

Nurturing Teacher Leadership

CPS Board of Education National Board Resolution Speeches

May 25, 2022

On May 25th, the CPS Board of Education issued a Resolution to honor the 58 new NBCTs and the 143 newly Renewed NBCTs. New NBCTs Conor Cameron (Adolescent through Young Adulthood Mathematics), and Hillary Munoz (Exceptional Needs Specialist), as well as newly Renewed NBCT Shirley Roberson (Middle Childhood Generalist) addressed the Board of Ed and CPS senior staff describing the impact of NBC on their students' learning, school climate, and professional growth.

Shirley Roberson, Renewed NBCT, Middle Childhood Generalist

Good Morning,

Thank you Mrs. Cherkasky-Davis for the introduction, and thank you all for the time to speak with you this morning. My name is Shirley Roberson and I am a National Board Certified Teacher! I initially received the Middle Childhood Generalist Certificate in 2010 as a 5th year teacher at Andrew Carnegie Elementary School. When I achieved certification, I was one of five teachers at Carnegie to accomplish this feat. Having a cohort of National Board Certified Teachers at the school was instrumental in taking the school from receiving "intensive support" from the district to one that was in "good standing".

The work did not stop there. Because this was the best educational decision I made, I became a mentor to facilitate learning for other teachers as they went through the process. I informed everyone I met about National Board Certification and how it prepared me to teach with intentionality and in return increased student achievement. As I grew professionally, I transitioned to the role of Assistant Principal at Carnegie School. As an instructional leader, I stressed to my teachers the importance of analyzing the National Board standards, planning culturally responsive lessons that engaged students, and using data to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.

I lead by example. Knowing how the process developed me, I made the decision to renew my certification, even while being an Assistant Principal, and receiving no financial remuneration. I went through the process of renewing my National Board Certificate to remain abreast of current trends in education, which also prepared me to lead my teachers through the pandemic; which has changed the very structure of our educational system. This is what makes the national board initiative so crucial. With the uncertainty of the long term effects the pandemic can have on student achievement, a constant is knowing that students whose teachers and leaders are National Board certified are prepared for this ever changing world.

My National Board Certified teachers were ready to transition their instruction from the classrooms to the computer screen, all while preparing authentic, and engaging lessons. I, too,

Nurturing Teacher Leadership

CPS Board of Education National Board Resolution Speeches

May 25, 2022

read through each standard, and strategically planned how to teach the students in front of me, as well as those behind the computer screens. While talking with fellow colleagues about the challenges remote learning presented, I would often remain quiet because Carnegie School did not experience those challenges. We were already 1:1 with technology, we incorporated site licenses that supported our core curriculum, and we grounded our practice in the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Core Propositions; specifically proposition # 1: Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

I would like to thank the Chicago Teachers Union and Chicago Public Schools for supporting this initiative, and I urge you to continue funding teacher quality. I now stand before a new staff as the interim principal of Reavis Elementary School, and I am anxious to build the capacity of teachers by way of National Board Certification. Thank you.

Hillary Munoz, NBCT, Exceptional Needs Specialist

Good morning,

My name is Hillary Munoz. I am a special education teacher that just recently became National Board Certified as an Exceptional Needs Specialist in December 2021. Currently I teach 3-5th special education. Becoming National Board Certified was extremely challenging, but worth every late night and every returned draft that consumed me over the 2 year period working with my mentors through the Nurturing Teacher Leadership program. When I certified, a huge part of my professional practice involved teaching literacy in Spanish. Yes, I am one of those magical special educators who is also bilingual certified! Prior to this process, I had been inquisitive about the intersection of special education and English language learning.

Through completing my National Board portfolio I was able to dive deeply into designing effective, native language specialized instruction in literacy for my Kindergarteners and first graders. Let me share one specific example of how earning National Board Certification has helped my English Learner students with special needs.

As a direct result of the assessments I designed and then administered for Component 4 of my portfolio (Effective and Reflective Practitioner), the group of students that I featured improved their ability to read open syllables in Spanish from an average accuracy of 31% to 97%. The process of analyzing their assessment data forced me to think carefully about what was causing my students to make decoding errors. I had to delve deeply into the data and find patterns. In doing so, I discovered that they needed support making phonemes (units of sound) concrete. I then devised a visual blending guide to help them map each sound onto a letter. (I'd like to add that I did all of this remotely.)

Nurturing Teacher Leadership

CPS Board of Education National Board Resolution Speeches

May 25, 2022

The National Board standards aligned with component 4 forced me to move past merely considering how “well they did” and engage more deeply with the data to truly pinpoint gaps in their understanding. It is clear, then, that National Board Certification yields unequivocal results for student achievement. Because of the data I collected on student growth as a result of my multi-sensory approach to native phonics literacy instruction, I was able to secure a multi-sensory native language instructional program for my students.

The process of completing my National Board portfolio led me to carefully document the outcome of each of my instructional strategies as it related to native language phonics instruction for my diverse learners. Through documentation of these strategies, I realized that students with exceptional needs learning phonics in their native language benefited most from tightly organized, systematic, explicit and multi-sensory instruction. I suspected this to be the case, but there is a dearth of research on multi-sensory phonics instruction in Spanish, so documenting my proof of this felt very exciting! This never would have happened had I not gone through national board certification. By sharing this data with my bilingual colleagues I was then able to garner enough interest in a formal program to go to administration and request that they purchase it for students.

Suffice to say, the impact of becoming a National Board Certified Teacher has had far-reaching effects on my professional practice. The act of studying a set of standards so closely, unconsciously began to change my educational paradigm. I began to ask myself “WHY” and “HOW” for almost every decision I make in my classroom. Being cognizant of my decision making process and anchoring my choices in sound research and evidence has become as natural to me as breathing.

That being said, what someone does with their certification is the reason why the NTL program is so crucial for Chicago Public Schools. I am only one person out of a large cohort, but the tools and power of mind that I have learned will reap benefits for students for years to come. This process has given me the confidence to advocate for my students and what they truly need, even if it means suggesting ideas that my coworkers might not have considered. Through this process, I have also learned how important it is to honor my professional path and seek opportunities for growth. This growth in the depth of my pedagogical knowledge has enriched my collaboration with co-workers and will remain with me for the rest of my career. The truth is that there is no such thing as a perfect lesson. There will ALWAYS be something to improve, but that’s the beauty of it. There is always space for growth as a professional and what I learned going through this process has embedded in me the practice of continuous reflection and improvement.

With that, I would like to thank CPS and CTU for giving me this opportunity and encourage everyone listening to support the Nurturing Teacher Leadership Program as an indispensable

Nurturing Teacher Leadership

CPS Board of Education National Board Resolution Speeches

May 25, 2022

asset to this district, and I am hoping you decide to expand the program to reach even more teachers throughout the district.

Conor Cameron, NBCT, Adolescent through Young Adulthood Mathematics

Good morning.

My name is Conor Cameron and I teach 9th grade algebra and coach debate at Eric Solorio Academy High School.

I want to reflect on what the National Board process has meant to me, my students, and my school.

First, the National Board process taught me more deeply the need to really know my students to teach my students. Before I sat for National Board Certification, I played 'getting to know you' games on the first day of school because I thought that was all I needed to know about my students as I was only teaching math. I hadn't really realized I was teaching students, not just math. Now, I also administer a diagnostic assessment and gather and analyze data to learn more about my students' learning styles, language preferences, and interests from family and student surveys. Because of that shift, I learned, for example, that in one of my classes, my students need plenty of examples before being asked to do mathematics and based on diagnostic assessments, that they needed additional work on algebraic manipulation. Because I learned these details about these students, I now make sure that I design lessons with additional examples that I demonstrate and that student volunteers can demonstrate for their peers. I also used Algebra tiles throughout the year to build an understanding of what algebraic symbols actually mean. The shifts I made in my teaching because of what I learned about how to really know my students during the National Board process, have increased my students' confidence and success in performing procedures, and have increased student understanding of and accuracy in manipulating algebraic expressions. For the first time ever, my students were able to successfully complete the square to solve quadratic equations on the summative assessment! Thank you Nurturing Teacher Leadership!

Second, I'd worked on facilitating better mathematical discussions for years. I'd even recorded these lessons. And I thought it was going great. Until I had to record a lesson good enough to meet the standards of the National Board. And it was then that I realized how shy my students were when it came time to discuss math. Their quietness required that I be even quieter to give them room. As a result of collaboration with the math teachers in my NTL cohort, I learned that I needed to pre-script the central questions of discussions, write them down so that my students could see them as well as hear them, start asking students to summarize the thinking of the students who came before them so that I could eventually ask them to agree, disagree, respond, and build upon the work of previous contributions. These changes to my teaching

Nurturing Teacher Leadership

CPS Board of Education National Board Resolution Speeches

May 25, 2022

impacted student learning because my students now listen to and learn more from each other, deepen the connections students can identify between different representations and ways of thinking, and improve my students' ability to justify their thinking with valid mathematical reasoning. These habits of mind were particularly useful in my systems unit where students' participation in discussion strengthened their ability to describe what it means for an ordered pair to be a solution. None of this growth in student learning would have been possible without my work in and learning from the National Board Certification Process during my 2 years in the NTL program.

Third, teaching remotely was difficult. It often felt like spewing knowledge into the void. Before I found nurturing teacher leadership, I used to sign up for professional development because it looked interesting. National Board, by contrast, required that I identify a student need, collaborate, participate in professional development specific to that student need, and modify my teaching accordingly. My work with NTL helped me to identify that my students needed entry points to discuss mathematics. After attending professional development specific to increasing student engagement in mathematics discussions, NTL helped me adapt what I learned to my teaching at Solorio. For example, I now open every Thursday's lesson with a Slow Reveal Graph routine, in which I show students a graph devoid of labels and scales. I solicit noticings and wonderings from students about this graph. I gradually reveal labels and encourage students to connect their prior noticings and wonderings to this newly available information. Because "what did you notice" and "what do you wonder" are such low stakes questions, my students who were most hesitant to participate in a math class have increased their confidence. They share what they notice both in this routine and elsewhere in class, which allows them to attend to details of problems and strategies. Their practice sharing wonderings allows them to ask better questions, which deepens their understanding of mathematics. All students have become better at reading graphs and making predictions. National Board forced me to think about professional development as a means to address a current teaching and learning need, which drives immediate improvements in my students' learning.

I am a better teacher because of the national board process and my students benefit from that every day because they have a teacher who knows them better, who can facilitate better mathematical discussions in which they participate, and has more and better strategies to engage them in meaningful mathematics. And the impact of NTL at Solorio extends far beyond the students I teach: I had the privilege of completing the program with a cohort of Solorio teachers with whom I regularly discuss how to respond to instructional challenges I am facing. NBCTs at Solorio serve as department chairs, instructional coaches, and lead the school's professional development efforts. In this way, all Solorio students benefit from instructional decision-making aligned to the National Board's standards.

Nurturing Teacher Leadership

CPS Board of Education National Board Resolution Speeches

May 25, 2022

I want to thank CPS for funding the Nurturing Teacher Leadership program, and CTU for building it. I would never have become a board certified teacher without the mentoring I received in NTL. I hope this program can be made available to as many teachers as possible so that anyone looking to reflect deeply on their teaching and distinguish their practice has a local source for high quality professional development. And if Solorio is any indication, the benefits compound when buildings achieve a critical mass of NBCTs. Thank you.