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NBPTS Studies and Research Questions

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Summary

Dan Goldhaber is engaged in two studies on the impacts of NBPTS on teachers and students. His first study (funded by the U.S. Department of Education), “*National Board Certification: Who Chooses to Become Nationally Board Certified and What are the Consequences for Students?*” is slated for completion in Summer 2005. His second study (funded by NBPTS), “*National Board Certification and Teacher Career Path: Does NBPTS Certification Influence How Long Teachers Remain in the Profession and Where They Teach?*” runs through December 2005. The findings from these studies are summarized below, and the full reports are available at:

<http://www.crpe.org/workingpapers.shtml>

Using a unique dataset from North Carolina, these studies examine several broad research questions:

1. What factors affect the decision of individuals to seek Board certification? (*Who Chooses*)
2. What determines the success of applicants for Board certification? (*Who Chooses*)
3. What is the ultimate impact of Board certification on students? (*Who Chooses*)
4. Does NBPTS certification affect the length of time that teachers remain in the teaching profession in general and the length of time that teachers remain in particular districts or schools? (*Career Path*)
5. What is the distribution of NBPTS-certified teachers across different districts, schools, and students and how do NBPTS-related district incentives affect this distribution? (*Career Path*)

Research Findings

NBPTS Certification

Who Applies?

Holding all else equal:

- Women are 75 percent more likely to apply than men.
- African-American teachers are 30 percent more likely to apply than white teachers.
- Teachers who perform better on standardized tests (such as Praxis and SAT) are more likely to apply.
- Teachers who have an advanced degree and a standard teaching license are more likely to apply.
- Teachers employed at more affluent schools are more likely to apply.
- Teachers employed in schools that provide financial incentives are more likely to apply.

Given Application, Who is Certified?

Holding all else equal:

- Female applicants are about 30 percent more likely to be certified than male applicants.
- White applicants are about 65 - 70 percent more likely to be certified than African-American applicants.
- Applicants with higher standardized test scores are more likely to be certified.
- Applicants employed by more affluent, higher achieving schools are more likely to be certified.

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Student Outcomes

Having an NBCT Matters.

Controlling for a wide range of variables, we find that National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs):

- Are more effective at raising student achievement than teachers who pursue, but fail to obtain, NBPTS certification, suggesting that NBPTS is successfully identifying the more effective teachers.
- Are more effective at raising student achievement -- outside of the year in which they apply -- than teachers who do not pursue NBPTS certification.
- Have a greater impact with younger students.
- Have a greater impact with low-income students.

For example, learning gains in reading for students who had NBCTs rose to as much as 12 percent for the youngest students (3rd grade) and rose to 15 percent for low-income students. Students with NBCTs improved an average of 7 percent more on math and reading tests than students whose teachers had pursued but failed to gain NBPTS certification.

Teacher Career Paths

Where - and Who - Do NBCTs Teach?

The most disadvantaged districts, schools, and students are least likely to have access to those teachers who are recognized by NBPTS as being highly qualified, and this sorting becomes more pronounced as we move from the district to the classroom. This is true whether we take a snapshot of where NBPTS teachers are employed or focus on the type of trends that are likely to emerge in the future as a result of the flow of teacher movers from one district or school to another. The fact that state resources follow NBCTs, and that NBCTs are inequitably sorted across schools and students, means that state funds are flowing disproportionately to more affluent schools.

Overall, the findings show that NBCTs are more likely to teach in more affluent schools and districts, although one unexpected finding was that NBCTs tended to be in schools with a slightly higher student/teacher ratio. For instance, NBCTs tend to teach in schools:

- Where students achieve high academic performance on math and reading tests.
- Where a larger portion of students perform at or above grade-level.
- That are more affluent, higher spending and paying.
- Where incentives, financial or otherwise, are offered.
- With fewer minority students.
- With fewer students with learning disabilities.
- With fewer students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.

Important Unanswered Research Questions

1. Does NBPTS certification impact the length of time teachers remain in particular schools/districts or the teaching profession? (to be addressed by Career Path study)
2. Will the student achievement findings be sustained as the NBPTS program matures?
3. Are there school-level student achievement effects?
4. Do NBCTs move into leadership positions in schools?
5. What explains the larger gap in certification by race?
6. Are there particular sub-assessment components of the NBPTS assessment system that are strongly correlated with student achievement?