

AMERICAN BOARD

for Certification of Teacher Excellence

TESTIMONY OF MS. EILEEN PROUDLOCK

**AMERICAN BOARD
FOR
CERTIFICATION OF TEACHER EXCELLENCE**

**BEFORE THE
WASHINGTON STATE BASIC EDUCATION FINANCE
JOINT TASK FORCE**

SEPTEMBER 15, 2008

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Good afternoon members of the task force. I am Eileen Proudlock, from the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE). It is an honor to speak to you today regarding our teacher certification program. The certification program is designed to help support current efforts by the state to ensure that all students in Washington are taught by highly qualified and effective teachers. We have worked hard to create a program that incorporates the requirements for Washington teachers yet still provides a viable route for professionals to change careers to become teachers.

Research shows that college students are much less likely to go into teaching today than at any other time in our history. The pipeline of math and science teachers in our colleges of education continues to decrease. Today's young professionals will not stay in one job for 30 years, but instead will choose to move in and out of careers when they feel the timing is right. States must act now to ensure that they have additional avenues to recruit teachers as well as having additional options available for those who choose teaching as a second career.

In addition to less college students pursuing education as their first career, we are also faced with the challenges of early departures from the field of education and baby-boomers who are getting ready for retirement. This growing population of career changers and retirees is creating additional pressure on states to create new incentives for experienced professionals to make the transition to teaching.

No one teacher certification program can meet the teaching needs in today's environment. To ensure every student has a highly qualified teacher it takes all programs working hard and working together. The certification program offered by ABCTE is not here to replace other programs, but instead to work along side the existing programs to ensure every child is being taught by an excellent teacher. ABCTE teachers will augment the current supply of teachers to better serve all communities. The hiring of teachers will still be up to each principal and school district. This program will provide additional resources, so principals and school districts can provide their students with someone who is highly qualified.

The American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence

The American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence was created in September 2001 under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Currently, *Passport to Teaching* certifications are available in elementary education (K-6), English (6-12), mathematics (6-12), general science (6-12), biology (6-12), physics (6-12), chemistry (6-12), special education (K-12), US history (6-12), and world history (6-12). Additionally, ABCTE offers a reading endorsement for elementary education teachers. We have certified over 1,100 teachers and currently have over 2,400 additional candidates pursuing their teaching certification.

We are working to meet high-need subject areas in high-need areas. We have also partnered with the Urban Leagues of Miami, FL and Jackson, MS to recruit and certify more teachers of color. Currently over one third of our candidates are male and 22% are teachers of color – significantly higher than most routes to teacher certification. The ABCTE certification is accepted in eight states and is filling a need for teachers in both urban and rural schools. One of our most successful states is Idaho where rural school systems have successfully used our program to fill vacancies that otherwise would not have been filled.

Missouri, the most recent state to accept the ABCTE certification, is a great example of how we work with the state to recruit, prepare, and certify new teachers. On May 1st, 2008, Missouri Governor Matt Blunt signed Senate Bill 1066 into law accepting the ABCTE program as a route to certification. Since then, over 400 people have already enrolled in the program, with an additional 2,500 people expressing interest. ABCTE has also already hosted five recruiting events across the state and has had over 500 new potential teachers attend the events.

Passport Certification for New Teachers

Teachers certified through the American Board's *Passport to Teaching* have demonstrated not just competency in subject area, but *mastery*. We have built a set of extremely rigorous exams to ensure that before a teacher gets to your classroom they have a thorough understanding of their subject and of research based pedagogy. Pass rates through our program are less than 40% - we weed out a large portion of our candidates to make sure you get the best. To prepare the candidates for teaching, the American Board utilizes a multi-step process:

- Application for American Board certification, which requires possessing a bachelor's degree, passing an FBI background check, and paying the registration fee;
- Completion of a self-assessment to identify knowledge in subject area and pedagogy that require additional study and preparation;
- Assignment of an American Board advisor (all of whom are veteran teachers) to create and work through an Individualized Learning Plan; and
- Passage of two rigorous exams (one in subject area and one in professional teaching knowledge).

Recommendations and Conclusion

Members of the task force, I encourage you to consider ABCTE's certification program for the state of Washington. The program is a rigorous and effective route to certification that appeals to career changers who dream of making teaching their next career but do not have the resources to make that a reality. These are valuable new teachers that will help to ensure that every child has a quality teacher.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.