

My name is Lauren Smith, and I am a proud National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) with 13 years of teaching experience in Lubbock, TX. I am writing to strongly advocate for the continued recognition of NBCTs under the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) and to highlight the invaluable contributions we bring to Texas classrooms.

Earning my National Board Certification was an intense and transformative process. Over two and a half years, I immersed myself in research-based teaching strategies, meticulously analyzed student data to measure growth, built a vast network among community members, and engaged in continuous professional development. The certification process is widely and nationally recognized as more rigorous than obtaining a master's degree, yet I embraced this challenge because I believe every student deserves high quality instruction and access to highly recognized teachers dedicated to developing their craft.

Since earning my certification, I have served as a team leader, campus leadership member, Technology Leader, Content-Focus Presenter, Leadership Institute Presenter, District Future Focus, Committee member, NBCT mentor, professional learning facilitator for current NBCT candidates, Teacher of the Year, Erma Lee Boyce Educational Advocacy Award Winner, and recipient of the National Travelers Insurance Award for Teaching Excellence. My dedication to excellence is not unique—when you meet National Board Certified Teachers in Texas, it becomes evident why we deserve the recognition under TIA.

I urge you to stand firmly in support of NBCTs by ensuring we remain an integral part of the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA). Additionally, I encourage you to advocate for a higher designation level within TIA for those who have proven their impact through National Board Certification.

Recognizing and rewarding accomplished educators is not just about fairness—it is about ensuring every Texas student has access to the most effective teachers possible. Thank you for your time, dedication, and commitment to supporting the educators shaping the future of Texas. I look forward to your response and to seeing your continued advocacy for those who have dedicated their lives to excellence in education.