

Great Ideas for Great Public Schools

ARIZONA

'Mitchell 20' pursue National Board Certification as a group

With the support of the Arizona Education Association, 20 teachers at Mitchell Elementary School in Phoenix—nearly 60 percent of the staff—banded together to pursue **National Board Certification** to improve the quality of their teaching. The Arizona K-12 Center and its director, Kathy Wiebke, are helping the teachers use the National Board process to better understand their teaching and how it directly impacts student achievement. Of the 20 teachers who began this journey, 17 have earned National Board Certification. Those who did not are continuing the process.

Background

- Mitchell serves a community where less than 25 percent of the adults have a high school education.
- More than 50 percent of the students are learning a second language, 96 percent get free or reduced-price lunch, and 96 percent are Latino.
- Once in corrective action, today Mitchell meets all Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals.

Positive effects

- Collaboration on National Board Certification has increased collaboration across grade levels as well.
- The teachers are learning together how to better teach students with special needs and how to work more closely with parents.
- Working towards certification has turned into an alternative approach to improving student performance and closing achievement gaps.
- Teacher turnover is no longer an issue for the school.
- Inspired by the Mitchell 20, more than 200 teachers in 11 schools throughout Arizona, including three schools in the Isaac School District, are pursuing either full certification or participating in the related Take One! program.

Meaningful professional development

- Mitchell teachers say the process has transformed their teaching and given them more control over their professional development.
- Pursuing certification as a group has influenced the school's professional culture, empowered teachers, and renewed spirits.
- The certification process, a powerful strategy for developing successful teachers in high-needs schools, combines rigorous professional standards, teacher collaboration, and bottom-up leadership.
- Teachers are taking responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Fresh approach to teacher recruitment

- The district did not have to import expert teachers to staff high-need schools—it grew its own.
- Most of the home-grown National Board Certified Teachers are minorities who have roots in the community.

For more information:

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Great Public Schools for Every Student