

**FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

by Dr. Barry Harding  
Public Schools  
of Robeson County



Last Tuesday was a noteworthy occasion for the Public Schools of Robeson County in general and 22 of our teachers in particular. It was on that day that those 22 teachers were guests at a reception saluting them for having received National Board Certification. For those unfamiliar with that designation, let me explain its importance. After a person receives a degree in education, they must then go through a certification process by which the State of North Carolina is assured that the person is qualified to teach in the state. Following receipt of that certification, the person is then allowed to teach our young people. Other states, likewise, have certification procedures in effect for their states many of whom have reciprocal agreements allowing a teacher properly certified to teach in this state to teach in those states. For that to

happen, though, a North Carolina teacher has to provide transcripts to that state proving that the teacher has fulfilled all the requirements of that state. In 1996, though, a program came along which provided the possibility of changing things. It was called National Board Certification and it provided the potential of certifying a teacher to teach in any state without any further checking of that teacher's transcripts or records. If the teacher could pass the rigorous test which had to be taken to obtain National Board Certification, then that teacher was assured of being able to teach anywhere else in the country. While, understandably, it would not be an easy procedure, it would not only allow the teacher more flexibility in being able to relocate to a teaching position in another state more easily, if desired, it also provided a finan-

cial advantage in that a teacher who earns such certification is also assured of a 12% increase in salary each year for ten years. Melissa Oxendine, a 3rd grade teacher at Union Chapel, learned about the program at a workshop 2 years ago, and recognizing its benefits, immediately went to work putting together the required portfolio and video that went with the application. As a trailblazer among PSRC teachers trying for National Board Certification, she also was successful in becoming our first teacher to attain that recognition. Subsequently, numerous other teachers have been encouraged to also make the effort. The 22 who were recognized on Tuesday, are in the vanguard of teachers who are working towards that same goal. Their success has resulted in many more making the effort, and, as time goes by and more make the effort, we can expect an increasing number of teachers to be successful. In the meantime, both successful teachers and the system benefit. The video and portfolio, required by the application, give the teachers the opportunity to scrutinize themselves with regards to their strengths and weaknesses in the classroom. Thus, they have the potential to serve as a method self-evaluation which can be used for

self-improvement and which, ultimately, results in stronger teachers whether or not they are successful in obtaining National Board Certification. Hopefully, the success of the 22 will continue to encourage others to make the effort. While it takes a lot of hard work and study, the rewards certainly make it worthwhile.



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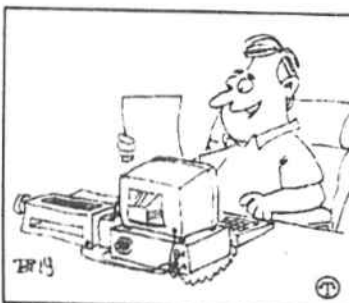
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