

Proposed Arkansas Department of Education
 Rules Governing Eligibility and Financial Incentives For
 National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
 Candidacy and Certification Program

Summary

The proposed changes to the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Eligibility and Financial Incentives for National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Candidacy and Certification Program are for the purpose of updating the rule.

Purpose:

The purpose in making the changes to these rules (as shown in the markup) is primarily to clarify the process by which applicants may become qualified for the appropriated funding, to ensure that legislative intent is followed, and to ensure that decisions for payments from the appropriated funding are prioritized. Also, the National Board is changing the way it issues certificates, for example – in 2017 it will begin issuing 5-year certificates, and will discontinue the renewal of 10-year certificates after 2020 (all will be renewed for five years). Therefore it is necessary to change the rules to provide for phasing out payments for renewals of 10-year certificates and add provisions for including the 5-year certificates and one renewal of a 5-year certificate, which will allow the payment of bonuses for a 10-year period.

In the process of making the substantive changes, technical changes were also made.

Technical changes:

- **Section 2.01** uses the correct terminology for what the program will pay for, which is not “full tuition”.
- **Definitions section** – Arranges the definitions in alphabetical order and adds new definitions at 3.04, 3.05, 3.06, and 3.07, revised 3.08, adds 3.09, 3.10, and 3.12, and deletes one unused term.
- **Section 5.01** and throughout clarifies that all payments for NBCT candidacy and bonuses are subject to the availability of funds.
- Many other provisions are rewritten or reordered to make the rule easier to read and understand. Some redundancy is eliminated.

Substantive changes:

- **Section 3.07** defines “initial certification” to include an initial 10-year certificate and the new 5-year certificate plus the first 5-year renewal.
- **Section 5.01** clarifies that it is the NBPTS fees for the program components. The program does not pay for a candidate to retake an exam.

- **Section 5.02** provides options for candidates who either wish to complete a full application process to receive funding for program components from the outset, and an option for candidates who will pay for the cost of their first component and upon successful completion seek reimbursement for the costs.

Rationale: Some candidates prefer to have the knowledge that they can be successful before seeking state funding, as they do not want to be subject to the repayment of funds if they are unsuccessful. This was a deterrent to some qualified candidates.

- **Section 5.03** is added to clarify that the applicant pays the NPBTS application fee.
- Beginning in **Section 6.01**, the proposed rule clarifies that all payments under this program are for the period of the initial certification.
- **Section 6.04** provides a specific schedule for phasing out bonus payments for the renewal of a ten-year certificate.

Rationale: The changes in 6.01 and 6.04 reflect the legislative intent that NBCTs receive a bonus for the period of the initial 10-year certificate. Although in the past there have been bonus payments made beyond the initial 10-year period as funds were available, the number of NBCTs in Arkansas has increased to a level that renders the payment of bonuses during the renewal of a 10-year certificate unsustainable based on current funding levels.

- **Section 9.02.5** is added to eliminate double payments of financial incentives to an educator who is also receiving a financial incentive as a Master Principal.
- **Section 10.02** expresses the priority for the payment of appropriated and available funds.