculum communities, and facilitating an easy admission to grad school and gaining access to outside organizations* were some of the comments attributed to leadership. The third hypothesis involving the lack of expected leadership

opportunities offered by the school or district because of National Board Certification was not supported given the constructed responses.

Limitations

Designing a study is a complex task for which Cone and Foster (2006) advise "...the recognition that your study is not perfect" (p. 277). There are a number of things that can be identified as limitations in this study.

The decision to limit the participants to only those NBCTs who certified in 2005 & 2006 eventually led to the lower than expected participation. Using district employment data that were nearly a decade old, limited the access of NBCTs that may have wanted to participate. And while there is probably never a slow time for teachers, reaching out during an extended holiday season may not have been the most advantageous time of year.

The design of the research tool may have been simple for the participants to complete, but also may have contributed to simplistic responses. It may be that by providing so many choices and making the initial part of the survey so simple, that the constructed responses were not seen as important. Requiring more details in their responses would have garnered richer, more detailed data in the constructed responses.

Finally, there were no methods of triangulating the data built into the methodology. All of the data were self-reported with no evidence or other

supporting materials requested. Adding in an interview may have teased out more details.

Recommendations for Future Research

Even though this study was conducted with 2005 & 2006 NBCTs in California and demonstrates the regard and value these veteran teachers find in the process, expanding this study would be the first logical step for further research. Touching the pulse of the constituent group for the NBPTS would provide valuable feedback as to the value each finds not only in the process but in the possession of NBC.

If NBC is seen as a viable professional development activity, it would be prudent to expand this study in terms of continued quality practice for NBCTs. Measuring the impact of the process on practice would help justify the costs of certification and support many districts' offer to candidates seeking certification. More NBC candidates are seeking support from their site administrator for reimbursement of the process or for release time to work on the tasks. The professional development budgets are increasing in California, making more money available as professional development is needed for additional training in the Common Core State Standard implementation. Tying this to NBC would be easier with a detailed study showing the impact.

Some NBCTs in this study shared that they were given leadership opportunities. However, others mentioned they received no support or

recognition from school or district administration. It would be interesting to study the perceptions of school site administrators concerning the abilities of the NBCTs on their campuses. The National Education Association (NEA) and the NBPTS are recognizing the need for teacher leaders in terms of instruction, policy and advocacy. Very often the opportunity to participate in these career advancements hinges on the administrators under whom a teacher works. A study pinpointing misconceptions or misinterpretations of the NBC process or the actual Certification would be enlightening.

Conclusion

Teachers do difficult, important work every day with students. Creating and maintaining a well-trained teaching force should be one of the first tasks for improving the education system. Developing teacher leaders who can assist their peers in instruction, as well as helping teachers become reflective practitioners who continually strive to improve is the cornerstone of quality professional development. Using our teachers' expertise to strengthen our schools would be the next logical step. However, this would require a level of trust from the policy makers that would allow the instructional practitioners to make quality decisions in their classrooms, provide support and training to their peers and become excellent leaders in the educational community. Providing professional development opportunities that offer an individualized approach, while honoring the skills the teacher already possesses would be a welcomed

respite for teachers. "What attracts teachers to professional development, therefore, is their belief that it will expand their knowledge and skills, contribute to their growth, and enhance their effectiveness with students" (Guskey, 2002, p.382). Professional development activities that provide authentic opportunities to practice new techniques are far more effective than typical professional development programs in which participants listen but do not practice. As Joyce and Showers (1980) found a change in a teacher's belief and an impact on student learning can only be expected when professional development activities move to application and problem-solving.

Since 1989, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has offered a program that includes all of the characteristics identified in research while it challenges and empowers teachers. This program provides teachers with a voice to define and advocate for quality teaching, while providing one of the most rigorous certifications of any profession. Fullan (1993) and Huberman (1995) found that educators use professional development programs to improve their practice and reduce alienation. Giving teachers a voice sheds light on the daily challenges in every classroom and exposes some of the most vexing problems facing our society. Too often it is easier to blame the apparent lack of student achievement on the teacher rather than on failed policy. It would appear that policy makers prefer to make the decisions on what best benefits our students. Teaching is multifaceted and extremely complex causing many teachers to leave the profession within the first five years. Since we know that job

satisfaction and teachers' attitudes improve when they enhance their knowledge, it would be prudent to improve job satisfaction by increasing the control teachers have over their positions and classrooms. Keeping teachers in the profession should be a priority and providing PD is one way to retain them.

"...every new era of education reform has been characterized by a political and media war on the existing teachers upon whom we rely to do this difficult work..." (Goldstein, 2014. p. 4). At a time when teachers are being blamed for the failing education policy of the recent past, providing them with the support and opportunity to engage in PD that is applicable to many different settings would help develop learning communities of practice suggested by Goldstein (2014) as a way to help improve the education system.

This study has shown that teachers are interested in retaining a certification that provides financial benefit. In order to be an effective financial incentive, it must be seen as linked to work and effort that is possible to complete and under the control of the recipient with performance measures that are deemed to be accurate and reliable (Rice, Malen, Jackson, & Hoyer. 2014; Kelley & Finnigan, 2003). These criteria apply with National Board Certification. This study exposed that each NBCT was willing to work for the incentives, while acknowledging that the incentives were important. Lawler (1990) suggests that the financial incentives should be ten to fifteen percent of a base salary to be truly motivating.

Teachers are also continually seeking professional improvement. With the cyclical reforms that surround education policy, keeping a teaching force well trained in the foundations of quality instruction would be of benefit to any school or district. Offering support for National Board Certification and recognizing and utilizing the skills of these teachers to support learning will benefit students as well.

APPENDIX A
PERMISSIONS

1. Petty, O'Conner and Dagenhart

Petty, Teresa <tmpetty@uncc.edu>

5/26/14 ☆

to me, Diana, oconnork ▾

Hi Bev,

The survey is attached. Please be sure to cite the source.

Best,

Teresa

Teresa M. Petty, Ed.D. | Associate Professor
Graduate Director of the Master of Arts in Teaching Program
UNC Charlotte | Dept. of Middle, Secondary, & K-12 Education
9201 University City Blvd. | Charlotte, NC 28223
Phone: [704-687-0995](tel:704-687-0995) | Fax: [704-687-1630](tel:704-687-1630)
tmpetty@uncc.edu | <http://education.uncc.edu/tmpetty>

2. Ronald J. Starnes

Starnes, Jay <starnesja@wallenpaupack.org>

5/21/14 ☆

to me ▾

Hi Bev,

I am flattered that you found my research fascinating. I would like to talk sometime to hear about your research plan, and to discuss your experience in National Board. My schedule is pretty crazy right now as we end the school year, but I'm sure I can set aside some time to chat. What works for your schedule?

I'm not sure if you have the full study. If not, you can find it here... <http://dspace.iup.edu/bitstream/handle/2069/1990/Ronald%20Jay%20Starnes.pdf?sequence=1>

I have no problem with you using the survey as your research instrument, but would like to talk to you about some improvements I would make if I was to use it again.

Regards, Jay (Ronald is my first name, but I go by Jay)

Jay Starnes, Ed.D.
Principal
Wallenpaupack Area High School
2552 Route 6
Hawley, PA 18428-7045

Office: [570-226-4557](tel:570-226-4557) ext 5
Mobile: [570-262-4431](tel:570-262-4431)
Fax: [570-251-3187](tel:570-251-3187)

APPENDIX B
THE SURVEY

NBCT Renewal
1. Which best describes your current position?
Classroom teacher
Teacher on special assignment
Other
2. Please indicate your years of teaching experience
5-10 years
11-15 years
16-20 years
21-25 years
26+
3. How many more years to you plan to teach?
1-5 years
6-10 years
11-15 years
16-20 years
20+
4. In which district do you work?
5. In which year did you certify?
6. How many attempts were made to certify?
1
2
3
4+
7. Please select all that were a factor for you in deciding to become a National Board Certified teacher.
I wanted to be a teacher leader.
I wanted to prepare to be a department chair.
I wanted to be a better curriculum writer.
My administrator suggested I apply.
I wanted to become an administrator.
8. Please select all that were a factor for you in deciding to become a National Board Certified teacher.
I wanted to strengthen my resume.
I wanted to have a portable credential.
I wanted the financial incentives offered by the State.
I wanted the financial incentives offered by my district.

9. Please select all that were a factor for you in deciding to become a National Board Certified teacher.
I wanted to collaborate with other teachers.
I wanted to improve student achievement.
I wanted to revitalize my teaching.
I wanted to improve my teaching skills.
Certification was part of an advanced degree program in which I was enrolled.
10. Please select all that were a factor for you in deciding to become a National Board Certified teacher.
I wanted my teaching to be validated.
I wanted to gain respect as a teachers.
I wanted to be valued in my school community.
I wanted to be evaluated by a national organization.
11. Do you plan to review your National Board Certification?
Yes
No
12. If you plan to renew or have already completed the renewal process, please indicate what prompted this decision.
13. If you do not plan to renew, please indicate what prompted this decision.
14. In what ways has National Board Certification affected your career?

This survey was adapted from two previous surveys (Starnes, 2013; Petty, Dagenhart & O'Conner, 2010).

APPENDIX C
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Consent Letter to Participate in Research

National Board Certification: The Perceived Value and Renewal Rates of California National Board Certified Teachers

You have received this message because you attained National Board Certification in 2005 or 2006. As a doctoral candidate at California State University, San Bernardino, I am conducting research on the renewal rates for National Board Certification. Your participation in my study is completely voluntary.

Purpose of the Study

The specific purpose of my study is to identify the limiting and motivating factors in making the decision to renew National Board Certification before it expires. I hope my study will inform the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards as they are seeking to make this Certification more meaningful for teachers, schools, districts and the nation's teaching force.

What is Involved

If you choose to volunteer to participate you will be asked to:

- complete an online study taking approximately 15 minutes

Benefits

This information will provide a benefit to the local, state and national educational community by providing a new perspective on National Board Certification for teachers both in terms of the motivating factors for renewing and perceived value of Certification.

Withdrawal

You may withdraw your participation at any time from this study with no negative consequences.

Compensation

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality

All information gathered will be kept confidential. No school, district or other agency will be able to identify participants in this study.

Identification of Investigators

I would deeply appreciate your voluntary participation. If you have questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact either:

- Bev Bricker: bbricker@csusb.edu 760-902-3883 or
- Dr. Pat Arlen: parlen@csusb.edu.

Institutional Review Board Approval

This study has received approval from the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino.

APPENDIX D
DIRECTIONS TO ACCESS THE SURVEY

November 1, 2014

Dear National Board Certified Teacher,

You are receiving this email as a California National Board Certified Teacher. My name is Bev Bricker. I am also a National Board Certified Teacher as well as a doctoral student at California State University, San Bernardino. I am beginning a study on the renewal rates of National Board Certified Teacher as I work to complete my dissertation. I am hopeful that this research will help guide the future of National Board Certification and teacher leaders across the country as we all seek to improve the professional standing of teachers in our country.

I would like to ask you to be a part of this study. If you are willing, it should take no more than 15 minutes of your time. Your responses, thoughts and reflections are important to me and will add valuable data to my research. I have attached an Informed Consent form for your information. It should answer all of your questions concerning this study and how your identity and participation will be kept anonymous and confidential. I will assume you are consenting to this study if you decide to log on and complete the survey.

If you do decide to volunteer and become a part of this study, please go to the following website: www.surveymonkey.com/s/NBCTrenewal

The survey should appear on the opening page. Please follow the prompts.

Completion of this survey should take no more than 15 minutes.

I am available should you have any questions or concerns about the survey or my research on renewal rates for National Board Certified Teachers. You can reach me using the contact information listed below.

Thankfully,

Bev Bricker
48755 Stillwater Street
Indio, CA 92201
[760-902-3883](tel:760-902-3883)
bbricker@csusb.edu

APPENDIX E
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



Academic Affairs

December 22, 2014

Office of Academic Research • Institutional Review Board

Ms. Beverly Bricker
c/o: Prof. Pat Arlin
Department of Educational Leadership and Technology
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

CSUSB
INSTITUTIONAL
REVIEW BOARD
Administrative Review
IRB# 14042
Status
APPROVED

Dear Ms. Bricker:

Your application to use human subjects, titled, "National Board Certification: The Perceived Value and Renewal Rates of California National Board Certified Teachers" has been reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of California State University, San Bernardino has determined that your application meets the requirements for exemption from IRB review Federal requirements under 45 CFR 46. As the researcher under the exempt category you do not have to follow the requirements under 45 CFR 46 which requires annual renewal and documentation of written informed consent which are not required for the exempt category. However, exempt status still requires you to attain consent from participants before conducting your research.

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional approvals which may be required.

Your responsibilities as the researcher/investigator reporting to the IRB Committee include the following 4 requirements as mandated by the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 listed below. Please note that the protocol change form and renewal form are located on the IRB website under the forms menu. Failure to notify the IRB of the above may result in disciplinary action. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years. Please notify the IRB Research Compliance Officer for any of the following:

- **Submit a protocol change form if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your research prospectus/protocol for review and approval of the IRB before implemented in your research,**
- **If any unanticipated/adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research, and**
- **When your project has ended by emailing the IRB Research Compliance Officer.**

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the IRB Research Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval identification number (listed at the top) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Judy Sylva

Judy Sylva, Ph.D., IRB Chair

California State University, San Bernardino Institutional Review Board

JS/mg

cc: Prof. Pat Arlin, Department of Educational Leadership and Technology

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APPENDIX F
DISTRICTS OFFERING SUPPORT



Candidate Support by School Districts

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

Many school districts are supporting teachers through the process for becoming a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT). Below is a compilation of information gathered from district surveys, statewide resources, and reports from teachers and support providers. Much of this information is subject to contract negotiations between districts and teachers' unions, which may change from year to year. Please contact your district for the most current information. If your district is not listed below, it may still offer assistance. Please send any updated information to Judy Sinclair at jsinclair@cde.ca.gov.

District	County	Candidate Fee Support	Other Support	NBCT Incentives
Alum Rock Union Elementary School District (ESD)	Santa Clara	\$650	None	None
Anaheim City School District	Los Angeles	None	Support program	None
Aspire Public Schools	San Mateo	100%	Release days, technical support	Annual: \$2,000
Baldwin Park Unified (USD)	Los Angeles	None	None	Annual: \$1,000
Bear Valley USD	San Bernardino	\$1,000	Coaching support, release time, and video help	\$2,000 for five years NB process counts for district's teacher evaluation process
Belmont Redwood Shores School District	San Mateo	None	None	Annual: \$2,500
Berkeley USD	Alameda	None	None	Fee reimbursement and annual \$1,500 to the first 20 NBCT's
Black Oak Mine USD	El Dorado	None	None	None
Buena Park ESD	Orange	None	Support program, video assistance, release time	Reimbursement of fees not covered by grants or scholarships
Butteville Union ESD	Siskiyou	None	None	\$1,000 stipend
Cambrian ESD (San Jose)	Santa Clara	None	None	Annual: \$2,000
Capistrano USD	Orange	None	Release time, video support	10 units of advancement credit on salary schedule
Carlsbad USD	San Diego	None	None	NBCT's move to the far right of the pay scale
Ceres USD	Stanislaus	None	None	50% reimbursement of fees

Chaffey Joint Union High School District (UHSD)	San Bernardino	\$2,300	None	None
Charter Oak USD	Los Angeles	None	None	Annual: \$800
Chula Vista	San Diego	Up to \$1,300 and up to 3 retake fees	One release day, monthly meetings, video support	None
Clovis USD	Fresno	None	None	Annual: \$500 for four years
Coachella Valley USD	Riverside	\$2,000 for up to ten candidates	Five release days	None
Coast Unified	San Luis Obispo	\$500	Release days and support meetings	None
Cupertino USD	Santa Clara	None	None	\$1,000 fee reimbursement Annual: equivalent to a Master's stipend
Davis Joint USD	Yolo	None	\$100 for materials, five release days, and professional development (PD) credit for support meetings	None
Eastside USD	Santa Clara	\$2,000	Release time, video help, and meetings	Incentives for coaching candidates
Escondido ESD	San Diego	None	Support group	None
Escondido Union HSD	San Diego	\$1,000	Three release days	Annual: \$1,000
Fairfield-Suisun USD	Solano	Will pay retake fees for candidates.	Support program, fee support, video assistance, release time	Annual: Equivalent to Master's stipend
Fallbrook Union Elementary	San Diego	A \$5,000 fund.	None	A \$1,623 stipend.
Folsom-Cordova USD	Sacramento	None	Coaching support	None
Fontana USD	San Bernardino	None	Support group	None
Fresno USD	Fresno	None	None	Annual: \$1,000 only if active
Glendale USD	Los Angeles	\$1,000 loan	Support provided on individual basis	Annual: \$2,500 for additional 50 hours worked
Hawthorne SD	Los Angeles	\$1,000 loan	Release time	None
Hemet USD	Riverside	None	None	Annual: \$700
Hillsborough City SD	San Mateo	50% of fee	None	50% of fee reimbursed and Annual: \$750
Hueneme ESD	Ventura	None	None	Additional 5% (Step 1, Column III) on salary schedule. Increase continues through 10-year period that the certificate is valid.

Kerman USD	Fresno	\$2,300	Release time	None
Lake Tahoe USD	El Dorado	Fee support	Release time and sample portfolios	None
Las Lomitas ESD	San Mateo	100%	Release time	Annual: about \$1,800
Long Beach USD	Los Angeles	\$2,300 for completed pre-candidacy	Support program, two release days	5% salary increase additional 5% for providing 60 hours of PD
Los Angeles USD	Los Angeles	None	Support network provides comprehensive programs for all candidates seeking certification.	7.5% salary increase additional 7.5% for 92 hours of PD
Manhattan Beach USD	Los Angeles	\$2,000 for up to ten candidates	Five release days, four training days, and video support	Annual: \$1,000 for four years
Menlo Park City Schools	San Mateo	None	None	Annual: \$2,600
Moreland ESD	Santa Clara	None	None	Annual: \$2,000 (equivalent to a Master's degree)
Mountain View	Los Angeles	Fee support	One release day	None
Mountain View - Los Altos USD	Santa Clara	Fee support	Three days release time	Annual: Same as Master's stipend and four units credit on salary schedule for completed process
Mt. Diablo	Contra Costa	None	Support program, release days, and copying support	Annual: Same as a Master's stipend
New Haven USD	Alameda	\$1,000	Support program, one day release time	Annual: \$750
Newport-Mesa USD	Orange	None	Support program	2% salary increase
Oak Grove ESD	Santa Clara	None	None	Annual: \$2,000
Oakland USD	Alameda	None	Support program (510-879-8914)	Annual: \$1,000
Oceanside USD	San Diego	100%	None	Annual: 6% of base salary
Orange USD	Orange	\$1,000	Video support	Annual: \$1,000 and Board of Education maintains a plaque with NBCT names
Pajaro Valley USD	Santa Cruz	100%	Professional Development Leave	None
Palo Alto USD	Santa Clara	None	Videographer, two release days, four units PD credit	None
Pasadena USD	Los Angeles	None	Support program	Annual: \$2,500
Patterson USD	Stanislaus	\$1,000	Support program	Annual: \$1,000
Petaluma ESD	Sonoma	None	10 release days and monthly meetings	Annual: \$1,098
Petaluma HSD	Sonoma	None	10 release days and monthly meetings	Annual: \$1,098

Piedmont USD	Alameda	None	None	Annual: \$500
Placentia-Yorba Linda USD	Orange	\$1,000 fee support reimbursement \$1,000 upon certification	None	Annual: \$500
Pomona USD	Los Angeles	None	None	3.5% salary increase. Additional 10% salary for specially designed positions.
Poway USD	San Diego	100%	Full retake funding	Annual: \$1,000 for ten years
Redding ESD	Shasta	None	None	\$1,800 Master's stipend
Redwood City ESD	San Mateo	None	None	\$1,000 fee reimbursed Annual: \$1,000
Rio Dell ESD	Humboldt	\$1,000	Video support	None
San Carlos ESD	San Mateo	100% reimbursement	None	Annual: \$1,837
San Diego City Schools	San Diego	Up to \$2,000	Coaching support	None
San Francisco USD	San Francisco	None	Support program	Annual: \$5,000
San Jose USD	Santa Clara	None	None	Annual: about \$2,223 (equivalent to a one-year "bump" on pay scale)
San Juan USD	Sacramento	None	Support meetings	300 continuing education hours
Santa Clara USD	Santa Clara	None	None	Annual: \$1,443
San Mateo Foster City SD	San Mateo	None	None	\$1,000 stipend
Santa Monica-Malibu USD	Los Angeles	100% reimbursement	Two release days, support from current NBCT, up to \$100 materials reimbursement	Annual: \$5,000 for the duration of certificate, teacher must provide 20 hours of professional development.
Santa Paula ESD	Ventura	50%	Two fee subsidies per five-year period	Annual: \$2,500
Santa Rosa City Schools	Sonoma	None	Monthly support meetings	Annual: \$2,500
Saugus USD	Los Angeles	100% reimbursement if passed	None	Annual: \$500
Sequola Union HSD	San Mateo	None	Release time and technical support	Annual: \$1,200
Sierra Sands USD	Kern	None	Release time and video help	None
Snowline Joint USD	San Bernardino	None	Three release days	None
Sonoma Valley USD	Sonoma	None	None	Annual: \$600 for the period of certification
Tamalpais Union HSD	Marin	None	None	Annual: \$1,000 for five years and additional stipend for mentoring.
Torrance USD	Los Angeles	None	Support meetings, video support	None
Tracy USD	San Joaquin	Stipend	None	None
Tustin USD	Orange	None	None	One-time \$5,000 award upon completion and passing of NB certification.

Twin Rivers USD	Sacramento	None	Support program	Annual: \$2,600
Walnut Valley USD	Los Angeles	None	None	2% salary Increase
West Contra Costa	Contra Costa	None	Support program	Annual: \$1,000
Wheatland Schools	Yuba	\$1,000	Release time	None
Whittier UHSD	Los Angeles	Fee support	Support programs	Annual: \$2,000
Willits USD	Mendocino	Fee support	Release days	None
Yuba City School District	Yuba	None	None	Annual: \$1,000

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