



Superintendent's Honor Roll – Jan. 8, 2008

Taryn Gillespie from Monarch High School recently received the 9NEWS “9 Who Care Teacher” award for December. 9NEWS anchor Bob Kendrick visited Monarch High School on Dec. 13. A highly respected language arts teacher, Taryn was in the process of bringing Dante’s *Inferno* alive and relevant to her students as she effectively engaged their minds and their energy in discussing this classic work.

Seventeen BVSD teachers achieved National Board Certification (NBC) this year – our largest number of teachers to achieve this distinction in any one year. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization governed by a board of directors, most of whom are teachers. National Board Certification is a challenging 18-month process that measures an individual teacher’s practice against high and rigorous standards for professional performance.

Julie Benmellah from Pioneer Elementary worked together with a small cohort of teachers from which she pulled ideas and resources to improve her teaching. Her group collaborated and critiqued each others’ work in an effort to meet the many needs of their students.

Michelle Carpenter from Boulder High pursued certification because of her passion for her work with at risk students. Given the hectic day-to-day pace of life in a large high school, she was especially appreciative of the time for reflection on strategies and approaches that work best for her students.

Devira Chartrand from Mesa Elementary said her experience made her more aware of what she does in the classroom and helped her sort through areas she saw that needed improvement. She found it very helpful to watch herself on video and have to analyze her teaching.

Leslie Cumming from Whittier International said the process was an incredible experience. It required her to take time to think through her teaching practices. She compared it to getting a new lens that helped her focus more clearly on what she wanted her students to know.

Ellen Debacker from Platt Middle School felt the certification process helped her focus and reflect on her job for a year. She believes that the reflection component is often neglected in the busyness of day-to-day work, but is a very important aspect to improving her teaching.

Mary Jane Ecton from Eldorado K-8 firmly believes that the certification process enhances both professional development and teaching effectiveness. Her most valuable lesson learned is to be much more reflective about everything from best practices in teaching to involving her community in her classroom.

Mel Haik from Boulder Technical Education Center said she learned a lot in the process. In addition to evaluating and documenting her teaching practices, she studied career and technical education and arts and communication – from the latest developments (a huge topic, from Web 2 to podcasts to hardware miniaturization) to the history of art, which covers centuries of material.

Mark Little from Broomfield High said the National Board process is one of the best professional development experiences he has ever done in 20 plus years of teaching. He found it to be a very personal form of development in which he had to focus on his skills in the classroom and the impact his teaching had on his students.

Stacey Mandel from Sanchez Elementary said that not only does she plan more thoughtfully for her students and teach with purpose, but the relationships she has developed with other educators allow for rich discussion, reflection, and creative collaboration. Most important, however, is that she has learned that balance in life is a necessity.

Terri Mitchell from Sanchez Elementary said the NBC process was one of the best things that she has done as an educator in her career. She especially enjoyed the authentic reflection that the portfolio entries challenged her to do. As a result, she is now better at reflecting daily and making necessary teaching adjustments.

Lynn Molitor-Gordon from Arapahoe Ridge High School said her certification experience taught her to dig deeper and question further until she has the answers to help each student be successful. For her, it was the most effective and meaningful professional development that she has ever done.

Scott Partridge from Boulder High said the NBC process is a great way to stimulate a revitalization of one's teaching. He thinks it pushes the candidate to really reexamine their methods and leads to improved teaching and learning.

Patty Rodriguez from Angevine Middle School said earning her certification helped her analyze the different components of her teaching which has helped her to validate what she does well and challenged her to consider how to further improve her instructional practice.

Elaine Rosquist from Fireside Elementary views the NBC as the most useful professional development program she has participated in during her 24 years of teaching. Ellen thanks her students, fellow teachers and administrators, community members, friends and family for all their support in achieving her goal.

Carol Sandstrom from Crest View Elementary organized all the requirements of the certification process into a notebook several hundred pages long. She estimates that she studied more than 400 hours last year. Her students even helped edit her work and loved that she was learning and writing just like they were.

Lisa Sobieniak from Centennial Middle School said the process gave her the opportunity to make a thorough examination of what she does as a teacher librarian and why she does it. Through the process of explaining her practice, she says she gained insights that will increase her effectiveness as a teacher in this rapidly changing profession.

David Tanaka from Pioneer Elementary credits the certification process with making him engage in a deep, lengthy, personal, and critical examination of his teaching practices. It forced him to analyze and defend virtually everything he does with his students by asking the question: “How does this have a positive effect on student learning?”

All of us at BVSD appreciate these outstanding educators’ personal and professional commitment to teaching excellence.