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# *Budget Briefs*

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## **NATIONAL TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

The budget adjustment act (1997 Wisconsin Act 237), passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Tommy Thompson on June 2, 1998, provides incentive grants in the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years for Wisconsin teachers who earn national certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

The governor increased the potential number of grants by vetoing the provision that would have limited participation to a maximum of 20 teachers. The legislature had structured the grant as a 9-year program, but the governor reduced it to two years. He stated in his veto message, however, that he wanted to encourage as many teachers as possible to seek certification and he expected that the program would be reviewed by the 1999 Legislature.

### **NATIONAL TEACHER CERTIFICATION; STATE GRANTS**

**NBPTS Certification.** The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is a non-profit organization whose mission is to develop and operate a national, voluntary system of credential certification for teachers who meet certain professional standards. Nationally, about 1,000 teachers currently hold NBPTS certification. Although no state requires national certification, a number do offer significant incentives to teachers who seek NBPTS recognition. Certification by the national board requires a considerable commitment in time and effort. The program costs each applicant approximately \$2,000, which includes registration fees, materials and on-site assessment.

**State Grants for Wisconsin Teachers.** Any Wisconsin teacher will be eligible for a \$2,000 grant in the 1999-2000 school year if he or she applies to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and meets the following requirements:

- Certified by NBPTS before July 1, 2000.
- Licensed as a teacher by the state superintendent or employed as a teacher in a private school located in Wisconsin.
- Wisconsin residency.
- Employed as a teacher in Wisconsin.

Teachers who receive a grant in the 1999-2000 school year are eligible to receive a subsequent \$2,500 grant in 2000-2001 if they maintain their NBPTS certification and continue to fulfill the other requirements listed above.

### **CERTIFICATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

Under existing law, teachers must renew their regular licenses through DPI every five years, and the applicant for renewal must have satisfactorily completed six semester credits

(or the equivalent) in continuing professional education in the five-year period immediately preceding the application. Act 237 provides that a licensed teacher who has received initial NBPTS certification within the preceding five years does not have to earn continuing professional education credits. DPI can determine by administrative rule the number of times that exemption may apply to an individual teacher.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For copies of relevant sections of Act 237, contact the Legislative Reference Bureau at (608) 266-0342. Acts can be downloaded from the legislature's website at **<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/billtrack.html>**. For more detailed information about this program, contact the Department of Public Instruction, Division for Learning Support: Instructional Services, Licensing and Teacher Education, at (608) 266-1879.