

Teacher Perceptions: A Study of One School System Sponsored National Board Cohort

by

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Abstract

Research suggests that retaining teachers is becoming a challenge to school and system leadership in most states, including Alabama. Local school system sponsored national board cohorts are being developed as one means of providing the experiences necessary to train and retain teachers.

The present qualitative case study focuses on leadership supports of teachers in a national board certification cohort. Its goal is to learn more about the role leadership plays in the success of the national board cohort model and which outcomes from participation might be helpful to develop, train, and retain teachers to curtail the present teacher shortage facing school systems in Alabama. Through confidential interviews, participants reflected on the facilitators and barriers leadership provided during certification. They describe the outcomes from certification including their viewpoint on remaining in the field.

The findings from this study suggest that school and system leaders can implement supports through the system sponsored national board cohort that will allow teachers reach high levels of self-efficacy in their practice, realize additional professional opportunities, attain greater job satisfaction, and improve their outlook on remaining in the field.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Teachers across America have been pursuing National Board of Professional Teaching Standards certification for decades (NBPTS, 2021). The process for certification has changed over time, but the focus behind it has remained the same: to improve teaching practices for increased student learning (NEA, 2015; Marsee, 2020). Lately, as teacher shortages increase, it is more important than ever for leaders to support in-service teachers to reach their professional goals in hopes of retaining them in the field (Marsee, 2020; Wiggan et al., 2020). Research considering new teacher learning, claims a connection between developing professional identity, self-efficacy, and actualization as strategies which can help retain new entrants in the teaching profession (McDowell et al., 2014). This leads to the assertion that when teachers reach the highest levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, they feel more satisfaction with their careers, which in turn may lead to higher teacher retention rates (Fisher & Royster, 2016; McDowell et al., 2014; Pucella, 2011). The way that leadership supports teachers during the certification process may help them reach these personal and professional goals and help them remain in the field (Crane, 2023; Handler et. al., 2021).

Teachers originally pursued national board certification on their own; however, the way that teachers certify has changed over the thirty-six-year span since its inception (Will, 2017; NBCT, 2023). During that time, a variety of supports have emerged across the nation. State networks were the first organizations to develop, then regional cohorts until, finally, some school systems across the country began supporting their candidates through school system sponsored national board cohorts (Marsee, 2020). The evolution of national board certification in Alabama has followed a similar progression (Crain, 2018). The Alabama National Board Certified Teachers Network (AL NBCT Network) is an Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE)

sponsored support platform providing information and links for grant opportunities to all Alabama educators wishing to pursue national board certification (ALNBCT, 2023). The documentation of eleven university based regional cohorts in Alabama is noted on the history of the AL NBCT Network website (ALNBCT, 2023). School system sponsored national board cohorts in Alabama are known to exist, as evidenced by the fact that some system cohorts have been recognized in NBPTS publications for the high numbers of teachers certifying in their school system (NBPTS, 2021). A consolidated list of these cohorts, however, cannot be found in either the AL NBCT Network webpage or on any of the AL NBCT Network social media platforms (ALNBCT, 2023). Individual school systems in Alabama that sponsor a national board cohort often include this information on their district websites, providing further evidence that these organizations exist. The lack of a centrally located list is further evidence to the newness of this type of support system for certification (ALNBCT, 2023).

As school and system leaders consider how to support teachers in local national board cohorts, it is important to acknowledge the connection between leadership standards and how they apply in the unique setting of the school system led National Board Cohort. According to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, “Leaders should possess a positive approach to leadership that is optimistic, emphasizes development and strengths, and focuses on human potential” (NBPEA, 2015. p. 3). This can be applied to the system sponsored national board cohort as means of developing and retaining in-service teachers.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers are leaving the profession (Alabama, 2022; Fischer et al., 2022). Therefore, it is more important than ever for school systems to developed ways to support and retain the teachers who are already in the field to encourage them to stay (Ingersoll et al., 2020; Hornick-

Lockard, 2021). Local national board cohorts are being developed as one means of providing the experiences necessary to encourage teachers to remain (NBPTS, 2010; Will, 2017). However, leaders are unsure of how to support their teachers to national board certification ((NBPTS, 2010; Will, 2017). Presently there is a gap in the literature regarding the role of leadership in school system sponsored national board cohorts (Martin et al., 2017; Sumowski & Grimes, 2019; Witteveen, 2015). This gap warrants further research to learn how the role of leadership plays into the success of the national board cohort model and which outcomes from participation might be helpful to develop, train, and retain teachers to curtail the present teacher shortage facing school systems in Alabama (Alabama, 2022; Marsee, 2020; Wiggan et. al., 2021).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to address a gap in literature about teachers' perceptions of their participation in the school system sponsored national board cohort. Results of this study will serve as a source of insight into the outcomes teachers report receiving from their participation including whether their participation had any effect on their intentions toward remaining in the field of education and how leadership played a role during their participation in the cohort. These perceptions and responses will serve as a resource for school and school system leaders in Alabama in their continuous quest to support, train, and retain highly qualified teachers in the field.

Conceptual Framework

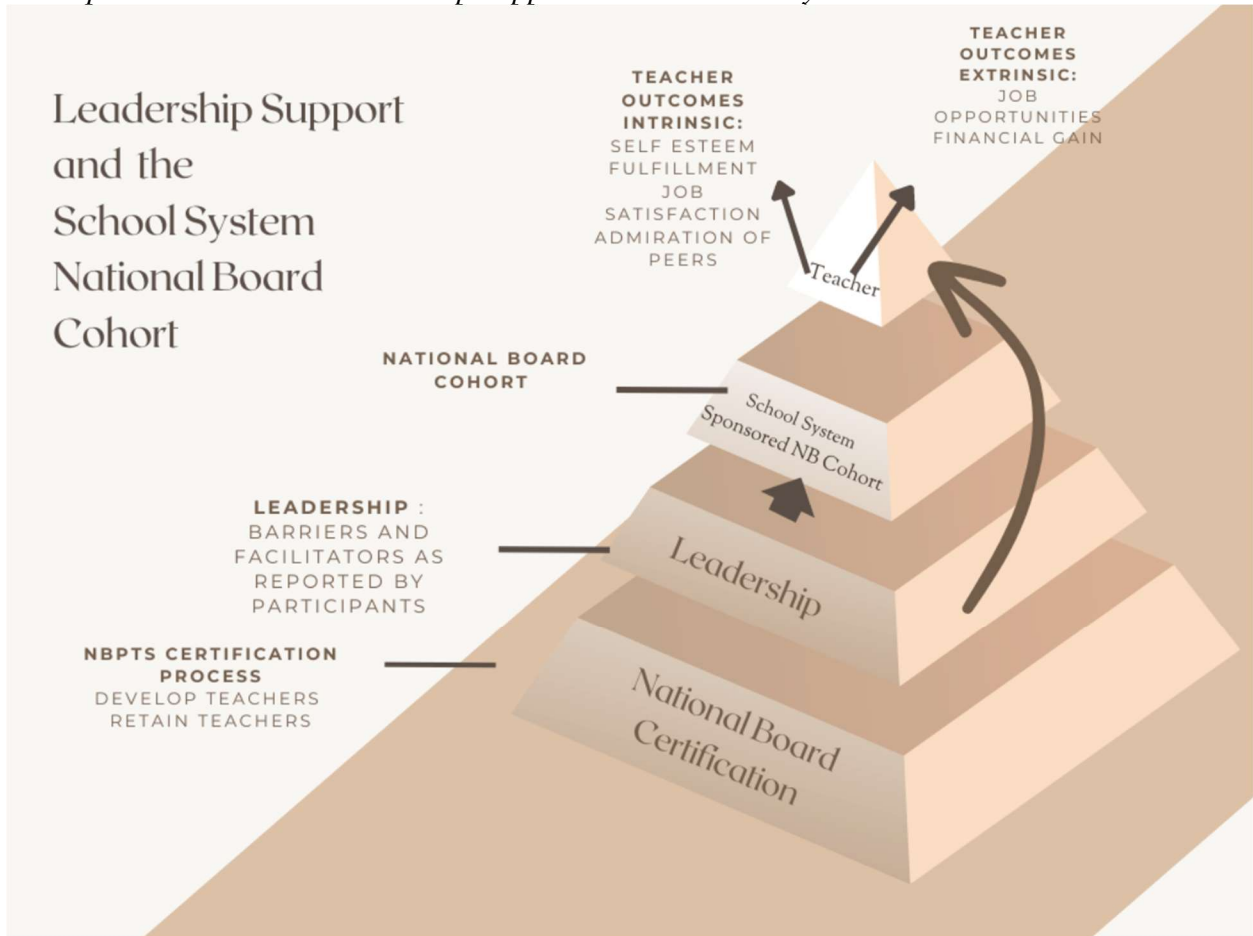
The conceptual framework is based on the literature review. The framework appears as a pyramid. This figure is used as a representation of the literature as it pertains to national board certification, its role in the school system cohort, the role of school and system leadership in the cohort, the teachers' perceptions of the leadership role, and teacher reported outcomes after

participating in the cohort. The pyramid design is in reference to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which has also been used as a framework for understanding teachers' needs (Knowles, 1983; Fisher & Royster, 2016). The foundation of the framework, the national board certification process, serves as its base. National board certification has existed for a long time, more than 35 years (NBPTS, 2023). According to the literature, NBPTS established a certification process that was far more in depth than any state certification process across the country (Cowan & Goldhaber, 2016). The next level of the pyramid is leadership and describes the importance of school and system leadership in supporting teachers through the national board certification process (Ledbetter, 2018). Those facilitators and barriers as reported by teachers are noted in the leadership level of the pyramid. The next level of the pyramid is the school system sponsored cohort. It sits above the leadership level with an arrow driving directly up into this level, because system leaders and school leaders provide the structures and supports that the cohort is built on. The research describes the emergence of school system sponsored national board cohorts across Alabama in the last ten years and how some of those cohorts have been recognized nationally for their accomplishments (ALNBCT Network, 2021; MCPSS, 2023; NBPTS, 2021). The final level of the pyramid represents teacher participants in the cohort, their experiences, and their perceived outcomes. An arrow reaches from leadership around to the teacher level to represent additional supports given directly to teachers from leaders, differentiating these supports from the supports given indirectly through the design and structure of the system sponsored national board cohort. This top tier is where teachers describe their outcomes from the certification process, some of which may align with the Maslow's hierarchy of teacher needs, including the need to attain self-esteem and self-actualization in the field (Knowles, 1983; Fisher & Royster, 2016). Additionally, the literature shows that there is a need for teachers to reach a high level of

satisfaction in their job to remain in the field (Ingersoll et al., 2020; Hornick-Lockard, 2023; Marsee, 2020; Pucella, 2011).

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework: Leadership Support and the School System National Board Cohort



Research Questions

This study explores the following research questions:

- 1) What outcomes do cohort members describe from their participation in the school system sponsored national board cohort?
- 2) What barriers and facilitators did leadership provide to participants while in the cohort?

Research Design

Based on the research available, I chose to utilize a qualitative descriptive case study (Creswell, 2007). The participants were chosen through purposeful sampling through a request for interview, email, and follow-up interviews of participants in one school system led cohort in Alabama (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Schwandt, 2015). These participants were chosen because the school system sponsored national board cohort had been established for a relatively long period of time and was recommended by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards as a well-designed program in Alabama. Voluntary subjects were contacted using a request for interview email. Participants took part in a follow up telephone interview using an interview protocol. Interviews were recorded on a password-protected cellular device. The cellular service on the phone was turned off when the phone was being used to record interviews and was not reinstated until the interview was put in BOX and deleted from the phone. Interviews were then coded for themes.

The study investigated the participants' personal meaning constructed from their "lived experiences" during their participation in a school system sponsored national board cohort in Alabama. This study allowed the researcher to gain insight into the perceived outcomes that teachers felt they received from their participation in the certification process through a system led cohort. The information collected included which aspects of the system cohort leadership support served as facilitators or barriers on their journey through the national board certification process (Patton, 2002; Schwandt, 2015).

Assumptions

Research supports the link between leadership support and the effect it has on school (campus) culture (Peterson & Deal, 2016). I assumed, therefore, that the need for leadership

support would apply within the context of the national board cohort. I also assumed that meaning and knowledge were gleaned by participants' lived experiences and that the participants were honest in sharing their perceptions and experiences.

Delimitations

There were certain limitations to the study which included the following statements. The time of the study is limited to perceptions gathered during a specific period (August 2024). The location of the study is limited to participants who are practicing educators in Alabama. The study sample was comprised of K-12 public school educators who are members of the same school system national board cohort. Only subjects who agreed to participate and completed the consent process were included in this study. Cohort participants' perceptions may have been affected by previous interactions and experiences with school system leadership sponsored professional development. Cohort participants may have previously received state sponsored grant support which may impact study results.

Significance of Study

The significance of this study is that few studies have been conducted examining teachers' perceptions of their participation in a school system led national board cohort. There are many that have examined teacher cohorts as models in higher education (Sumowski & Grimes, 2019). There are also studies that have established a connection between leadership support and teacher productivity and self-efficacy (Peterson & Deal, 2016). There is a gap, however, in research concerning leadership support of teachers in national board cohorts. The goal of the study was to gain insight into the perceptions of the participants. This information could be shared with school and system leaders affording them greater knowledge in how to create supportive and successful school system national board cohorts and whether this cohort

model might be a useful tool for them to use as a viable means for developing and retaining in-service teachers.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined for the purpose of clarity and use in this dissertation:

1. National Board of Professional Teaching Standards – (NBPTS), established in 1987, is a nationally recognized, voluntary program that assesses quality teaching practices using portfolios, video with reflection, and assessments. Twenty-five states offer financial incentives for certified teachers (Cowan & Goldhaber, 2016).
2. National board cohort – a group of teachers (often twenty-five or fewer) pursuing national board certification as an organized community of learners that has been established with parameters and supports by the participating teachers' local school system (Ledbetter, 2018).
3. Positive outcomes – all positive outcomes from participation in the cohort, both the extrinsic and intrinsic features, characteristics, traits, properties, qualities, and actions that teachers name during the interview process (Croshaw, 1999; Fawcett, 2011; NPBEA, 2015).
 - Building (or school) leadership – campus administration in direct professional supervision of the national board cohort member (Wallace, 2023).
 - School system leadership – (can be used interchangeably with school district leadership) the central office leadership organization for a given school system or district, whether a county-wide or city-wide entity; the organizational level governing over the school building leadership level; the highest level of organization leadership in the school operating system or district (Wallace, 2023).

- Facilitators – a person or thing that makes an action or process easy or easier (Merriam-Webster, 2016).
- Barriers – obstacles or hurdles; something that makes progress more difficult (Merriam-Webster, 2016).
- Perceive – to attain awareness or an understanding of; to become aware through the senses (Merriam-Webster, 2016).
- Teacher shortage – Over 50.7 million students are enrolled in public schools across the United States, reflecting a need for 1.5 million new teachers (Wiggan, 2020).
- Self-Actualization – at the peak of Maslow’s hierarchy are the self-actualization needs; self-actualizing people are self-aware, concerned with personal growth, less concerned with the opinion of others, and interested in fulfilling their potential (Coble, 1973).

Organization of the Study

This study was organized into five chapters. In Chapter 1, I defined the topic of study, provided supporting literature, explained the purpose of the study, stated the research questions, and overviewed the research design. In Chapter 2, I provided more selected literature and research relevant to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the historical perspective of how the National Board came into existence, its certification in Alabama, and the conceptual framework was discussed in detail and connected and connected to the literature, which supported the development of the study. In Chapter 3, I included details of the methodology, a description of the cohort featured in this case study, and the ethical

considerations of the study. The data and findings were presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 concludes the study and considers recommendations for future practice and research.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Overview

The literature review begins by discussing the present teacher shortage, the subsequent need to retain in-service teachers, and explains how national board certification in the school system cohort might be useful in teacher retention (Wiggan, 2021; Hornick-Lochard, 2021). The review explores what motivates adult learning in relation to teacher hierarchy of needs (Knowles, 1983; Fischer & Royster, 2016). The literature review continues with the historical background of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, the changes that have evolved in the certification process since its inception (NBPTS, 2021; NEA, 2015), and the specifics regarding national board certification for teachers in Alabama (Crane, 2018). The review continues with how leadership standards have evolved since the national board certification process first began (Smith & Ellett, 2000) and then shifts to examine the expectations of school system leadership to support and retain a highly qualified faculty to develop professional capacity in school personnel (NBPEA, 2015). It examines the role that school system leaders have historically had in the national board certification process and how specific school systems have reported that the certification process increased teacher retention.

Teacher Shortage and Retention

School systems in the United States are faced with a teacher shortage. Alabama is no exception (Morgan, 2024). The Education Commission of the States compiled and shared a descriptive report from all 50 states and the District of Columbia regarding teacher recruitment and retention (Fischer et al., 2022). They reported that forty states and the District of Columbia have published teacher shortage data in the past five years (Fischer et al., 2022). According to a study by Ingersoll et al. (2018) analyzing thirty years of federal teacher data, the nationwide

teacher turnover rate increased by twenty-seven percent between 1990 and 2018. Alabama alone has published three reports regarding state teacher shortages in the last five years. In the Teacher Workforce Recruitment and Retention Evaluation from the Alabama Evaluation Commission, the issue of most importance regarding teacher retention demand is the high number of new teachers who leave the profession (Morgan, 2024). This report states that new teachers in Alabama leave the field of education at a rate of fifty percent within their first three years of teaching, placing Alabama higher than the national average of forty-four percent (Morgan, 2024). According to this data, the state lost \$652 million dollars over a ten-year period by not retaining teachers. Also included in the same 2022 report are the state-funded programs to recruit and retain teachers, noting that the state paid \$13,712,908 in stipends to retain accomplished national board certified teachers in the profession (Morgan, 2024).

Figure 2

Data Table from Alabama Teacher Workforce Recruitment and Retention Evaluation

Entry Year	Exit Year												First-Time Teachers	3-Year Exits
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021		
2010	189	767	283	123	78	59	49	52	44	43	32	34	2,124	58%
2011		195	549	213	125	81	57	42	33	44	22	33	1,753	55%
2012			312	773	335	244	118	84	71	96	50	54	2,811	51%
2013		\$ 10,296,000		358	825	405	235	129	100	118	75	58	3,041	52%
2014			\$ 12,096,000		324	933	400	257	116	119	76	95	3,125	53%
2015				\$ 13,356,000		311	899	366	286	180	97	110	3,065	51%
2016					\$ 14,841,000		359	933	414	300	88	123	3,141	54%
2017						\$ 14,922,000		361	854	428	194	172	3,036	54%
2018							\$ 14,940,000		359	1015	347	322	3,291	52%
2019								\$ 14,643,000		415	633	494	3,486	
2020									\$ 16,722,000		165	782	2,863	
2021										\$ 10,305,000		309	4,033	
													35,769	
	3-Year Loss	1,144	1,344	1,484	1,649	1,658	1,660	1,627	1,858	1,145	1,585			

(Alabama, 2022)

In a recent article by Hornick-Lockard on the importance of recruiting, hiring, and retaining highly qualified teachers, the researcher claimed, “Retaining teachers is less costly than hiring, and new teachers who receive support and mentoring or participate in development programs tend to stay in the profession,” (Hornick-Lockard, 2023, p. 1). Additional research on the topic also stated that increased student enrollment and decreased teacher preparation program enrollment have made this issue an acute one (Jordan, 2020). This makes it important for school system leadership to retain and develop the highly qualified faculty they employ (Wiggan, 2020). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (McFarland et al., 2018) there are over 50.7 million students enrolled in the nation’s public schools, which is an all-time high. At this rate, within the next decade an estimated 1.5 million new teachers will be needed (Wiggan, 2020), making teacher retention a critical issue. Increased student enrollment and high teacher turnover add to the necessity to train and retain highly qualified teachers. Some common solutions regarding teacher retention include improving mentoring programs (Ingersoll et al., 2020; Hornick-Lockard, 2023; Alabama, 2022) and creating professional learning communities (Jordan, 2020; Hornick-Lockard, 2023; Alabama, 2022). Supporting teachers through national board certification was named in two studies (Alabama, 2022; Fisher et al., 2022). In an additional study of national board certification conducted by Horoi and Bhai (2018), the authors assert the following:

The value of NBPTS teachers is substantial, and importantly offsets the certification wage premium. Policies that make use of NBPTS certification whether to identify or retain good teachers, are an economical way of raising the quality of instruction that may potentially provide large, long-run economic and social benefits. (p.1200)

In an article by Marsee (2020) in the Kentucky Teacher, he describes a statewide initiative for developing school system led national board teacher certification support programs. He states, “Certification was designed to develop, retain, and recognize accomplished teachers and to generate ongoing improvement in schools” (p.6). One system leader interviewed also stated, “It’s [the cohort’s] unifying and retention is also affected. National board teachers have a tendency to stay” (Marsee, 2020, p. 5). Another study conducted by Pucella (2011) regarding national board certification and burnout levels in educators reported that national board certified teachers reported lower levels of burnout. In fact, according to that study, over 70% of the teachers polled reported positive outcomes. These reported outcomes included: becoming an NBCT made a difference in their commitment to their school, becoming an NBCT renewed their interest in teaching, the status of NBCT provided additional rewards and recognitions, and recognition of accomplishments in the classroom through the NBPTS process has improved their outlook on teaching (Pucella, 2011).

Teacher Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow first introduced his hierarchy of needs in 1943 when he wrote about human motivation stating that humans are motivated by goal accomplishment and that they must satisfy the lowest level of needs before moving up to the higher-level needs. He further asserted that individuals must first satisfy their basic physiological needs, such as food, water, and shelter, before moving on to satisfy the next level of safety needs which include personal safety, monetary security, resources, employment, and property. Once this is satisfied, the individual can proceed with satisfying the need for love and belonging through friends and companionship. The next level is that of esteem, which takes the form of self-esteem, respect, status, and recognition. The final level is self-actualization, which occurs when the individual wants to

become the best they can be (Knowles, 1983). In the last two decades, there has been a renewed interest in Maslow's theory with a focus on contemporary issues. Maslow's hierarchy has been used as a framework for understanding teachers' needs (Fisher & Royster, 2016). According to additional research considering new teacher learning, there is a connection between developing professional identity, self-efficacy, and actualization as strategies which can help retain new entrants in the teaching profession (McDowell et al., 2014). Both studies lead to the assertion that when teachers reach the highest levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, they feel more satisfaction with their careers, which in turn may lead to higher teacher retention rates (Fisher & Royster, 2016; McDowell et al., 2014).

Figure 3

Maslow's Hierarchy and the Hierarchy of Teacher Needs



(Knowles, 1983; Fisher & Royster, 2016)

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards

The federal report entitled, *A Nation at Risk*, was published in 1983. Since that time, the education system has been on a quest to better prepare students to meet the needs of a rapidly

changing world (A Nation, 1983). The report was commissioned by President Ronald Reagan and published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (A Nation, 1983). It is the result of an eighteen month study. The commission determined that the American education system was being called upon to provide solutions to personal, social, and political problems that other organizations could not solve and that these demands were exacting a toll on American schools and colleges (A Nation, 1983). This report stated that the United States had fallen in the world view from being the premier producers of steel, automobiles, and tools and was being replaced by foreign producers and products (A Nation, 1983). It also reported that knowledge, learning, information, and skilled intelligence are the new raw materials of international commerce and that the United States would have to reform the educational system to be successful in the new information age (A Nation, 1983). The report listed the following indicators that the nation was at risk:

- An international comparison of student achievement placing American students last in seven of nineteen tests (A Nation, 1983).
- Twenty-three million American adults were found to be functionally illiterate (A Nation, 1983).
- 13% of seventeen-year-olds in the United States were found to be functionally illiterate, with minority youth having as high as a 40% rate of functional illiteracy (A Nation, 1983).
- The average achievement scores of high school students were lower than they had been in twenty-three years before the study (A Nation, 1983).
- More than half of the identified gifted students' abilities did not match their achievement tests in schools (A Nation, 1983).

- The College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) showed a steady decline in scores from 1963 to 1980, reflecting an average verbal score of fifty points lower and an average mathematics score of forty points lower over the same span of time (A Nation, 1983).
- College Board achievement tests showed a decline in both physics and English (A Nation, 1983).
- The number of students demonstrating superior achievement (scores greater than 650) dramatically declined (A Nation, 1983).
- The national assessment of science reflected a steady decline in scores (A Nation, 1983).
- Between 1975 and 1980, the enrollment in remedial mathematics courses in public four-year colleges increased by 72% (A Nation, 1983).
- The average tested achievement of students graduating from college had dropped (A Nation, 1983).
- Business and military leaders reported an increase in the need for remedial education and training programs in basic skills including reading, writing, spelling, and computation (A Nation, 1983).

The report came out at a time when the demand was increasing for highly skilled workers in new fields such as computers, laser technology, robotics, and technology driven industry such as health care, food processing, and maintaining sophisticated scientific equipment (A Nation, 1983). The Commission went on to describe in detail the shortfalls in the expectations for student learning and teacher preparations (A Nation, 1983). These can be surmised from the Commission's following recommendations:

- State and local high school graduation requirements must be strengthened with more years of core subject instruction and two years of foreign language instruction (A Nation, 1983).
- High school English teaching must include an ability to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and use what they read to write well-organized papers, (A Nation, 1983).

The report set off a series of local, state, and federal reform efforts as it called for more academic rigor and new standards of student achievement (McGrath, 2017; Saatcioglu et. al., 2021; Wang, 2020). The report also asked for teacher preparation programs and salaries to be evaluated. Teaching standards were changed to meet the demands for more highly effective teaching practices, and accountability was added to the equation (Gardner, 1983; McGrath, 2017).

The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy assembled a task force to search for solutions to the demands set forth in A Nation at Risk (1983). This task force was comprised of educators, teachers' associations, business leaders, and policy makers (McGrath, 2017). Their findings resulted in the publication of A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century, an essay calling for more rigorous standards for teaching and insisting on the professionalization of the teaching workforce (Carnegie, 1986). A Nation Prepared became known as the Carnegie Report. This report was responsible for the establishment of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) (McGrath, 2017). NBPTS was created to meet the government's demands for more highly effective teaching practices. The idea was to better equip teachers so they could better prepare students to be competitive in the global workforce (Carnegie, 1986; Gardner, 1986; McGrath, 2017). The Carnegie Report claimed that if the United States was to remain a competitive democracy with a high wage economy in the world, then some meaningful

changes needed to take place (Gardner, 1986; Carnegie, 1986). The report called for increased achievement levels for *all* students, including minorities and students with disabilities, and demanded a well-educated teaching workforce. In addition, the report called for an increase in the number of minority teachers for restructuring schools and for redefining teaching as a career. Additionally, it demanded strengthening teacher preparedness by requiring a bachelor's degree in the arts and sciences and higher expectation standards for teaching. The suggested solution was a new national teacher certification standard in the form of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (Carnegie, 1986).

Additional political pressures for educational reform occurred in 2002 when the No Child Left Behind Act was passed, calling for all students to reach grade level proficiency by the end of each school year (Heise, 2017). Schools were held accountable for their progress based on student performance data. Educators were presented with a new set of curriculum standards that were covered a large range of more specific targets than the previous, more broad achievement standards (Heise, 2017). Eventually, when it was time to reauthorize NCLB, the federal government chose to instead transform it into (the) Every Student Succeeds Act in 2016 (Brenchley et. al., 2015; Heise, 2017). The primary difference being that NCLB created federal expectations while, with ESSA, states were once again given more autonomy over their educational systems. Under ESSA, each state had the right to develop its own standards, criteria for mastery, and standardized assessments as long as those plans fell under the larger umbrella of the national guidelines (Heise, 2017).

The Every Student Succeeds Act required that teachers proved themselves to be highly qualified, but no national norms were ever agreed upon for highly qualified status. Each state was left to update their teacher certification standards (Heise, 2017). Some states opted to accept

a teacher's national board certification as proof of their highly qualified teaching status (NBPTS, 2022). By 2019, forty-three states followed suit and allowed national board certified teachers to use that credential as a basis to be accepted as highly qualified teachers (NBPTS, 2022).

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) emerged in 1987. As described previously, the establishment of NBPTS was a direct result of the demands set forth in the Carnegie Report of 1986. The committee wanted to establish a national standard much like law, medicine, and other professional fields followed (Carnegie, 1986). NBPTS was established as an independent, nonprofit organization working toward providing highly accomplished teaching practices for the benefit of all students (NEA, 2015). Since its inception, the NBPTS mission focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning by providing highly rigorous professional development standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. In addition, it provided a national voluntary system that certified teachers who met these standards. The organization advocated educational reforms to integrate national board certification in America. It also capitalized on the leadership potential and expertise of national board certified teachers (NBPTS, 2021).

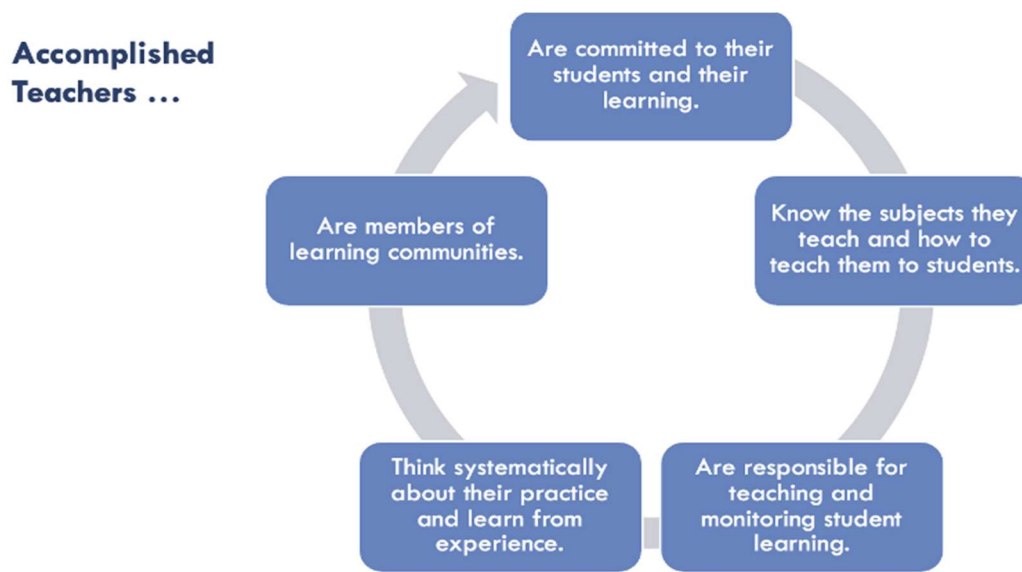
NBPTS was built on the following five core propositions that all accomplished teachers should know and be able to do:

- Accomplished teachers were committed to their students and learning.
- Accomplished teachers knew the subjects they taught and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Accomplished teachers were responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

- Accomplished teachers thought systematically about their practice and learned from experience.
- Accomplished teachers were members of learning communities (Hamilton, 2015; NBPTS 2021).

Figure 4

What Every Teacher Should Know and Be Able to Do (NBPTS, 2021)



National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2020

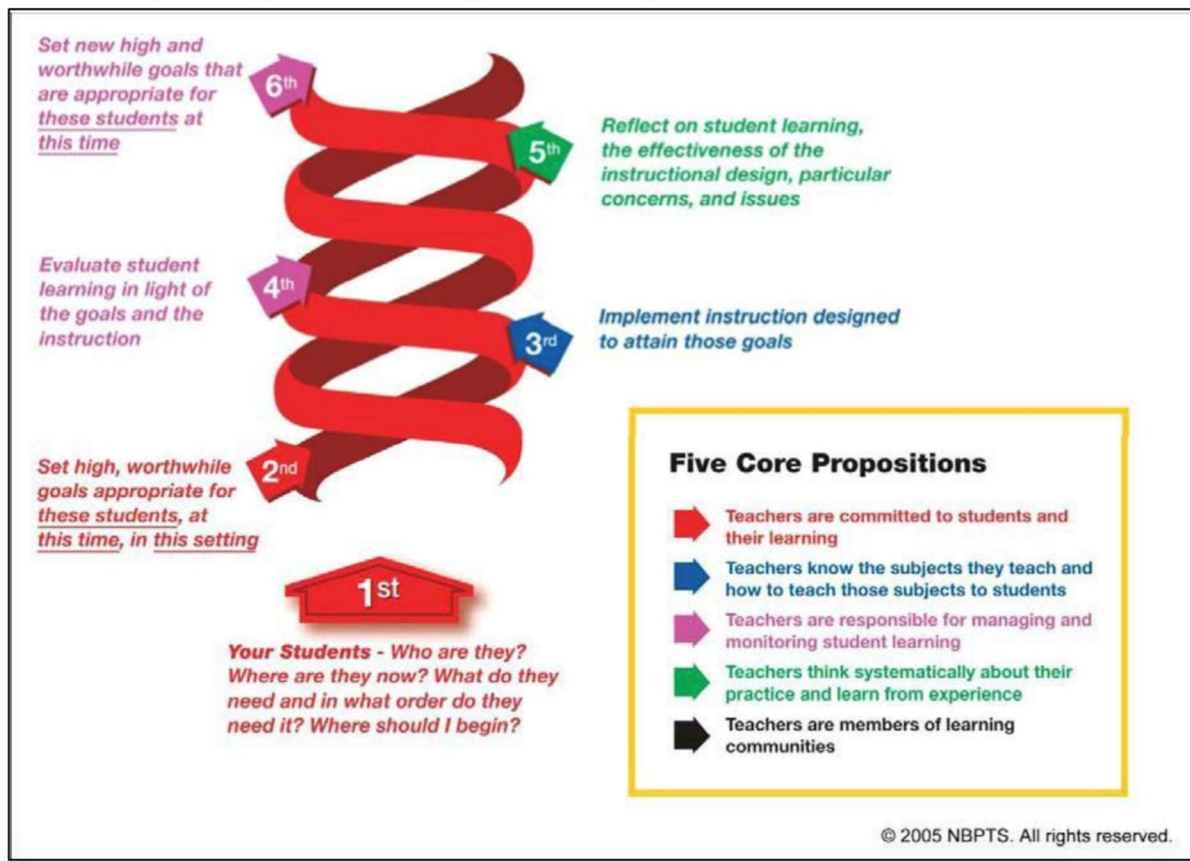
By the end of 1987, the NBPTS established a certification process that was far more in depth than any state certification process across the country (Cowan & Goldhaber, 2016). Teachers wanting to obtain their national board certification had to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts and sciences degree from an accredited four-year college or university. They had to complete three years’ teaching in a classroom before starting the certification process. Teachers were required to submit a portfolio containing video recordings of instruction with students and to catalog work samples with written commentary explaining how these samples exemplified the

profile of accomplished teaching (Fawcett, 2011). Portfolio submission included assessments with written commentary, reflections analyzing their teaching practices, and documentation of how teachers worked as professionals in educational partnerships with families, colleagues, and professional organizations. After submitting their portfolios, the candidates were required to complete a series of computer-based tests regarding content knowledge with pedagogical scenarios. The tests were unique to each category of teaching. It was estimated to take between 200 and 400 hours for an individual to complete the national board certification process (NBPTS Mission & History, 2021; Spires, 2020).

Teacher evidence submitted follows a double helix model (see Figure 3). According to the Profile of Accomplished Teaching (NBPTS Profile, 2019). “The Architecture of Accomplished Teaching Helix shown below uses a double spiral to illustrate the carefully woven, upward-spiraling nature of accomplished teaching, wherein knowledge of students, commitment to goals, and practice of instruction, analysis, and reflection—as defined by the Five Core Propositions—develop at six closely linked stages” (p. 5).

Figure 5

Architecture of Accomplished Teaching (NBPTS Profile, 2019)



As previously stated, some states accepted a teacher’s highly qualified status through their national board certification (NBOTS, 2022). Even with this allowance for highly qualified status, only about half of these states were rewarding their national board certified teachers with an annual monetary stipend. Each state’s legislature governed public education within their borders and, as such, determined how and if they would reward teachers with a stipend; therefore, these benefits varied from state to state (NBPTS, 2022).

As of 2019, twenty-seven states compensated their national board certified teachers with an annual monetary stipend. The range of compensatory value varied. For example, Kansas, North Dakota, and Oklahoma awarded \$1,000 each year to national board certified teachers during the life of their certification; however, Alabama and Hawaii awarded \$5,000 each year to

their national board certified teachers. In addition, Arkansas applied a sliding scale based on the level of poverty in the school district where the national board-certified teachers worked. They paid \$2,500 per year in the most affluent school districts, and up to \$10,000 per year for teachers in the most impoverished districts.

Some states paid bonuses based on a percentage of the teacher's pay. For example, Nevada paid a 5% annual salary increase and Delaware paid 12% annual salary increase for the life of the certificate. Forty-six states offered a connection to state licensure with national board certification. Twenty-two states offered support for board certification fees; however, this support varied vastly in description. Four states offered a chance for competitive scholarships. Thirteen states offered partial payment of fees, some demanding repayment if the candidate did not qualify. The other five offered payment of all fees or repayment of all fees upon certification (NBPTS, 2022).

Completing the national board process was expensive for teachers. When the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards was established in 1987, teachers completed the certification process independently and paid \$2,500 to submit their portfolio and take their exams. According to a study outlining the changes in the certification process, the changes made to the NBPTS process in 2014 were financed in part by a \$3.7 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Will, 2017). This grant was offered in coordination with The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which provided \$2.5 billion in funding to states and districts for teacher professional development (Will, 2017).

This shift opened the door to making national board certification a more collaborative process as grant money was used to support teacher professional development. In response to ESSA, NBPTS released guidance to states and districts to support more national board

certification through bonuses, leadership opportunities, and mentor and induction programs. At last, national board cohorts began to form and become established as a means of delivering professional development to teachers. These most recent changes encouraged states and districts to create support cohorts for teachers seeking national board certification (Will, 2017).

During the original certification model, the national board certification process was to be completed within the same calendar year. This made it challenging for many to achieve (Lieberman, 2002; Will, 2017). The process was revised in 1994 to include six portfolio entries and four exam components but remained a one-year process. It continued to cost participants \$2,500. If they failed to qualify on the first attempt, they were required to pay the fee again and resubmit the components.

In 2001, the process was further updated to include four portfolio components and six parts to the exam process. It remained a one-year process costing an individual \$2,500 to submit (Will, 2017). After fifteen years, it became clear that the one-year process and hefty price tag were making national board certification less appealing than it once seemed (Will, 2017).

The length of time it takes to certify, the delivery method for materials, and the cost of the process has evolved over the last thirty-six years (NBPTS, 2020; Will, 2017). Many of these changes were the result of changing technology and participants' demand for more support throughout the process (NBPTS, 2020; Will, 2017). Likewise, over time, the way teachers pursued national board certification changed.

Initially, teachers certified independently by submitting a body of work through the mail (NBPTS, 2010; NEA, 2015). During the last thirty-five years, technology spread across the country and teachers connected to the national board more easily. Teachers now submit components through an online portal (NBPTS, 2021). Support networks began to emerge across

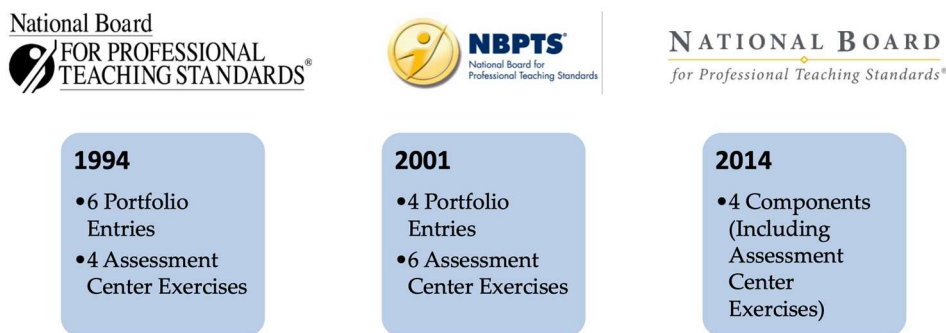
the United States over the years. These networks were operated at the state level and managed resources and fund dispersal for teachers as they certified.

Teachers connected to other teachers pursuing the certification process. They looked to other previously certified teachers as a resource (Crane, 2018; Berg, 2020; NBPTS, 2022) and resulted in a growth in state level NBPTS networks, Figure 2: National Board Networks by State (NBPTS, 2019). With the emergence of state networks, individual school system cohorts have formed giving teachers further support at a local level (Croshaw, 1999; Fawcett, 201; NBPTS, 2022; Pawlas, 2001).

Figure 6

History of Revisions to National Board Certification Process

History of Revisions to National Board Certification process



(Will, 2017)

National Board of Professional Teaching Standards records note that only twenty-five percent of the teachers who attempted national board certification from 1987 to 1997 achieved certification (NBPTS, 2021). NBPTS worked to overhaul the process to a more simplified approach, hoping to encourage more teachers to apply. Meanwhile, teachers were asking for more support. State and local bodies began establishing programs of instruction, mentoring, and

some financial incentives for teachers. These were made available through the national board website by state (NBPTS, 2021).

Research describing the need for increased support for teachers was growing, as well (Pershey, 2001). Support efforts began nationally in 1997 with 912 nationally certified teachers. By the close of 1999, NBPTS reported 4,804 certified teachers. Wolfson (1999) published a paper describing the success of newly established networks of support for candidates. By 2010, the United States was slipping into a recession and most states were in proration. Many states found themselves unable to pay the annual stipend promised to their national board certified teachers. This proved to be an additional deterrent for some teachers (Cowan & Goldhaber, 2016).

The most recent overhaul of the national board certification process occurred in 2014 (Will, 2017). This ideation brought the certification process up to current standards. The national board submission now consisted of four components. There was only one assessment center exercise, and the fee was reduced to \$1,900. The cost was broken into four distinct payments. These payments were assessed for each of the four components including the assessment. Teachers were allowed up to three years to complete the certification process. They could retake individual components while retaining their scores in other portions previously passed. This version of the process allowed teachers to increase their scores and allowed them more flexibility in reaching their certification goals (NBPTS, 2015; Will, 2017).

Since NBPTS is a national organization, national board networks were established as a smaller organizational structure that could be used to support candidates. According to the NBPTS online database, national board networks were designed to support candidates by state and specialty group (NBCT, 2020). According to the database, there are seventy-five networks

across thirty-nine states, about one-third of these networks are associated with an education association or organization, fifty percent of them are statewide networks, fifty percent of them are regional networks, and three nationwide networks were created to support specific subgroups: the National Board Network for Accomplished Minoritized Educators (NAME), the Bureau of Indian Educational Board Certified Teachers, and the National Educators Association NBCT (National Board Certified Teachers) caucus (NBCT, 2020). Still, according to NBPTS data, there are currently seventy-five support networks across thirty-nine states. Approximately one-third of these networks are associated with an education association or organization, about half are sponsored statewide, and about half are district or regional cohort models (NBPTS, 2021).

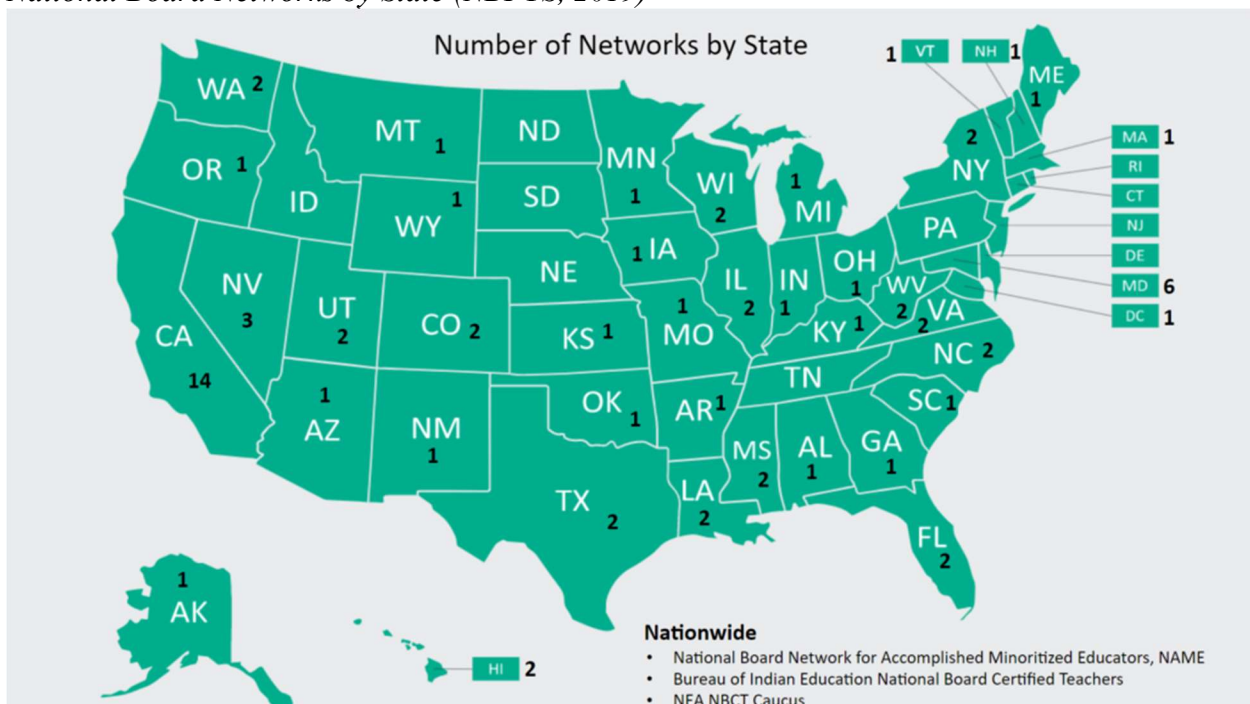
The emergence of national board network support after the 2014 revision by NBPTS allowed for states to relay information to their teachers, highlighting the monetary benefits their state was giving national board certified teachers. The networks became a presence in social media and provided a connection between the national organization, national board certified teachers, and individual states (NBPTS, 2019). National board networks were established and promoted as a platform for delivering information to teachers wishing to pursue certification. The goal of these networks was to give teachers more support toward certification. Even after NBPTS had established networks in over half of the state, teachers were not certifying in any increased significance. The idea behind the network was sound, but the method of support remained distant and disconnected from teachers pursuing certification (Will, 2017).

In 2004, the Washington Initiative Report was published, noting the supports provided by the state of Washington's national board network over a three-year time span. This initiative allowed for what they called a state-level cohort to be put in place to support teachers through

the national Board process (Stokes et al., 2004). The report was presented to school district leaders with two aims: 1) increase the number of national board certified teachers in Washington (state) by offering teachers scholarships and systematic support as they prepared their application portfolios, and 2) develop a network of national board certified teachers (NBCTs) as leaders and to support their roles as change agents in local schools and districts (Stokes et. al., 2004).

Figure 7

National Board Networks by State (NBPTS, 2019)



Some of the earliest documented national board cohorts were established in 1998 by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to fund The Charlotte Collaborative Project. Based on the study, we know that this school district was large and had a high concentration of students with low socioeconomic status. The system was having difficulty finding and retaining highly qualified teachers (Anderson et. al., 2004).

The Charlotte Collaborative Project, a multifaceted initiative, was designed to improve teaching practices and student learning by helping teachers (Anderson et al., 2004). The study

described a cohort aimed to support teachers in the twelfth largest school district in the nation to earn their national board certification. The organization supported over 2,300 candidates to national board certification in Charlotte-Mecklenberg (Anderson et al., 2004). According to the authors, “This project was designed to be a prototype for future organizations wishing to foster the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards’ objectives” (Anderson et al., 2004, p. 108).

Another early documented cohort model appeared in 2010 in Montgomery County, Maryland. This study documents the results from a ten-year long districtwide coalition aimed to improve teaching through national board certification (NBPTS, *Profiles in Excellence*, 2010). The school system aligned their core values with those of the NBPTS to allow teaching standards to extend to national board certification standards. They increased the academic rigor required in high school for graduation. They focused on encouraging national board certified teachers through financial incentives and support. At the end of the decade, they boasted the highest graduation rate in the nation among large school districts as identified in the *Education Week* national report, “Diplomas Count, 2010,” and they outperformed all other Maryland districts that served students with similar family incomes at all grade levels (NBPTS, *Profiles in Excellence*, 2010). Statistics from each of these studies showed that the number of teachers certifying in those school systems increased under the support of their cohorts than was experienced without those supports (Anderson et. al., 2004; NBPTS, 2020).

The literature documents a call for system leaders to support national board teacher certification. For example, in the early part of the 21st century, J.M. Lieberman addressed school district leaders at the American Association of School Administrators conference and the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration calling for school administrators

to support teachers through the NBPTS process (Lieberman, 2002). In a similar fashion, a paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Rural Education Association in New Mexico in 2001. In this paper, survey results were shared that consisted of principal supports provided during the national board certification process. Almost one-third of the teachers stated that they had no support from their building principal; however, others reported that they received the following: words of encouragement, release time or less duty, public recognition, use of school equipment, and letters of recommendation. They also shared that these forms of support were highly motivating to them in finishing the process (Lieberman, 2002). While each of these publications does not specifically use the wording *cohort model*, they document early discussions for leadership support of the national board certification process during national meetings of school system leaders.

The state of Kentucky, when faced with the need to transform teaching, developed a pilot program. In this program, the state vowed to support schools who would develop accomplished teachers through national board certification (Marsee, 2020). In a short time, the two school districts, Monroe and Menifee Counties, enrolled in the pilot program and created cohorts to support their teachers. Teachers from twenty schools across the two districts participated, resulting in 219 teachers becoming certified, which gave Kentucky the fifth largest class of NBCT's in the nation in 2019 (Marsee, 2020).

In a study conducted by Janet Fawcett (2011), one principal observed a cohort of five teachers on her campus as they completed their national board certification. She followed their journey and examined student data to determine if NBPTS certification had a positive impact on student achievement. In the process, she noted an unexpected finding in her study. That unexpected finding was that all five of the teachers named being a part of the cohort as a

valuable piece in completing the journey. Each one also mentioned that her belief in them gave them the support they needed to finish (Fawcett, 2011).

National Board Certification in Alabama

The progression of how teachers complete their national board certification in Alabama has changed in a similar fashion to the changes described in the earlier literature. When the national board certification process began in 1987, Alabama teachers were pursuing their national board certification alone, paying their fees alone, and submitting every aspect of their portfolios alone (Will, 2015). This is evidenced through the early documentation that no state support network and no national board cohorts existed until the earliest documentation of a state sponsored grant for submission was offered in 2005. A limited number of grants were offered (ALNBCT, 2023). Teachers wishing to compete for the grant sent in a video of themselves teaching with a (mock) write up—what their national board submission would look like. Grant winners earned the prize of full admission fees paid on their behalf. If after submitting to the national board they did not earn it, they had to pay it back (ALNBCT, 2023). Members of the ALNBCT Network are encouraged to participate in Hill Day, a day set aside annually for meeting with state representatives and advocating for NBCT supplements and greater leadership opportunities for national board certified teachers (NBPTS, Hill Day, 2023). This year, the ALNBCT Network advocated for additional funds for teachers working in school districts that serve the highest rate of students receiving free or reduced lunches through the CEP program. School systems in Alabama can qualify for the CEP program if all schools in their system meet the cutoff of 40% or higher free or reduced lunch rate. Once the school system enrolls in CEP, all students will receive free breakfast and lunch (Crane, 2023). Representatives passed an additional \$5,000 stipend for teachers who work in a Community Eligible Provision (CEP)

program school system, giving them a total of \$10,000 in annual NBCT stipend if they teach certain certification areas, which are deemed as areas of high importance:

- Literacy/reading/language arts in elementary grades,
- English as a new language in all grades,
- Math in sixth through twelfth grades,
- Science in sixth through twelfth grades,
- Career and technical education in sixth through twelfth grades,
- Special education in all grades (Crane, 2023).

Alabama has moved to eighth place in the nation in percentage of NBPTS certified teachers since the creation of the AL NBCT Network. The AL NBCT Network hosts an annual conference to bring teachers together for professional development, mentoring, and professional recognition. According to the most recent certification scores released in December of 2023, Alabama now boasts 3,452 national board certified teachers (Alabama, NBPTS, 2023).

Documentation through the AL NBCT website shows that the Alabama National Board Certification Network was formed in 2005, and the network began taking the first steps toward establishing national board cohorts. The first cohorts were created as tools for recruitment and a means of dispensing information (AL NBCT, 2023). There are eleven Regional In-Service Centers in Alabama. These in-service centers were established across the state as centers of support for school system curriculum support and teacher professional development (ALDSE, 2023). The centers are based out of the University of North Alabama, Athens State University, Alabama A & M University, the University of Alabama, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Jacksonville State University, the University of Montevallo, Alabama State University, Auburn University, the University of South Alabama, and Troy University.

Universities were the logical places for the establishment of the first cohort models in the state. The centers established webpages for national board resources. Some offered professional development opportunities to teachers interested in learning more about national board certification. Regional in-service centers at several universities across the state offered summer professional development opportunities as early as June of 2009 (ALSDE, 2023; SARIC, 2021).

By 2021, each in-service center offered support sessions monthly. The national board candidate teachers were directed to register through the state's professional development platform. These sessions were open to any teacher working on their certification. They also provided links to scholarship opportunities, mentors, and access to in-service leadership as troubleshooters. While these supports became popular, there was no cohort model or any formalized opportunity for teachers to move through the process together (SARIC, 2022). Regional Inservice Centers shied away from sponsoring cohorts, but local school districts did not. Many districts across the state were creating cohort models to support their teachers' national board certification. Mobile County Public Schools, one of the larger school systems in the state, established their cohort in 2015 (MCPSS, 2023). In the same year, Madison City School District established its national board cohort. Before long, they were recognized as the top district in the state in 2017, 2018, and 2019 for the highest number of newly certified teachers (NBPTS, 2021). In April 2021, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards recognized Tuscaloosa City School District, established in 2016, as a nationally accomplished school district for the way it supports its teachers through its National Board Cohort (NBPTS, 2021).

Piedmont City School District established their national board cohort in 2015, and more than 40% of their teachers were national board certified as of June 2021. Additionally, Cullman

City Schools, Homewood City Schools, Oxford School District, and Mountain Brook City Schools boasted more than 20% of their teachers were certified as of June 2021 (Holingsworth, 2019; ALNBCT, 2021; NBPTS, 2022). Some Alabama national board cohorts have earned recognition from the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. Several cohorts were recognized for their high percentage of teachers certified. One was recognized for outstanding support of the cohort based on the means of support they offered through the cohort model (ALNBCT Network, 2021; NBPTS, 2022).

Figure 8

Statistics for Alabama (Alabama, NBPTS, 2023)

Teachers Achieving and Pursuing National Board Certification*				
	New NBCTs in 2021-22**	Maintained NBCTs in 2021-22**	Total NBCTs	Total Currently Pursuing Certification***
AL	189	249	3,452	1,480
Total	2,814	8,064	133,444	29,278

Top Five School Districts	
By number certified in 2022**	By current candidates***
Madison County (14)	Mobile County Public Schools (114)
Mobile County (13)	Huntsville City (66)
Madison City (11)	Baldwin County (63)
Shelby County (11)	Madison County (60)
Baldwin County (8)	Tuscaloosa City (57)

**Source: Data reflects teachers' place of employment as self-reported in the National Board database as of January 23, 2023*

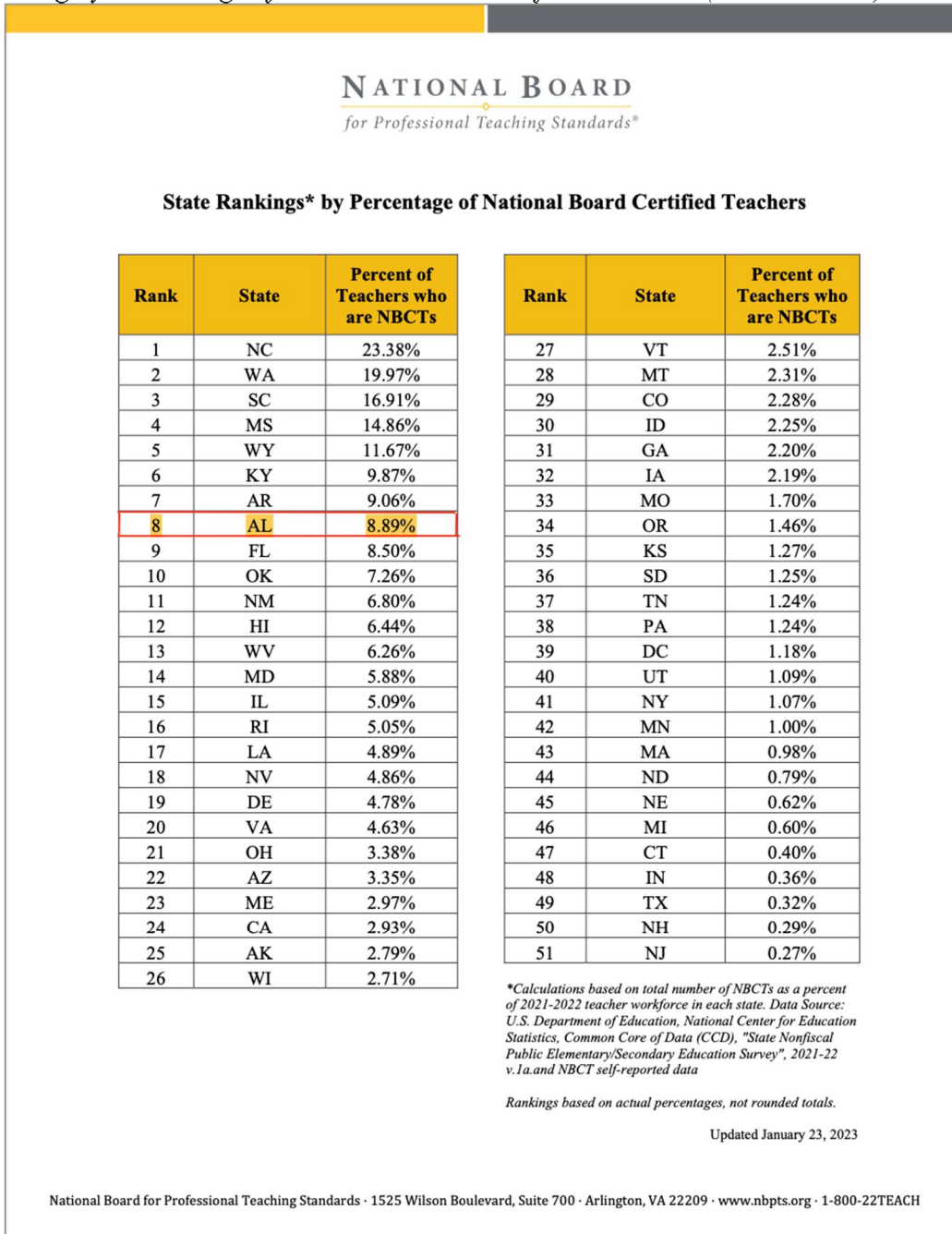
***Total NBCTs certified in December 2022*

****Candidate total reflects all National Board candidates in progress and all first-time applicants who have paid the registration fee in the current assessment cycle as of January 23, 2023*

Each year in December, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards releases score reports to each candidate. Afterwards, NBCT publishes state rankings according to both the percent of national board certified teachers in each state and the number of national board certified teachers in each state (State Rankings, NBPTS, 2023). According to the most recent data from the December 2023 score release, Alabama ranks eighth in the nation in the category of percent of in-service teachers who are national board certified (NBPTS, 2024).

Figure 9

State Ranking by Percentage of National Board Certified Teachers (NBPTS, 2024)



The literature above described the changes in national board certification in Alabama.

The literature will now examine the way adults learn and how this might be applied to national board certification.

Leadership Support and National Board Certification

In the twentieth century, the role of educational leadership saw minor change despite the attempts of reforming the roles of principal and the teacher (Tyack & Honsot, 1982). At the turn of the twenty-first century, researchers described school leadership from 1970 to 2000 as having a leader-centrist perspective, comparing the school to an orchestra that watches and waits as the principal conducts. Since 1970, school leaders have shifted primarily from manager to instructional leader to transformational leader. The same expectations placed on building level administrators are also placed on school system leaders, who are governed by the same policies and leadership standards (Smith & Ellett, 2000).

It was no accident that in 1987, the NPBEA was formed. It was established in response to recommendations contained in the 1987 report of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration. It also coincides with the Carnegie report, *A Nation Prepared*, which set out to create a plan for improving the nation's education system. The initial plan regarding leadership was to reform college preparation programs in educational leadership and develop initiatives that revitalized the field of study by setting national educational leadership standards (Murphy, 1990). In 1994, to prevent duplication, the grant application to the Pew Trusts was amended and designated the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) assuming primary responsibility for the work.

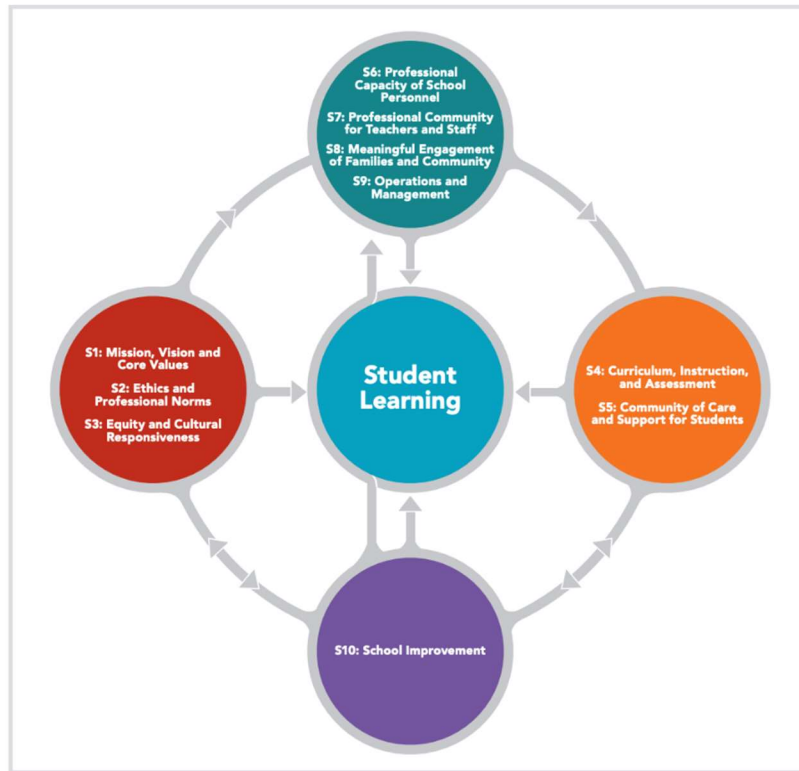
The newly formed Inter-State School Leaders Licensure Consortium, encompassing twenty-four states and members from the associations in the NPBEA, crafted the first set of national standards for school administrators. These came to be known as the ISLLC Standards for School Leaders (Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium, 1996). The ISLLC Standards were subsequently updated in 2008. They planned to draft a set of standards that

reflected the challenges of preparing students to succeed in the twenty-first century. They were comprised of six standards. Each standard began with “An educational leader promotes student success of every student by...” (ISLLC, 2008, p. 3). They covered the topics of shared vision, school culture, resource management, community collaboration, ethics, and understanding the socio-political climate (ISLLC, 2008). These standards remained in effect until 2015.

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) continued to be the national resource for school leadership issues. They decided to take a more significant role in guiding the development of the new Professional Standards for School Leadership, known as the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL). It also formally assumed ownership of the new standards from CCSSO in 2016. The new standards outlined the expectations of school leadership in detail. They applied to all facets of the learning organization. The standards had a clear emphasis on students and student learning. They gave more detail than the last standards, and the details explicitly described what effective leaders should know and be able to do (see Table 1) (NPBEA, 2015). The PSEL address ten standards which focus on improved student outcomes. The figure below describes how school and system leaders can apply these new standards to support teachers and, thereby, support student learning outcomes (NBPEA, 2015).

Figure 10

Relationship of School System Leadership Work to Student Learning



(NPBEA, 2015)

There are two PSEL standards that closely apply to the role of school system leadership in the development of a national board cohort as professional development (NBPEA, 2015).

Therefore, the following standards will be considered for this study: Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel and Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff (NBPEA, 2015). These two standards address the role of school system leadership in supporting teachers (NBPEA, 2015), which could be achieved through a national board cohort. Both standards state that “effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (NBPEA, 2015, pp. 14-15). Standard 6 states that effective leaders must do the following:

- “Recruit, hire, support, develop, and retain effective and caring teachers and other professional staff and form them into educationally effective faculty” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 14).
- “Plan for and manage staff turnover and succession, providing opportunities for effective induction and mentoring of new personnel” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 14).
- “Develop teachers’ and staff members’ professional knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth, guided by understanding of professional and adult learning and development” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 14).
- “Foster continuous improvement of individual and collective instructional capacity to achieve outcomes envisioned for each student” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 14).
- “Deliver actionable feedback about instruction and other professional practice through valid, research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation to support the development of teachers’ and staff members’ knowledge, skills, and practice” (NBPEA, 2015, p.14).
- “Empower and motivate teachers and staff to the highest levels of professional practice and to continuous learning and improvement” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 14).
- “Develop the capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and leadership from other members of the school community” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 14).
- “Promote the personal and professional health, well-being, and work-life balance of faculty and staff” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 14).
- “Tend to their own learning and effectiveness through reflection, study, and improvement, maintaining a healthy work-life balance” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 14).

Standard 7 states that effective leaders must do the following:

- “Develop workplace conditions for teachers and other professional staff that promote effective professional development, practice, and student learning” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 15).
- “Empower and entrust teachers and staff with collective responsibility for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student, pursuant to the mission, vision, and core values of the school” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 15).
- “Establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives pertaining to the education of the whole child; high expectations for professional work; ethical and equitable practice; trust and open communication; collaboration, collective efficacy, and continuous individual and organizational learning and improvement” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 15).
- “Promote mutual accountability among teachers and other professional staff for each student’s success and the effectiveness of the school as a whole” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 15).
- “Develop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among leaders, faculty, and staff to promote professional capacity and the improvement of practice” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 15).
- “Design and implement job-embedded and other opportunities for professional learning collaboratively with faculty and staff ” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 15).
- “Provide opportunities for collaborative examination of practice, collegial feedback, and collective learning” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 15).
- “Encourage faculty-initiated improvement of programs and practices” (NBPEA, 2015, p. 15).

Research suggests that effective adult professionals must continue to learn in ways that are transformative rather than merely informative. Informative learning involves adding to what one already knows, while transformative learning involves ways to deal more effectively with life's complexities (Draco & Severson, 2020). This fits well with the core values of what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do (NBPTS, 2020) and notes distinction between new knowledge, knowledge that elaborates on what is already known, and transformative learning (Draco & Severson, 2020). According to Wallace Foundation research conducted in 2023, successful educational leaders develop their districts and schools as effective organizations that support and sustain the performance of administrators and teachers as well as students. This category of leadership practices has emerged from recent evidence about the nature of learning organizations and professional learning communities and their contribution to staff work and student learning. Such practices assume that the purpose behind organizational cultures and structures is to facilitate the work of organizational members and that the malleability of structures should match the changing nature of the school's improvement agenda. Practices typically associated with this category include strengthening district and school cultures, modifying organizational structures and building collaborative processes. (Wallace, 2023, p. 82). This description of professional learning communities fits well into the narrative of school system sponsored national board cohorts. In addition, the school system leadership may be the organizational leadership of the national board cohort. In this light, perceived organizational support theory can be considered. According to a study of perceived organizational support by Eisenberger et al. (1986), three hundred sixty-two employees, including seventy teachers, completed an exchange ideology questionnaire that measured their beliefs that work effort should depend on the treatment by the organization. Results of that study

revealed that employees often form beliefs concerning the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about employee wellbeing (Eisenberger et al., 1986). While there is a gap in research concerning leadership support of teachers in national board cohorts, several studies link the relationship between leadership support and the effect it has on teachers. For example, leadership support is shown to have a positive effect on school culture. School culture reflects the perception of its teachers. Peterson and Deal (2016), for example, describe in detail the need for leadership support to exist to drive the positive culture of the school. “It is up to school leaders – principals, teachers, and often parents – to help identify, shape, and maintain strong, positive, student-focused cultures. Without these supportive cultures, student learning will slip” (Peterson & Deal, 2016, p. 163).

In another study by Zahed-Babelan et al. (2019), the authors found that supportive instructional leadership positively impacted teachers in several areas. They described how supportive leadership resulted in better work engagement by the teachers and faculty. They also discussed how the school culture was positively impacted by positive instructional support. In addition, they reported that job characteristics showed improvement as the teachers’ perception of supportive instructional leadership improved. Finally, they reported psychological empowerment as a positive product resulting from supportive instructional leadership (Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019)). Bolman and Deal (2005) described culture as the superglue that bonds an organization, unites people, and helps an enterprise accomplish desired ends. Many authors have recognized that leadership was connected to school culture. School leadership has been linked to teachers’ emotional state, and school working conditions and classroom working conditions fed into that emotional state (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Piotrowski, 2016). These studies agreed that the goal of schools was to improve student achievement and that a positive school culture must

be established for that goal to be met. “Teachers’ thoughts and feelings are built based on working conditions. Teachers’ schoolwide practices, their classroom practices, and their engagement in the profession all lead to academic success” (Piotrowsky, 2016, p. 25). Research suggests that leaders who have captured distributed leadership have empowered their teachers, giving them a sense of control, in some part, of the school’s and their own destinies (Sebastian et al., 2016).

Distributed leadership has been described as shared, collaborative, and collective. It has been extended to include principals, teachers, parents, students, and community members and is often team-oriented in nature and inclusive of both formal and informal leadership roles. These conceptualizations of leadership have been known to ignite a positive culture and enthusiasm across a campus and have been most effective when the entire campus is included in some aspect of the transformation (Ohlson et al., 2016; Piotrowski, 2016; Sebastian et al, 2016). The literature on school culture is consistent in its assertion that a shift in culture transformed school organizations, specifically rural schools in poverty showed cultural turnaround improved academic success. Later, the same culture-building was brought to the collegiate cohort level (Reames, 2018). This literature lent itself to the study of leadership support of the national board cohort. Two additional studies that focused on leadership support were conducted in 2017 and 2018 and described using a system thinking approach (self-examination and improvement) to educational leadership. They reported that this form of positive leadership support resulted in positive outcomes for the school (Hayes et al., 2018; Shaked & Shechter, 2020). In this light, the same principles could be applied to positive leadership support and the outcome of the national board cohort experience.

The national board cohort has been likened to a professional development program. In that vein, studies have shown that leadership support gleaned positive results on teacher engagement in professional development programs (Day, 2022). Additional studies have been extended to include professional learning communities. The positive culture built in these platforms had an ultimate positive affect on student achievement (Bayler et al., 2015; Dilmer, 2017; Park et al., 2018). One study with teacher participants from twelve western states who had completed the national board certification process examined national board teachers' perceptions of the impact of effective administrative behaviors on successful completion of national board certification; while this is an older study, it was one of the few that existed that described the teachers' perceptions of which leadership supports were most effective to them (Croshaw, 1999). The findings were aligned with the thirteen constructs of effective leaders and revealed that teacher responses fell under six of those constructs (Croshaw, 1999). Teachers responded that principals who promote change have a positive effect because they saw the principal as the leader of the change who had an active part in the change process. They listed autonomy as a positive factor since the leader had given them the autonomy to determine what they needed and the course they felt they needed to take through the process (Croshaw, 1999). They named the leader as the resource provider since the principal had given them tangible supports such as time off to write, assistance with video equipment, and dedicated meeting places. They named the principal as encourager of collegial relationships since the leader encouraged the group to work together and support each other through the process (Croshaw, 1999). They also named the principal as learner since the principal was willing to be taught about the certification process alongside the teachers. They listed the quality of principal as a listener as a positive attribute

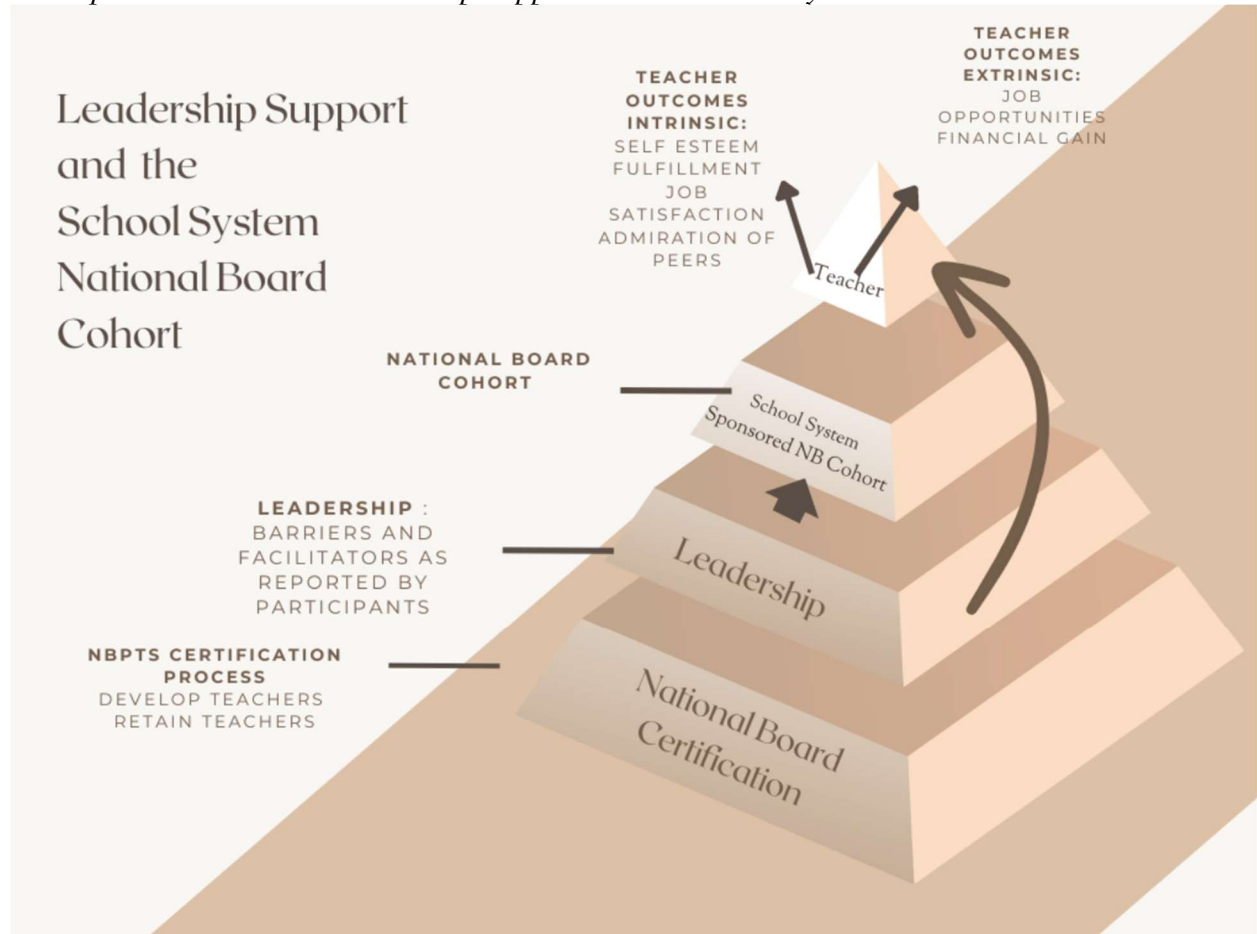
since they reported listening as they worked through the process was an important factor to them (Croshaw, 1999).

Ledbetter (2018) explained her recommendations for what leaders must do to support their national board cohorts. As a national board-certified teacher, Ledbetter polled other certified teachers for their input on what qualities helped them as they completed their national board process. She published the most popular teacher suggestions for how school leaders could support their cohorts, suggesting that leaders could give teachers release time, show a genuine interest in the national board certification process, express a belief in the teacher's ability to complete the process, ask supportive questions, connect candidates with local support, and allow candidates time with their fellow national board certifying colleagues (Ledbetter, 2018). The principal could also establish a school-based cohort of national board certifying teachers and connect candidates with state programs of financial and technical support (Ledbetter, 2018). In another study by Handler et al. (2021), the researchers examined teacher perceptions of the supports they received during national board certification. Working in a group with colleagues was the named most frequently. Additionally, participants named workshops, mentor/mentee pairing, and portfolio reading as valuable supports provided from their school system (Handler et. al., 2021). In another study by Mike Marsee (2020), the researcher examined a pilot program in the state of Kentucky in which school systems committed to supporting their teachers through national board certification. Teachers reported that principal buy in and knowing that they would have a support system had a positive effect on certification (Marsee, 2020).

The Conceptual Framework

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework: Leadership Support and the School System National Board Cohort



The conceptual framework is based on the literature review. The framework appears as a pyramid. This figure is used as a representation of the literature as it pertains to national board certification, its role in the school system cohort, the role of school and system leadership in the cohort, the teachers' perceptions of the leadership role, and teacher reported outcomes after participating in the cohort. The pyramid design is in reference to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which has also been used as a framework for understanding teachers' needs (Knowles, 1983; Fisher & Royster, 2016). According to research, there is a connection between developing professional identity, self-efficacy, and actualization strategies (all which appear at the highest

levels of the hierarchy) which can help retain new entrants in the teaching profession (McDowell et al., 2014). Both studies lead to the assertion that when teachers reach the highest levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, they feel more satisfaction with their careers, which in turn may lead to higher teacher retention rates (Fisher & Royster, 2016; McDowell et al., 2014).

The foundation of the framework is the national board certification process. It serves as the base of the pyramid and in this context as a tool for the school system in their national board cohort. National board certification has existed for more than thirty-five years (NBPTS, 2023). According to the literature, NBPTS established a certification process that was far more in depth than any state certification process across the country (Cowan & Gebhalter, 2016). The literature described national board certification as "A substantial and unique professional development opportunity for teachers, unique and differentiated to their positions and their roles, and grounded in years of national education research" (Day, 2022, p. 2).

The next level of the pyramid is leadership. The literature describes the importance of leadership in supporting teachers through the national board certification process (Ledbetter, 2018). Research revealed that teachers placed value on school and system leadership supports including release time, showing a genuine interest in the national board certification process, expressing a belief in the teacher's ability to complete the process, asking supportive questions, connecting candidates with local support, and allow candidates time with their fellow national board certifying colleagues (Ledbetter, 2018). Another study named working in a group with colleagues, attending workshops, mentor/mentee pairings, and portfolio reading opportunities were listed as valuable supports provided from their school system leadership as they completed national board certification (Handler et. al., 2021). Yet another study revealed that teachers felt knowing that they had buy in from their principal and a support system in place from their school

district had a positive effect on their certification (Marsee, 2020). Those facilitators and barriers as reported by teachers are noted in the leadership level of the pyramid.

The next level of the pyramid is the school system sponsored cohort. It sits above the leadership level with an arrow driving directly up into this level, because system leaders and school leaders provide the structures and supports that the cohort is built on. The research describes the emergence of school system sponsored national board cohorts across Alabama in the last ten years (ALNBCT Network, 2021; MCPSS, 2023, NBPTS, 2021). It describes how some Alabama cohorts have been recognized nationally for their accomplishments (ALNBCT Network, 2021; NBPTS, 2022). The research shows that Alabama now ranks eighth in its percent of in-service teachers who are national board certified (NBPTS, 2024).

The final level of the pyramid represents teacher participants in the cohort, their experiences, and their perceived outcomes. An arrow reaches from leadership around to the teacher level to represent additional supports given directly to teachers from leaders. This differentiates these supports from the supports given indirectly through the design and structure of the system sponsored national board cohort. This top tier is where teachers describe their outcomes from the certification process, some of which may align with the Maslow's hierarchy of teacher needs (Knowles, 1983; Fisher & Royster, 2016). The Top levels for the teacher hierarchy are esteem and self-actualization. Esteem is described as self-esteem and reputation resulting in recognition, value of work, dignity, support for ideas, opinion and contribution are valued. Self-actualization, the highest level, is described as reaching one's true potential through continued professional development opportunities for self-development and creative outlets (Knowles, 1983; Fisher & Royster, 2016). Additionally, the literature shows that there is a need

for teachers to reach a high level of satisfaction in their job to remain in the field (Ingersoll et al., 2020; Hornick-Lockard, 2023; Marsee, 2020; Pucella, 2011).

Chapter 3: Methods

Teachers across America have shown a desire to pursue National Board of Professional Teaching Standards certification for decades (NBPTS, 2021). The process for certification has changed over time, but the focus behind it has remained the same: to improve teaching practices for increased student learning (NEA, 2015). As teacher shortages have increased, an urgency to support in-service teachers to reach their professional goals in hopes of retaining them in the field is emerging (Wiggan, 2021). For some teachers, these professional goals include obtaining their national board certification. The accomplishment of national board certification provides them with an additional teaching credential and an annual financial stipend (Petty et al., 2019). Teachers originally pursued this certification on their own; however, the way that teachers certify has changed over the thirty-six-year span since the genesis of national board certification. During that period, a variety of supports have emerged across the nation. While these supports have varied and evolved over time, the latest trend emerging is the school system sponsored national board cohort.

The evolution of national board certification in Alabama has followed a similar progression (Crane, 2018). Due to the newness of these cohorts, however, a consolidated list of which school districts have a school system sponsored national board cohort cannot be found in either the AL NBCT Network webpage or on any of the AL NBCT Network social media platforms (ALNBCT, 2023). Individual school systems in Alabama that sponsor a national board cohort often include this information on their district websites, providing further evidence that these organizations exist. The lack of a centrally located list is further evidence to the newness of this type of support system for certification (ALNBCT, 2023).

As school system administrators consider supporting national board cohorts, it is important to acknowledge the connection between leadership standards and how they apply in the unique setting of the school system led national board cohort. According to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), “Leaders should possess a positive approach to leadership that is optimistic, emphasizes development and strengths, and focuses on human potential” (NBPEA, 2015. p. 3). This can be applied to the system sponsored national board cohort as means of developing and retaining in-service teachers.

Teacher are leaving the profession, and it is more important than ever for school systems to train and retain the teachers who are already in the field (Hornick-Lockard, 2023; Ingersoll et al., 2020). The school system sponsored national board cohort may be useful in providing these experiences for teachers (NBPTS, 2010; Will, 2017). Presently, there is a gap in the literature regarding the role of leadership in school system sponsored national board cohorts (Martin et al., 2017; Sumowski & Grimes, 2019; Witteveen, 2015). This gap warrants further research to learn how the role of leadership plays into the success of the national board cohort model and if any positive outcomes from participation might be helpful to develop, train, and retain teachers in an effort to curtail the present teacher shortage facing school systems in Alabama (Wiggan et al., 2021).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to address a gap in literature about teachers’ perceptions of their participation in the school system sponsored national board cohort. Results of this study will serve as a source of insight into the outcomes teachers report receiving from their participation including whether their participation had any effect on their intentions toward remaining in the field of education and how leadership played a role during their participation in

the cohort. These perceptions and responses will serve as a resource for school and school system leaders in Alabama in their continuous quest to support, train, and retain highly qualified teachers in the field.

Methods

The study is organized as a qualitative descriptive case study (Creswell, 2007). The study investigates the participants' personal meaning constructed from their "lived experiences" during their participation in a school system sponsored national board cohort in Alabama. This study allows the researcher to gain insight into the perceived positive outcomes that teachers felt they received from their participation in the certification process through a system-led cohort, including which aspects of the system cohort leadership support served as facilitators and barriers on their journey through the national board certification process. The participants' perceptions give the researcher a deeper understanding of how the system led cohort model might be better utilized as a tool for developing and retaining teachers in the field (Patton 2002; Schwandt, 2015).

Researcher Positionality

I am a national board certified teacher and presently serve as a member of a leadership team for a school system sponsored national board cohort in Alabama. I have some years of school administration experience but presently serve as a central office administrator. These roles offer some insight into my beliefs regarding the obligation for school and school system leadership to provide valuable training for teachers (NBPEA, 2015). My role as the researcher of this study was to collect and to analyze the data and to look for common themes, including the outcomes that were revealed from the participants' responses about their experiences during the time they spent in the school system national board cohort (Saldana, 2016). I also analyzed the

data collected surrounding the way the participants described the role of school and system leadership, including how leadership served as facilitators or barriers during their participation in the system sponsored national board cohort. Finally, I gathered the data regarding the participants' outlooks on remaining in the teaching field after their participation in the school system sponsored cohort.

Reflexivity Statement

As the main instrument for qualitative data collection, I recognize that I must identify and monitor my biases. The process of continuous self-analysis and reflection is applied throughout the study as I kept a journal to reflect on experiences, attitudes, and assumptions that influence the process. Being reflective allowed me to identify and disclose to the reader had any disclosure become necessary (Creswell, 2007).

I worked as a classroom teacher for sixteen years before moving into building administration for four years and into central office administration where I presently serve. As a classroom teacher, I became a national board certified teacher independently, not in a cohort. As a school system administrator, I serve as a member of the leadership team of my school system sponsored national board cohort. I excluded my school system from consideration as a participating school system in this study.

Research Design

This study employed qualitative methodology and a descriptive case study design. This was chosen based on several research resources. Stahl and King (2020) recommend qualitative research as a trustworthy method for describing the human experience. Likewise, Patton (2002) stated that descriptive case study investigates participants' personal meaning gathered from lived experiences. This indicates that this design and methodology is a good fit since the study focused

on the cohort participants experiences. This study employed purposeful sampling, something that Creswell & Poth (2018) describe as an appropriate means for selecting the participants in descriptive case study. Likewise, Schwandt (2015) states that the participants in descriptive case study can be chosen through expert recommendation. Therefore, purposeful sampling through expert recommendation was used. Additionally, Creswell (2007) stated that interview data can be sorted into themes and coded. Therefore, this was employed in the design of the study.

Quantitative study was considered but rejected since qualitative study was more aligned to the purpose of the study and better suited to answer the research questions. To realize and report the perceptions of the teacher participants, it was necessary to share qualitatively.

Research Questions

This study explores the following research questions:

1. What outcomes do cohort members describe from their participation in the school system sponsored national board cohort?
2. What barriers and facilitators did leadership provide to participants while in the cohort?

Participants

The participating school system was chosen by expert recommendation (Schwandt, 2015). This recommendation came from two organizations, the Alabama NBCT Network and the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the AL NBCT Network is operated through the Alabama Department of Education and managed through the office of the Assistant State Superintendent of Education. This organization serves as a support mechanism for teachers seeking national board certification regardless of whether they were working independently or in a group. When school systems reach out to the AL NBCT Network for names of model systems to be patterned after, this system is at the top of the list (ALNBCT,

2023). The other source of expert recommendation, NBPTS, recognized this system in 2019 as one of eighty-one districts across the nation to be recognized for their investment in resources to support quality teaching through national board certification (NBPTS, 2019). The organization also recognized this system in March of 2021, as one of 11 accomplished districts in the Nation. It is the only Alabama school system to date to receive this honor. The recognition named the high number of teachers certifying each year since the national board cohort establishment in 2016 and commended the school system for their positive supports for teachers (NBPTS, 2022).

The Case

This case study is focused on one school system sponsored national board cohort in Alabama. For purposes of this study, the school system will be referred to as The System and the case study national board cohort will be referred to as The Cohort. The System launched their first national board cohort in the 2016/2017 School Year. According to their director of strategic initiatives, The System's response was overwhelming from the outset. The first cohort had more than one hundred teachers showing interest in the program. This massive interest, however, began to wane as teachers began to realize the rigor involved in the process. Moving forward, potential candidates participated in a boot camp to learn about the expectations of cohort participation for them to make an informed decision. The System has successfully completed seven cohorts to date and is presently working with their eighth. Some of the changes implemented include limiting The Cohort to twenty-five teachers. Once accepted, the teachers remained in The Cohort until certification accomplished or until the teacher times out of the three-year process (Maxey, 2022). Each year a new cohort begins, allowing for twenty-five new teachers to join each year. The director reports that they were under the twenty-five teacher limit for several years and that they went slightly over the limit a few years. Over the past seven years,

they have had over one hundred eighty teachers participate in the process. Four national board-certified classroom teachers and the director make up the leadership team (Maxey, 2022). In March 2021, The System was recognized by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards for their commitment to accomplished teaching. As previously mentioned, The System is one of only eighty-one school systems across the nation to have been bestowed this honor (NBPTS, 2021). System leadership through the cohort model provided the following supports for its members:

- Paid \$250 each for up to four components (half) – a total of \$1,000 across the life of the process.
- If a teacher transferred into the district, they were accepted into the cohort and provided the \$1,000.
- One "professional day" was provided per component and leave time was provided to go to University of Alabama (UA) provided support days (per cohort). The cohort partnered with the UA in-service center on the support days.
- Previously certified national board certified teachers served as mentors to the new cohort members.
- There were summer session for interested teachers, so they were aware of the process before committing to it.
- They partnered with Dr. Melissa Shields, ALSDE, on summer NBCT Boot Camp for potential teacher candidates.

Data Collection

After approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I began the process of obtaining informed consent for the interview. First, The System being studied granted

permission. Next, a request for an interview email was sent to members of The Cohort. The list of members included all members still in the employment of the district (for accessibility purposes) from the first cohort (2016) through the present. Interviewees were chosen from the pool of respondents based on those who completed the consent process before being interviewed. Demographic data was collected from the respondents. Participants took part in a follow up telephone interview using an interview protocol. Interviews were recorded on a password protected cellular device. Interviews were transcribed. Participant's names were replaced with pseudonyms. I collected the study's data, stored it on a secure server in AU Box, and coded the data for themes.

Assumptions

I made the several assumptions while conducting this study. These assumptions included the assumption that meaning and knowledge were gleaned from participants' lived experiences. Additionally, I assumed that the participants were honest in sharing their perceptions and experiences of the effects of leadership support during their time in the national board cohort. Finally, I assumed that outcomes both good and bad could be described by the participants and sorted into broad categories of intrinsic or extrinsic, then further sorted and coded.

Ethical Considerations and Assurances

The interviews were collected on a cellular device using a voice recording app. These recordings were not stored in the cloud to ensure the confidentiality of the information. The device is password protected. Journaling and member checking were used to establish credibility and trustworthiness. In addition, participants were provided a copy of their own transcripts for review and validation (Creswell, 2007). The data from this study was collected and stored on a secure server in AU Box and confidentiality of information was maintained. My chair and I were

the only people who had access to the data. To eliminate and reduce risks of breach of confidentiality, pseudonyms were used to replace participant names. The code list for real names was kept in a separate location from the data files. To reduce risk of participant discomfort, participants were reminded that they are not required to respond to any interview questions that create discomfort for them and were informed that they could terminate their participation in the study at any time.

I applied empathy and integrity when designing the interview protocol and used careful consideration and transparency for several issues, including consequences for participation, confidentiality, and involving the participants in the verification of transcript process. I explained the interview and validation process, the purpose of the study, the risks involved, and how these risks would be minimized so that they would know what to expect. Participant risks and consequences were kept to a minimum. I used pseudonyms for the names of participants on surveys, interview transcripts, and omitted the cohort year. All interview recordings and transcripts were securely stored and destroyed by shredding or deleting. I obtained consent from the institutional review board for the study (Appendix A). Informed consent was obtained from the participants before any data were collected (Creswell, 2007).

Significance

The significance of this study rests in the fact that there is a gap in research regarding the role of district leadership in the school system sponsored national board cohort (Marsee, 2020). Additionally, there is little research in outcomes gained from participation in the system sponsored national board cohort, including the potential outcome of teacher retention (Marsee, 2020). Some research exists describing principal support of teachers in the national board certification process (Croshaw, 1999; Ledbetter, 2018). There are studies that examine teacher

cohorts as a model in higher education (Sumowski & Grimes, 2019) and studies that establish a connection between leadership support and teacher productivity and self-efficacy (Peterson & Deal, 2016). The goal of this study is to gain insight into the perceptions of the participants in the cohort. In turn, this information can be shared with school and system leaders affording them greater knowledge in how to create supportive and successful school system national board cohorts and potentially allow school systems to utilize the national board cohort as a means for developing and retaining in-service teachers.

Limitations of Study

There are certain limitations to the study. The time of the study is limited to perceptions gathered during a specific period (August 2024). The location of the study is limited to participants who are practicing educators in the state of Alabama. The study sample is comprised of K-12 public school educators who are members of the same school system led national board cohort. Only subjects who agreed to participate and completed the consent process were included in this study. Cohort participants' perceptions may be affected by previous interactions and experiences with school system leadership sponsored professional development. Cohort participants may have previously received state sponsored grant support which may impact study results.

Summary

Chapter 3 provides a summary of the methods used to conduct this study. It provides a detailed description of the rationale behind choosing the specific case studied. It explains the thought processes behind how the questions were chosen and how the request for interview email was dispersed. It includes the interview questions and the methods by which those questions

were obtained. It explains the data collection and storage processes and the considerations to protect the identity and confidentiality of the participants.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter represents the findings of this qualitative descriptive case study (Creswell, 2007). Using an interview protocol with open-ended questions allowed the participants' "lived experiences" to be gathered. Using their own words allowed for the most accurate description of their perceptions to be presented in this study (Patton, 2002; Stahl & King, 2020). All participants were from one Alabama school system's national board cohort and were chosen through purposeful sampling by expert recommendation (Schwandt, 2015). Interviews were recorded and transcribed for accuracy in coding and analysis (Saldana, 2016). The results of this study add to the literature regarding teachers' perception of outcomes gained and leadership support given during their participation in the system sponsored national board cohort.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to address a gap in literature about teachers' perceptions of their participation in the school system sponsored national board cohort. The findings serve as a source of insight into the outcomes teachers report receiving from their participation, including whether their participation had any effect on their intentions to stay in the field of education and how leadership played a role during their participation in the cohort. These perceptions and responses also serve as a resource for school leaders and school system leaders in Alabama in their continuous quest to support, train, and retain highly qualified teachers in the field.

Research Questions

- 1) What outcomes do cohort members describe from their participation in the school system sponsored national board cohort?
- 2) What barriers and facilitators did leadership provide to participants while in the cohort?
 - a. What barriers did leadership apply to participants while in the cohort?

b. What facilitators did leadership provide to participants while in the cohort?

The interview questions and data analysis were guided by the literature based conceptual framework. Interview responses were further examined for themes. Some of the themes that emerged in this study aligned with the conceptual framework.

Data Collection

After approval from the Auburn University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I began the process of obtaining consent to conduct research from the school system. Once the system granted permission to proceed, I was provided with the contact information for all potential candidates for participation. Next, a request for an interview email was sent to members of the cohort. The list of members included all members still in the employment of the district (for accessibility purposes) from the first cohort (2016) through the present. Interviewees were chosen from the pool of respondents based on those who completed the consent process before being interviewed. Participants consented to a follow up telephone interview using the interview protocol. I kept a field notebook for further documentation of my process. Demographic data was collected from the respondents during the interview process. Interviews were recorded on a password protected cellular device. Interviews were transcribed. I used member checking to ensure that I accurately captured the participants' voices and perceptions. Participants' names were replaced with pseudonyms. I collected the study's data, stored it on a secure server in AU Box, and coded the data for themes.

Participants

Model School System

The participating school system was chosen by expert recommendation (Schwandt, 2015). This recommendation came from two organizations, the Alabama NBCT Network and the

National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the AL NBCT Network is operated through the Alabama State Department of Education and managed through the office of the Superintendent of Education. This organization serves as a support mechanism for teachers seeking national board certification regardless of whether they were working independently or in a group. When school systems reach out to the AL NBCT Network for names of model systems to emulate, this system is at the top of the list (ALNBCT, 2023). The other source of expert recommendation, NBPTS, recognized this system in 2019 as one of eighty-one districts across the nation to be recognized for their investment in resources to support quality teaching through national board certification (NBPTS, 2019). The organization also recognized this system in March of 2021 as one of eleven accomplished districts in the nation. It is the only Alabama school system to date to receive this honor. The recognition named the high number of teachers certifying each year since the national board cohort was established in 2016 and commended the school system for their positive supports for teachers (NBPTS, 2022).

The system is comprised of twenty-one schools with a total of 11,303 students. It has eleven elementary schools, one K-8 school, four middle schools, three high schools, and two specialty schools. It is an urban school system. The breakdown of student body by race is: 66.5% Black, 22.4% White, 5.9% Hispanic/Latino, 2.1% Asian, 0.5% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.5% American Indian, and 0.18% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. The free or reduced lunch rate is 71% (tcs.com/about-us, 2024).

Interview Participants

Twenty-six email requests for interviews were sent out to the potential study participants. These teachers were former national board cohort participants still employed by the model school system. Nine individuals responded. Eight potential participants sent in the informed

consent letter and took part in the interview process. While this is a relatively small sample, the participants give a good representation of both the demographics and years of experience of the 26 member pool. In addition, this sample is a good representation of the overall demographics of teachers in this school system. The names of the interviewees were changed to reflect the pseudonyms below.

Cohort participant A

Cohort participant A is a Black female. She has twenty-four years of experience in education. She has worked as a third through fifth grade reading and math intervention teacher for the last five years. She has also been a classroom teacher in both second and third grades. She has also been an instructional coach. She has a master's degree and teaches at an urban elementary school.

Cohort participant B

Cohort participant B is a Black male. He has sixteen years of teaching experience in high school mathematics and STEAM. He has taught adjunct math courses at the local community college. He has a master's degree and teaches at an urban high school.

Cohort participant C

Cohort participant C is a Black female. She has eighteen years of experience in special education. She presently serves fifth through eighth grade students in a K-8 urban school. She has an educational specialist degree.

Cohort participant D

Cohort participant D is a White female. She has ten years of experience in education. She taught kindergarten and first grade for six years before becoming an instructional coach, specializing in

literacy for two years. She returned to the classroom, where she remains working as a third grade teacher. She teaches in an urban elementary school and is earning her master's degree.

Cohort participant E

Cohort participant E is a Black female. She has nineteen years of teaching experience. She taught first grade for four years and has taught second grade for the past fifteen years. She has a bachelor's degree and works in an urban elementary school.

Cohort participant F

Cohort participant F is a White female. She has eight years of experience in education. She has a bachelor's degree in mathematics and a master's degree in early childhood education. She worked as a seventh grade math teacher for three years, a fifth grade teacher for one year, and a kindergarten teacher for four years. She works in an urban elementary school.

Cohort participant G

Cohort participant G is a White female. She is a second career teacher. Previously, she served as an instructor in the Navy for twenty-eight years. She now holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She has six years of experience in public K-12 education as a third grade teacher in an urban elementary school.

Cohort participant H

Cohort participant H is a White female. She has ten years of experience in education. She completed her pre-med studies in college before changing to a career in education. She holds a master's degree in teaching secondary science and teaches ninth grade science at an urban IB (International Baccalaureate) school.

Table 1*Participant Chart*

Participant	Race	Gender	Years in Education	Population Descriptor	Highest degree	Role in Education
Cohort Participant A	Black	Female	24	Urban Elementary School	Masters	3-5 Rdg & Math Intervention
Cohort Participant B	Black	Male	16	Urban High School	Masters	High School Math/Science (STEAM)
Cohort Participant C	Black	Female	18	Urban K-8	Ed.S.	5-8 Special Education
Cohort Participant D	White	Female	10	Urban Elementary School	Masters	3 rd Grade
Cohort Participant E	Black	Female	19	Urban Elementary School	Bachelors	2 nd Grade
Cohort Participant F	White	Female	8	Urban Elementary School	Masters	Kindergarten
Cohort Participant G	White	Female	6	Urban Elementary School	Bachelors	3 rd grade
Cohort Participant H	White	Female	10	Urban (IB) High School	Masters	Science

Data Analysis*Interviews*

Once the data collection was complete, analysis began using a two cycle coding design. "Coding is a heuristic (from the Greek, heuriskein, meaning 'to discover'), an exploratory problem-solving technique without specific formulas or algorithms to follow" (Saldana, 2016, p. 13). I employed inductive coding, which allowed themes to develop based on the data itself.. I felt this bottom-up approach was the best method since there is little existing theory on this topic.

The steps I followed were organizing the data, reading and interpreting the data for patterns, refining the codes, and identifying themes (Saldana, 2016). I used first cycle coding as I read through the raw data (interview transcripts) and highlighted key quotes and phrases from the participants. While working with the raw data, I kept a copy of the conceptual framework and purpose of the study before me to help me remain focused (Saldana, 2016, p. 18). I further examined phrases and quotes during a second reading of the interviews for more information with a specific focus on key words and phrases. Using all the information gathered, initial codes were assigned to the data, then second cycle coding was applied. Data was initially lumped into large categories, then split, arranged, and rearranged, until the data was further refined and themes emerged (Cresswell, 2007; Saldana, 2016).

Findings

Research Question 1

What outcomes do cohort members describe from their participation in the school system sponsored national board cohort?

The interviews provided much detail describing perceived outcomes from the national board certification process in the system cohort. Seven themes emerged, four of which give insight into the internal social and emotional growth and renewal perceived by the participants: renewed purpose, restorative actions, self-esteem, and professional recognition. One theme, increased pedagogy gave insight into how the process affected their teaching practices both with an increase in knowledge of subject and practice and with a new understanding of the importance of building relationships to improve instruction. Two themes, professional opportunity and financial reward, emerged as participants described the tangible outcomes they had experienced.

Table 2*Question 1: Participant by Theme*

	Renewed Purpose	Restorative Actions	Increased Self Esteem	Professional Recognition	Improved Pedagogy	Professional Opportunity	Financial Reward
Cohort Participant A	X			X	X	X	X
Cohort Participant B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cohort Participant C		X	X	X	X	X	X
Cohort Participant D		X	X	X	X	X	X
Cohort Participant E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cohort Participant F		X	X	X	X	X	X
Cohort Participant G	X	X	X		X	X	X
Cohort Participant H	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Alignment	5 of 8	7 of 8	7 of 8	7 of 8	8 of 8	8 of 8	8 of 8

Theme 1: Renewed purpose. The theme of renewed purpose emerged as participants spoke about their outlook on staying in the field of education since participating in the national board cohort. All eight interviewees shared that they planned to remain in education. Five of the eight participants described this as an important outcome.

Cohort Participant A

This has given me a new outlook. I am at year 25 and I don't plan on retiring any time soon. I am in my sweet spot. I can see myself doing this for several more years.

Cohort Participant B

National board definitely helped me decide to keep on teaching. It gave me fresh ideas of more and better ways to reach kids. I have so much more to do and to give to my job.

Cohort Participant E

Becoming national board certified has reaffirmed my place in education. I don't see myself leaving education anytime soon. Or the classroom anytime soon.

Cohort Participant G

Absolutely. I'll definitely stay. I'll teach until I'm either no longer effective or I'm not able to do it anymore. I think having people out there that I know. I mean the ones I went through the cohort with. We have grown very close. So, you know, I still keep in contact with them, and we still exchange ideas. And you know every time I come up with a crazy scheme I always say, "What do you think?" So yeah, they've become more than just colleagues I mean they've become trusted friends and so yeah, I enjoy it, and I definitely want to keep doing it as long as I am able to.

Cohort Participant H

So being a national board certified teacher has absolutely helped keep me in the education world. I mean because, at the end of the day, I feel like all of the lessons and both the external and internal positive ideas that I've gathered from being [a] NBCT, I can take that into any room whether it's a room of students or a room of teachers and help them.

Theme 2: Restorative actions. The theme of restorative action emerged as participants were discussing the positive outcomes from participating in the national board cohort. For the purpose of this study, the operational definition of restorative actions will be described as: Actionable volunteer behaviors that are taken by a national board cohort graduate after successfully certifying and completing their time in the cohort and intended to benefit the school system, future national board cohort members, the community, and other teachers. Some of the named restorative actions include: volunteering to mentor new cohort members, volunteering to mentor new teachers, volunteering to be team leader or grade level chair, volunteering to read component submissions for new cohort members, volunteering to assist at writing workshops for future cohort members, volunteering to serve as a member of the leadership team in a future national board cohort, and/or giving back to members of their community by remaining a teacher in the same community in which they grew up. Seven of the eight participants described this as an important outcome.

Sub-Theme 1: Giving back.

Cohort participant B

With all I have learned in this process together with all I have seen in my neighborhood, I have been thinking about the kids. I guess you could call it survivors' remorse. I know it's so hard to find men in the field and I want to be a good role model to the kids. They deserve it. By doing this hard thing (national boards) I feel like the students see me as an example of what they can achieve.

Cohort participant E

Becoming national board certified has made me more confident and given me a desire to go out and help others.

Cohort participant F

Being able to read for other teachers is a chance for me to give back to the system for all they did for me. Getting to talk with the teachers about their work. I see it as an opportunity. But I also see it as really fulfilling as well. I really enjoy supporting other teachers.

Cohort participant G

I gives me great satisfaction to be a mentor to other national board candidates now and to get to help new teachers in my school.

Cohort participant H

Becoming certified opened up many opportunities for me to help other teachers. It allows me to give back to the organization that helped me.

Sub-Theme 2: Paying forward.

Cohort participant B

One model I live by is “each one teach one.” If you are blessed to be taught something, you have an obligation and a responsibility to teach somebody what you know. And I don’t think that has to be restricted to the classroom. I think that I will be a helper no matter where I am located. Becoming national board certified allows me to teach the next group of teachers. Even if I am sharing words of encouragement to the new cohort member teachers.

Cohort participant C

Mentoring other teachers brings me joy. I feel like I am paying it forward.

Cohort participant D

Becoming national board certified has opened doors. It has also opened my eyes. Now I want to pay it forward and help other teachers. I am finding that I am super passionate about supporting other teachers through professional development, but I also like serving emergency certificate teachers because they need us the most, you know.

Cohort participant E

I've been able to take what I've learned and turn it around to my fellow colleagues. I especially enjoy helping those new teachers and those non-certified hires.

Cohort participant H

I am happiest when I am encouraging other teachers in their practice. This process makes me want to do more of that.

Theme 3: Increased self-esteem. The theme of self-esteem emerged as teachers described the new found confidence they got from the national board cohort experience. Teachers described their increased abilities and how those increases changed their self-image. Seven of the eight participants described this as an important outcome.

Cohort participant B

I think that in some ways for the first time now, I know that I am a really good teacher. I finally see that I know what I am doing and how it helps students really learn the way they need to learn. Just having that confidence of knowing I am doing it right, makes me a better more self-confident teacher.

Cohort participant C

After completing the national boards with the cohort, I felt like my principal and my peers respected me more. It was a big boost to my self-esteem.

Cohort participant D

Becoming an NBCT in this cohort gave me so much more self-confidence. It helped me see what I am worth as a teacher.

Cohort participant E

Becoming a national board teacher in our cohort gave me more confidence to go out and help others. It makes me feel as though, you know, we (teachers) deserve to be respected. It rebuilds a positive reputation for teachers again. Being able to tell others makes me feel good. It gives me a sense of accomplishment. It has given me a lot of pride in what I do.

Cohort participant F

I have noticed a distinct difference in my confidence. I don't question what we (my grade level team) should be doing. I know I am going to steer them in the right direction (as team leader). That new self-confidence allows me to know what to do and therefore the team works together with collective self-efficacy.

Cohort participant G

It does build self-esteem. The national board cohort process built a lot of self-confidence in my abilities to teach literacy in the third grade. That's a big thing. Now I know that I can do this [teaching] and do it right.

Cohort participant H

This process helped me have the confidence I need to know I can help adults as much as I do my students. It has restored my self-esteem.

Theme 4: Professional recognition. Participants described ways in which system leadership, school leadership, and their peers recognized their accomplishments. Seven of the eight participants described this as an important outcome.

Cohort participant A

I never was a person that ever really cared for letters behind your name, but one of the things my principal said was, “Look you've earned this. You put you put those letters behind your name.” And my principal she did nameplates for your door, so you know it says that I'm a national board certified teacher and she encouraged me to be proud of it. At school, when my coworkers see the plaque by my door, they say, “Oh, you’re NBCT,” and they are proud and they tell me so, because they know what it means to earn this. They say, “You earned those letters, now put them behind your name.”

Cohort participant B

After earning my NBCT more of my coworkers started taking notice of my abilities. They ask me my advice and they want to come watch me teach.

Cohort participant C

My principal put a plaque outside my door saying I’m an NBCT with my name on it and announced it at the faculty meeting.

Cohort participant D

We have a wall of gold stars on the main wall when you enter our central office. Every year when you certify, they put a gold star on that wall with your name on it. There's a star with my name on it. My principal and system gave me so many accolades.

Cohort participant E

They celebrate us so much. I'm so blessed to be a part of the school system. So, they gave us a plaque outside of our classroom door saying we are a national board certified teacher and our name and area of certification. They have star shaped plaques for all the national board certified teachers and in what areas they certified on the main wall at the board of education. And they have everyone's name, you know, has everyone has their own

individual little star. They even put everyone's picture up on billboards all throughout this city telling the community what we did and congratulations.

Cohort participant F

We go to a board meeting, too, and our local AEA chapter gives \$25 gift cards to everybody who gets certified. They give them to them when we go to that board meeting. I think this past time we had the biggest group come through that we had had so far. So, like even the professional organization of your peers, that AEA part, recognizes us, too. So, once you're certified, we get a star up at our central office. Like they have these physical, they're like big sturdy plaques that have our names on them and the shape of a star that go up at central office with all the National Board certified teachers. There's even more, we have digital billboards up around town and so after you get certified, there's a National Board Appreciation Week, the new certified teachers get a billboard with their name and their picture. We also get plaques, the city buys us plaques, that we put outside of our classroom doors. It's just like a name plaque. That's very nice. All those things add up.

Cohort participant H

If you are an NBCT, the system cohort sends a little plaque to put outside your door, so it says your name and then NBCT. The students (who I had when I certified) would walk by my room and they would point to it they would tell people "I helped her get that. I helped her get that," because they knew it was bad (hard to do).

Theme 5: Improved pedagogy. The theme of improved pedagogy emerged as teachers described a variety of outcomes from the cohort process that could be classified as improving their teaching practice. These outcomes were easily divided into two areas. The first area was an

improvement in their knowledge and practice of the art of teaching. The second area was a conviction of the importance of building relationships with students and families and engaging in collaborative relationships with their colleagues and cohort members. Every participant described this as an important outcome.

Sub-Theme 1: Professional knowledge. Participants described how their cohort participation resulted in improved knowledge of their teaching content area and resulted in improved knowledge of teaching practices.

Cohort participant A

I am much more intentional in my (teaching) practice now. I look at the students and their data first. I now know how important it is to look at their data on the front end, then plan for my lessons with student data in mind. it's a lot of work as far as getting to know my kids like that and the data on the front end but then April May like I look how it all just comes together. It's satisfying being able to say, "Oh, hey, I moved her." I have also learned to embrace a problem instead of saying this child has a problem. I embrace the problem like OK this is a problem. Let me look for a solution instead of complaining. It's like oh this is what the issue is, let's look at all the parts. Let's figure this thing out.

Cohort participant B

Becoming NBCT in the cohort showed me the importance of staying current in my teaching practice. It made me look for more resources for my craft.

Cohort participant C

This process taught me to become reflective in my teaching practice. As I learned to become a reflective teacher, I taught my students how to become reflective learners. I

modeled the importance of reflecting in their work to make it better. Now I focus on student outcomes.

Cohort participant D

...like with that reflective piece that national board asks you to do. I was like, THIS is the work I was supposed to be doing. I'm supposed to be doing things on purpose, with intention. Now, when you ask me about an instructional decision I've made, I'm going to be able tell you with confidence what I did and why I did it.

Cohort participant E

It gave me more knowledge of literacy. It definitely made me a more reflective teacher on ways in which my students can improve. It definitely made me a more reflective teacher. It's been helpful for me also, in becoming a more confident public speaker.

Cohort participant F

It made me a better teacher. Now I know how to home in on data and find what works for my students.

Cohort participant G

The process was a transformation for me to really explore the different strands of teaching was very helpful. I think it made me a better teacher for my students. Everything I do is student centered now.

Cohort participant H

Becoming national board certified changed my practice entirely to standards based grading. My students became more reflective in their work, as I modeled being a reflective teacher.

Sub-Theme 2: Building relationships. Participants described how their cohort participation resulted in a heightened awareness of the importance of building relationships with other professionals and with students and families.

Cohort participant A

And as far as my kids I will say now I know the value of building relationships. I talk to their homeroom teacher, and I talk to the special education teacher. I collaborate to learn more about what my students need. I get to know my students better. I ask the student, "Hey do you like any sports? What church do you go to? What team do you play for?" I'm really looking at the whole child now. I also ask my kids (students), "So what did you like about that? What did you like about this? What can I do better?" I value their feedback.

Cohort participant C

I look back at another thing that I feel like has really been impactful was the way that I interact with my parents and being more intentional about developing those relationships. I thought I was good, but again, as I say, the process shows me that I can do better. But if I hadn't learned to be more reflective, I wouldn't have known that. I probably would have kept doing whatever I was doing. Instead of my little letter home that's saying, "Hey, it's me," and that's enough. Now I realize that's not enough. Like I am at kids' games. They play a sport, even the little ones, early in the morning on Saturday, and my children are adults. But I'm still doing those things and developing those relationships with the families and finding out what their needs are. Or if there's a history of certain things, which makes it so that your student, you feel like, maybe we need support in other areas that have nothing to do with academics. But I don't feel like they would have just jumped

up and started telling me those things if I had been more intentional about developing the relationships that I had done. So again, this was stuff that happened within me after the boards.

Cohort participant G

I discovered the importance of professional relationships. It meant so much to be part of a cohort of professionals that exchanged ideas with me and allowed me into that community to see what I could glean from it. I truly value everything just like bouncing ideas off of the cohort members having them read my work and saying hey have you thought about this. I also value the friendships and the mentorships. There were so many different areas that in the part where I just felt like giving up and they said come on you can do this. You know put it away for a minute and come back to a look at it later just saying encouragement that was because I think if I had not had a cohort, I think I probably would have quit about eight times. We have grown very close. I still keep in contact with them, and we still exchange ideas. And you know every time I come up with a crazy scheme, I always say what do you think about this? I also learned the importance of really getting to know my students and what was going on in their personal life because it affected their school life. Taking the time to build those relationships with students is very important.

Cohort participant H

I think becoming a national board certified teacher transformed me personally. I think it changed my perspective because now I know that building relationships is key.

Theme 6: Professional Opportunity. The theme of professional opportunity emerged as participants described various job roles and opportunities that emerged as a direct result of their

becoming national board certified with the school system cohort. Participants described leadership roles on committees, moving into instructional coach position, becoming a model classroom teacher, becoming a leader on a district wide task force, becoming lead teacher in their department, becoming part of the new national board cohort leadership team, managing a district wide grant for the district national board leadership team, creating professional development for other teachers, managing mentor support for new cohort members, serving on the district advisory council to the superintendent, becoming a clinical master teacher, supervising student teachers from the local university, and/or presenting at conferences. Every participant described this as an important outcome.

Cohort participant A

More leadership roles have emerged for me in my school since becoming certified in the cohort. I have been invited on so many committees as a valuable contributing member.

Cohort participant B

People come into my room and watch me teach now. I am the lead STEAM teacher on my campus now.

Cohort participant C

Many leadership roles have emerged for me since certifying. I now lead the campus United Way drive. I just raised \$1,000 for the cause on behalf of the school. I lead the Little Ambassador program at my school which allows students to take a forward role in greeting visitors and taking them on tours of our facilities. I was asked to be the lead teacher for summer school last year, a role that has never been given to a special education teacher before. I also recently became the director of the teacher advisory

council to the superintendent. This allows me to lead a group of teachers from across the district to share our concerns and ideas with the superintendent.

Cohort participant D

The greatest professional opportunity came to me because of my national board certification in the system cohort. After certifying, I was asked to be a part of the cohort leadership team. That role put me in the position to step out of the classroom for one year (this year) and to serve full time in managing a grant for the system cohort. This opportunity includes developed a support system for third grade teachers certifying in literacy, creating the professional development pieces for the teachers, and facilitating mentoring supports for them. I am looking forward to seeing what other doors (professional opportunities) will open next.

Cohort participant E

This has opened doors to becoming more of a leader in my school and school system. I am (now) the mentor coordinator at my school and for the school system.

Cohort participant F

Since becoming certified I was asked to be one of twelve teacher ambassadors for my school system. We meet with our superintendent and share ideas as a representative voice for other teachers. Certification gave me the confidence in my practice to be able to go on to become a CMT (Clinical Master Teacher). This allows me to oversee student teachers from the university and to serve as their university supervisor.

Cohort participant G

Since certifying, I became my grade level chair. Now I have the confidence to steer them in the right direction for children. I use the principals I learned to mentor these other teachers.

Cohort participant H

Since becoming a national board certified teacher in the cohort, many opportunities have opened for me. I made a perfect score on my component four, so my cohort leadership team made a you tube video of me mentoring others in that component. They invited me to be on the leadership team for the cohort. I tour the country speaking at national board conferences now. I mentor not only teachers in my cohort, but teachers from across the country reach out to me for advice about component four. This process has helped me decide that I want to be a school leader. I know that the principals I learned through national boards can help me with adults just like they helped me with my students.

Theme 7: Financial Reward. The theme of financial reward emerged as participants described submission bonuses, scholarships for component submissions, and annual bonuses for certifying as a direct result of their journey in the school system cohort. Every participant described this as an important outcome.

Cohort participant A

Once you certify you get a \$5,000 a year bonus. That money is nice, and it comes every November just before Christmas. The year you certify you receive two checks. You learn in December that you certified, then the state sends your first check in January, but you still get the annual check in November. So that first year you get two of them.

Cohort participant B

The annual bonus money allows me to bring home more resources [money]. And because I teach in a Title I school in an area of critical shortage; I get the extra bonus money. So, I get \$10,000 a year instead of \$5,000.

Cohort participant C

The year that I certified, the school system paid for half of your submission fees, which was nice. In addition, my principal wrote an extra grant. So, in total, I was refunded 90% of my submission fees. That was very nice. I also receive the \$5,000 bonus each year for being a national board certified teacher. The cohort leadership team invited me to be a paid reader for candidates. Our local AEA gives all new NBCTs a \$25 Visa gift card at the school board meeting when we are first publicly recognized.

Cohort participant D

The way the school system funded me by paying for 50% of my component fees, is the only way I could have done this as a little baby school teacher with only three years of experience. Since I certified in literacy, which is a critical need area, I get \$10,000 a year bonus instead of the typical \$5,000 a year.

Cohort participant E

If I can be totally honest, it was the extra money that was my number one motivation for participating in the first place. They also paid for half my component fees which was motivating as well.

Cohort participant F

Certifying was a two year process for me. The system cohort paid for half of my submission fees the first year. Then in year two I received a scholarship that paid for the

other half of my fees. I just certified last December, so I received the \$5,000 in January. But I will get \$10,000 in November and every year after that because I certified in a critical area (literacy).

Cohort participant G

I know we get the bonus money and that is nice. But I really do the job for the kids. I am a third grade teacher and so my certification area is in literacy, so I receive the extra bonus money because it is an area of need, which is also nice. I get \$10,000 total each year for my NBCT.

Cohort participant H

The year I submitted, there was a bonus for submitting. So, I received \$5,000 just for submitting all four of my components – if I hadn't qualified - I still got that submission bonus. That year I also won the component fee scholarship, so I paid nothing for my components. That was a \$2,000 value. Since I certified in a critical area (special education) I receive the \$10,000 a year. Another financial perk is that they pay me to be a reader for candidates at the writing workshops.

Research Question 2

What barriers and facilitators did leadership provide to participants while in the cohort?

The interview process revealed some perceived leadership behaviors during the participants time in the system sponsored cohort. These behaviors can be described as barriers and facilitators. The leadership behaviors were further examined to consider whether they came from system leadership or local (building) leadership. Two themes emerged as barriers which included extinction behavior and perceived pressure. Five themes emerged as facilitators which

included financial support, social emotional support, proactive structures, collaborative relationships, and extinction behavior.

Sub-Question 2(a). What barriers did leadership apply to participants while in the cohort?

All of the participants were asked to describe any barriers they encountered from leadership during their time in the school system national board cohort. Three participants described barriers. These three behaviors can be separated into two categories or themes. These themes were extinction behaviors and perceived pressure. Extinction behaviors were also described in somewhat positive terms of autonomy, which allows it to be considered a facilitator as well as a barrier. Although this was a small number of responses regarding barriers, considering this study seeks to reveal facilitators and barriers, the researcher felt it important to code these barriers and report them for the purpose of improving leadership practice.

Table 3

Question 2(a): Participant by Theme

	Extinction Behavior	Perceived Pressure
Cohort Participant A		
Cohort Participant B		X
Cohort Participant C		X
Cohort Participant D		
Cohort Participant E		
Cohort Participant F		
Cohort Participant G		
Cohort Participant H	X	
Alignment	1 of 8	2 of 8

Theme 1: Extinction behavior. This behavior was described as a barrier behavior performed by the local (building) administrator making no recognition of what the participant was going through. One of eight participants described this as a leadership barrier.

Cohort participant H

It was my first year teaching at that school, so my principal didn't even know me. But she didn't try to get to know me either. She (the principal) was supportive in that she let me do what I wanted to do. She just didn't have any knowledge of what I was doing. I mean, it felt like nobody in the school knew what I was doing or even understood what national boards was, but it was hard knowing that my principal didn't have a clue what I was going through.

Theme 2: Perceived pressure. Two participants described perceived pressure from system leadership to join and complete the certification process in the cohort. Two of eight participants described this as a leadership barrier.

Cohort participant B

I felt pressure from leadership like I had to join the national board cohort. The superintendent pushed it at the beginning of the year meetings. The other national board certified teachers were always out trying to recruit for the cohort. It was like I felt I had to join.

Cohort participant C

I felt like my system cohort leadership team wanted me to try to do all four components in one year and get it finished. That was a real barrier for me.

Sub-Question 2(b). What facilitators did leadership provide to participants while in the cohort?

All of the participants were asked to describe any facilitators they encountered from leadership during their time in the school system national board cohort. Five themes emerged as facilitators, which included financial support, proactive structures, social emotional support, collaborative relationships, and extinction behavior. The facilitators were further examined to discern whether they came from system leadership or local (building) leadership.

Table 4

Question 2(b): Participant by Theme

	Financial Support	Proactive Structures	Social Emotional Support	Collaborative Relationships	Extinction Behaviors - Autonomy
Cohort Participant A	X	X	X		
Cohort Participant B	X	X			
Cohort Participant C	X	X	X	X	
Cohort Participant D	X	X	X	X	
Cohort Participant E	X	X	X	X	
Cohort Participant F	X	X	X	X	
Cohort Participant G	X	X		X	
Cohort Participant H	X	X	X		X
Alignment	8 of 8	8 of 8	6 of 8	5 of 8	1 of 8

Theme 1: Financial Support. Financial support was described in terms of fees being partially or fully funded, paid time off to attend workshops or to write, scholarships for submissions and attending conferences, and submission bonuses. All participants reported this as a leadership facilitator.

Cohort participant A

The local school had some money they could put toward it (certification) so my principal, she paid for the rest of my component submission fees.

Cohort participant B

I received financial support from my school system. They funded 50% of my component submissions.

Cohort participant C

I'll say that my principal at the time, she was very supportive. She even made sure that, I think there was some money that came in that if you paid for the boards, they would give you 90% of it back. And she made sure that whatever paperwork she had to fill out that she did that for everybody who was pursuing boards that year. My school system gave me two paid days off to attend writing workshops and two additional paid days off to write on my own at home.

Cohort participant D

My system supported me financially by paying for 50% of my submission fees. They also gave me paid time off to work on my components.

Cohort participant E

One of the most valuable things my system did for me was to provide me with days off to write so I could work on my component submissions.

Cohort participant F

My system awarded me the component submission scholarship which meant I paid nothing to submit all four of my components. They also gave me two paid days off to attend two different writing workshops and another two days off just to write on my own.

Cohort participant G

My system gave me paid days off to attend collaborative writing workshops.

Cohort participant H

When I was in the cohort, I got \$5,000 from the system just for submitting. That was a motivator to get it completed and turned in. The system also paid for several of us to go to a national board bootcamp. I received a scholarship which covered all my submission fees, which was a \$2,000 value. On top of all of that, the system gave me four paid days off. Two days to attend writing workshops and two days to write on my own. They were really committed to supporting us financially through this process.

Theme 2: Proactive Structures. Proactive structures are described in terms of any physical tools provided to aid participants in the submission process, the organizational structure of meetings, and the personnel provided as supports. All participants reported this as a leadership facilitator.

Cohort participant A

The system provided me with a mentor who had previously certified in my same certification area. My mentor gave me additional tools such as a timeline and a schedule which was very helpful. The monthly system cohort support meetings gave me time and space to collaborate with my peers and work on my components. In addition to my mentor, I was also assigned a reader who gave me regular feedback on my component drafts.

Cohort participant B

The system provided me with a coach who was in my same school building. That made it convenient for me to seek and receive advice.

Cohort participant C

The system provided us with the best (national board) professional development. They also provided a mentor to read my submissions and give feedback.

Cohort participant D

When I participated, I was fortunate to have enough participants on my school campus that we had a school based cohort within the system cohort. The cohort structure offered a pretty stringent timeline for completing items and submitting, which was helpful to me.

Cohort participant E

The system provided us with outlines and documents all set up by the standards in these big, huge binders for each component, which really helped. They also gave us options for morning or afternoon meetings which was nice because it gave us flexibility in scheduling.

Cohort participant F

The system cohort paired me with a mentor who was in my building, which made things very convenient for me. We were able to meet during planning or easily talk before and after school.

Cohort participant G

Our building principal arranged for the three of us who were all doing our literacy certification to be on the same hallway which really helped us with collaboration.

Cohort participant H

The system cohort provided all your standards, printed and in binders. They gave you the Bobbi Faulkner book to help you with certifying. They held a kickoff meeting before school started then monthly support meetings throughout the year to help with collaboration and submission. Those meetings really helped me break down the standards and understand what I was looking at. They gave me the gift of time to write and reflect.

That was huge. They provided me with a mentor who read all my submissions. She was a big help. Then when I submitted, she brought me cookies to celebrate.

Theme 3: Social Emotional Support. Social emotional support is described as behaviors performed by local building leaders or school system leaders showing that they cared about the participant in a way that made them feel supported while in the cohort. Six of eight participants reported this as a leadership facilitator.

Cohort participant A

The system leadership is so supportive. They know how important it is to develop highly qualified teachers. The Assistant Superintendent who was over the national board cohort, personally came by my classroom to check on me. My principal checked on me and always asked how I was doing. I always knew my building administrators were in favor of me. It was good for our students and our school.

Cohort participant C

My building principal gave me trust and encouragement. He believed in me, and I knew it. It helped knowing I had someone in my corner (principal). My principal would ask how I was doing after every submission. My principal always gave me a space for a shout out and urged me to share whenever I passed a component.

Cohort participant D

Our system leaders take intentional steps to show the value they pour into us. Central office administrators have always been a huge cheerleader and advocate for teachers on the national board journey. If a question came up that I couldn't answer or the cohort leadership team couldn't answer, I always knew I could reach out to my Assistant Superintendent. He could get the answer for you. Our superintendent would always

encourage us national board candidates at institute day. I always knew I had an advocate in (my principal) my building. It was good to have a school administrator whom I knew was going to encourage me.

Cohort participant E

The principal never said no when we had to do something for national board cohort. My school administrators supported me with positive words of encouragement. My principal was strong in verbal support.

Cohort participant F

Our system supports us with a robust cohort system. I had an amazing principal who was a real thought partner for me. I could send him my ideas and he gave me feedback. He would stop by my room, talk to my kids, and check on me.

Cohort participant H

The school principal and assistant principals were very understanding and accommodating while I was certifying. Our Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent are very supportive of our national board teachers and cohort participants. I always felt like they were in my corner.

Theme 4: Collaborative Relationships. The theme of collaborative relationships included ways in which school and system leadership encouraged and/or facilitated the collaborative process while participants were in the national board cohort. Five of eight participants reported this as a leadership facilitator.

Cohort participant C

The system cohort leaders connected us with specific Facebook groups for whichever specific certification area we were in for more collaborative support.

Cohort participant D

The system cohort leaders gave me a reader and mentor who was in my same school building. That allowed me to have more collaboration than most participants.

Cohort participant E

The system sponsored meetings allowed for collaboration with my peers from across the school system. Having this larger collaborative opportunity in addition to my personal mentor was helpful to me.

Cohort participant F

A big support for me was being able to collaborate with my cohort mates who were at my same school. There is a value in knowing you weren't in it alone. Other people were doing this with you.

Cohort participant G

A lot (of value) came to me from talking with the other teachers in the cohort community. That community part of the national board process was huge for me.

Theme 5: Extinction Behaviors (Autonomy). Extinction behaviors was reported as a barrier previously in question 2a. However, it serves additionally as a facilitator since while the participant described being ignored by her principal, she also expressed this in positive terms of being allowed to proceed with the certification process autonomously. One of eight participants reported this as a leadership facilitator.

Cohort participant H

My principal was supportive in that she let me do what I wanted to do. She just didn't have any knowledge what I was doing.

Summary

Chapter 4 reported the findings of this study based on participant responses to interview questions. Themes were reported as phrases in the participants own words to allow the reader to gain insight into the mindsets of the cohort members. In addition, themes were also reported in tables to allow insight into participant alignment across the themes.

Seven themes emerged from the responses focused on research question one, regarding outcomes described from participation in the system sponsored national board cohort. Four of the themes give insight into the internal social emotional growth and renewal undergone by the participants: renewed purpose, restorative actions, self-esteem, and professional recognition. One theme, increased pedagogy gave insight into how the process affected their teaching practices, both with increased knowledge of subjects and practices and with a new understanding of the importance of building relationships to improve instruction. Two themes, professional opportunity and financial reward, emerged as participants described the tangible outcomes they had experienced. These themes aligned with Maslow's hierarchy of needs framework for understanding teachers' needs (Fisher & Royster, 2016; Knowles, 1983).

When examining interview question two, the interview process further revealed some perceived leadership actions during the participants time in the system sponsored cohort. These actions can be described as barriers and facilitators. Five themes emerged from responses focused on interview question 2(a) focusing on leadership supports: financial support, social emotional support, proactive structures, collaborative relationships, and extinction behavior. These themes also aligned with Maslow's hierarchy of needs framework for understanding teachers' needs (Fisher & Royster, 2016; Knowles, 1983).

Two themes emerged from responses focused on interview question 2(b) focusing on leadership barriers: extinction behavior and perceived pressure. Extinction behaviors were not only described in negative terms but were also described positive terms, such as autonomy, allowing it to be considered as both facilitator as well as a barrier. The themes that emerged regarding leadership barriers and facilitators aligned with the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel and Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff (NBPEA, 2015).

Chapter 5: Discussion

Teachers across America have been pursuing National Board of Professional Teaching Standards certification for decades (NBPTS, 2021). The process for certification has changed over time, but the focus has remained the same: to improve teaching practices for increased student learning (Marsee, 2020; NEA, 2015). Lately, as teacher shortages increase, it is more important than ever for leaders to support in-service teachers to reach their professional goals in hopes of retaining them in the field (Marsee, 2020; Wiggan, 2021). Research considering new teacher learning shows a connection between developing professional identity, self-efficacy, and actualization as strategies which can help retain new entrants in the teaching profession (McDowell et al., 2014). This leads to the assertion that when teachers reach the highest levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, they feel more satisfaction with their careers, which in turn may lead to higher teacher retention rates (Fisher & Royster, 2016; McDowell et al., 2014; Pucella, 2011). The way that leadership supports teachers during the certification process may help them reach these personal and professional goals and help them remain in the field (Crane, 2023; Handler et. al., 2021).

Teachers originally pursued national board certification on their own; however, the way that teachers certify has changed over the thirty-six years since its inception (NBCT, 2023; Will, 2019). During that time, a variety of supports emerged across the nation. State networks were the first organizations to develop, then regional cohorts until, finally, some school systems across the country began supporting their candidates through school system sponsored national board cohorts (Marsee, 2020). The evolution of national board certification in Alabama has followed a similar progression (Crane, 2018). The Alabama National Board Certified Teachers Network (AL NBCT Network) is an Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) sponsored support

platform providing information and links for grant opportunities to all Alabama educators wishing to pursue national board certification (ALNBCT, 2023). The documentation of eleven university based regional cohorts in Alabama is noted on the history of the AL NBCT Network website (ALNBCT, 2023). School system sponsored national board cohorts in Alabama are known to exist, as evidenced by the fact that some system cohorts have been recognized in NBPTS publications for the high numbers of teachers certifying in their school system (NBPTS, 2021). A consolidated list of these cohorts, however, cannot be found in either the AL NBCT Network webpage or on any of the AL NBCT Network social media platforms (ALNBCT, 2023). Individual school systems in Alabama that sponsor a national board cohort often include this information on their district websites, providing further evidence that these organizations exist. The lack of a centrally located list is evidence to the newness of this type of support system for certification (ALNBCT, 2023).

As school and system leaders consider how to support teachers in local national board cohorts, it is important to acknowledge the connection between leadership standards and how they apply in the unique setting of the school system led National Board Cohort. According to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, “Leaders should possess a positive approach to leadership that is optimistic, emphasizes development and strengths, and focuses on human potential” (NBPEA, 2015. p. 3). This can be applied to the system sponsored national board cohort as means of developing and retaining in-service teachers.

Summary of the Study

This study was conducted using a qualitative design through purposeful sampling to investigate the participants’ personal meaning constructed from their “lived experiences” during their participation in a school system sponsored national board cohort in Alabama. This study

allowed for insight into the perceived outcomes that teachers felt they received from their participation in the certification process through a system led cohort. The information collected included which aspects of the system cohort leadership support served as facilitators or barriers on their journey through the national board certification process. Twenty-six requests for interviews were sent via email. Eight respondents agreed to participate. This chapter provides an overview of the methods, findings, and recommendations for future research and practice.

Research Questions

This study explores the following research questions:

3. What outcomes do cohort members describe from their participation in the school system sponsored national board cohort?
4. What barriers and facilitators did leadership provide to participants while in the cohort?
 - a. What barriers did leadership apply to participants while in the cohort?
 - b. What facilitators did leadership provide to participants while in the cohort?

Review of Methodology

This study employed qualitative methodology and a descriptive case study design. This was chosen based on several research resources. Stahl and King (2020) recommend qualitative research as a trustworthy method for describing the human experience. Likewise, Patton (2002) stated that descriptive case study investigates participants' personal meaning gathered from lived experiences. This indicates that this design and methodology is a good fit since the study focused on the cohort participants experiences. This study employed purposeful sampling, something that Creswell & Poth (2018) describe as an appropriate means for selecting the participants in descriptive case study. Likewise, Schwandt (2015) states that the participants in descriptive case study can be chosen through expert recommendation. Therefore, purposeful sampling through

expert recommendation was used. Additionally, Creswell (2007) stated that interview data can be sorted into themes and coded. Therefore, this was employed in the design of the study.

Quantitative study was considered but rejected since qualitative study was more aligned to the purpose of the study and better suited to answer the research questions. To realize and report the perceptions of the teacher participants, it was necessary to share qualitatively.

Significance

The significance of this study rests in the fact that there is a gap in research regarding the role of district leadership in the school system sponsored national board cohort (Marsee, 2020). Additionally, there is little research in outcomes gained from participation in the system sponsored national board cohort, including the potential outcome of teacher retention (Marsee, 2020). Some research exists describing principal support of teachers in the national board certification process (Croshaw, 1999; Ledbetter, 2018). There are studies that examine teacher cohorts as a model in higher education (Sumowski & Grimes, 2019) and studies that establish a connection between leadership support and teacher productivity and self-efficacy (Peterson & Deal, 2016). The goal of this study is to gain insight into the perceptions of the participants in the cohort. In turn, this information can be shared with school and system leaders affording them greater knowledge in how to create supportive and successful school system national board cohorts and potentially allow school systems to utilize the national board cohort as a means for developing and retaining in-service teachers.

Limitations of Study

There are certain limitations to the study. The time of the study is limited to perceptions gathered during a specific period (August 2024). The location of the study is limited to participants who are practicing educators in one school system in the state of Alabama. The

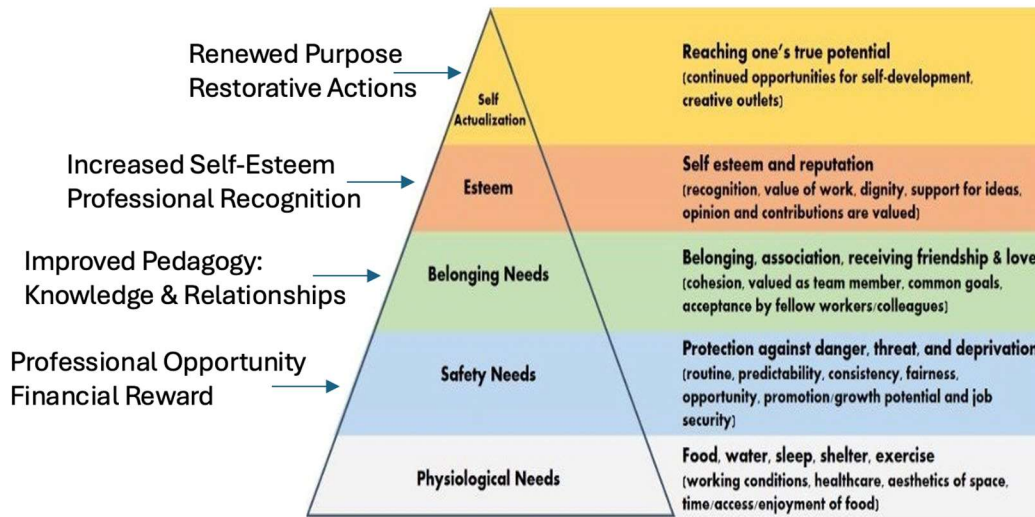
study sample is comprised of K-12 public school educators who are members of the same school system led national board cohort. Only subjects who agreed to participate and completed the consent process were included in this study. Cohort participants' perceptions may be affected by previous interactions and experiences with school system leadership sponsored professional development. Cohort participants may have previously received state sponsored grant support which may impact study results.

Major Findings Related to Literature and Interpretations

One major finding in the study was that all participants reported a desire to remain in the field of education as a direct result of their participation in the cohort. Another major finding was that each of the themes can be aligned with the highest four levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a framework for understanding teachers' needs (Fisher & Royster, 2016; Knowles, 1983). The themes of renewed purpose and restorative actions align with the top tier of the hierarchy pyramid, self-actualization. The themes of increased self-esteem and professional recognition align with the second highest tier of the hierarchy, esteem. The theme of increased pedagogy along with the subthemes of improved knowledge and relationships aligns with the third highest tier of the hierarchy, belonging. The theme of professional opportunity and financial reward aligns with the fourth highest tier of the hierarchy, safety (Fischer & Royster, 2016; Knowles, 1983).

Figure 12

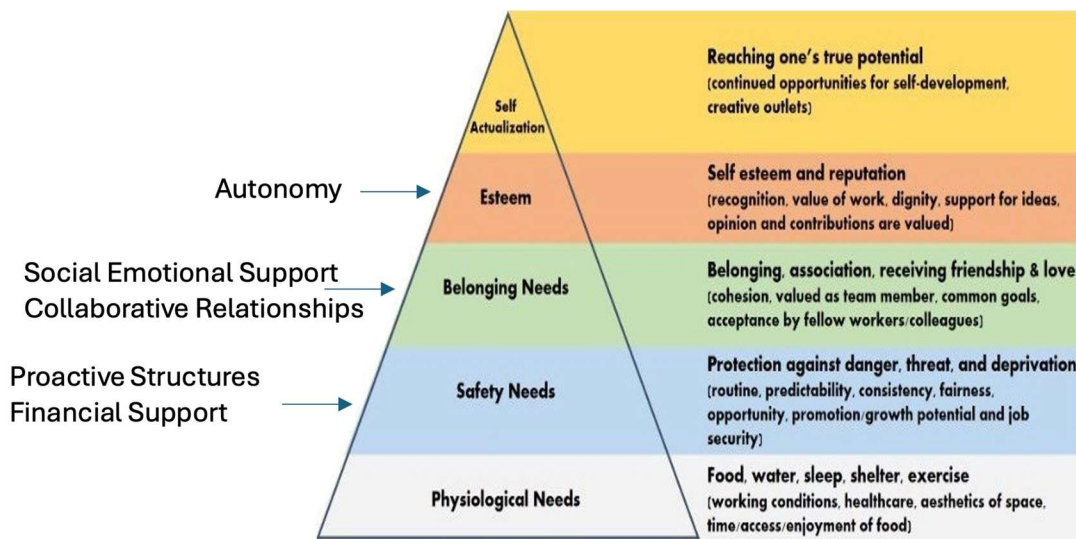
Questions 1 - Outcomes: Themes and Maslow's Hierarchy



Another major finding was that each of these themes surrounding leadership facilitators can be aligned with levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a framework for understanding teachers' needs (Fisher & Royster, 2016; Knowles, 1983). The themes are: financial support, proactive structures, social emotional support, collaborative relationships, and autonomy.

Figure 13

Questions 2(b) – Leadership Facilitators: Themes and Maslow's Hierarchy



Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

One implication for future study surrounds the result of all participants reporting a renewed interest in remaining in the field. I believe a larger study could be conducted to determine if this same sentiment exists with other teachers who certified in the system sponsored cohort. This could be done in several ways:

- A similar, quantitative study of another system sponsored cohort in Alabama to compare results.
- Qualitative study of all Alabama national board certified teachers who certified in a system sponsored cohort to compare results.
- Qualitative study of all national board certified teachers in Alabama regardless of whether they certified in a cohort or not to compare results.

A possibility for future research would be to take the same study to a system outside of Alabama to see if the same findings apply in another state with a similar system sponsored cohort. Another opportunity for future research would be a study on professional opportunities realized by teachers after certifying in the system sponsored cohort. Many of the participants mentioned leadership opportunities opening for them in various capacities around their schools and system. Future research could also involve the area of restorative actions. Every member reported a desire to either give back to the system or the people who helped them or to pay forward the good things that had received while participating in the system cohort. These restorative actions would be an area worth deeper study.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

Based on the findings in this study, there are several implications for practice which can be applied by system and school leaders. Because this system is a high poverty, urban school

system, it is traditionally the most difficult type of system in which to keep teachers; however, the participants interviewed had very positive things to say about working in the school system and remaining in the field of education. Every participant reported a desire to continue teaching. Based on this and other responses from all participants in the study, the system cohort could be a useful tool to be used as a method of keeping teachers in high poverty school systems.

The results of this study regarding teacher impressions of leadership barriers and facilitators can be a tool for system leaders. They can utilize the leadership facilitators and barriers results to build good cohorts which they can then use for their purposes, including (as the results reveal) to train and retain teachers.

The common language used in this study surrounding professional opportunities included many leadership opportunities for the cohort members after certifying. Based on those results, system leaders could use the system sponsored cohort model to grow leaders in their school system.

Considering the results of the interview responses and their alignment with Maslow's hierarchy of needs regarding teacher's needs, the results show that the participants reached a high level of self-efficacy. This information together with the specific interview results implies that the system cohort might be a useful tool to system leaders to help teachers build greater peace and satisfaction. In addition, this might imply an increase in social emotional health in teachers.

All participants reported a desire to remain in the field of education and all participants reported an increase in improved knowledge and practice in their field. This implies that systems who do not already have a system sponsored national board cohort, might consider developing one as a means of training and retaining their teachers.

Every participant reported a desire to either give back to the system or people who helped them or pay forward the good things that had been done for them while participating in the system cohort. These were reported under the theme of restorative actions. This information can be used by system leaders as a means for building greater loyalty to their schools and system that supported the teachers through the cohort. As teachers pay what they learned forward, it can also create more collegiality amongst the teachers. This could increase the professional growth of more teachers in the school even if they had not participated in the system led cohort.

Final Thoughts and Conclusions

As teacher shortages increase (Fischer et. al, 2022), it is more important than ever for leaders to support in-service teachers to reach their professional goals in hopes of retaining them in the field (Marsee, 2020; Wiggan, 2021). Research considering new teacher learning, claims a connection between developing professional identity, self-efficacy, and actualization as strategies which can help retain new entrants in the teaching profession (McDowell et al., 2014). This leads to the assertion that when teachers reach the highest levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, they feel more satisfaction with their careers, which in turn may lead to higher teacher retention rates (Fisher & Royster, 2016; McDowell et al., 2014; Pucella, 2011). The results of this study show that the way that leadership supports teachers during the certification process can help them reach personal and professional goals and, ultimately, help them remain in the field (Crane, 2023; Handler et. al., 2021).

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Appendix A

1

AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

PROTOCOL REVIEW FORM FULL BOARD or EXPEDITED REVIEW

For assistance, contact: **The Office of Research Compliance (ORC)**
Phone: 334-844-5966 E-Mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu Web Address: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs>
Submit completed form and supporting materials as one PDF through the [IRB Submission Page](#)
Handwritten forms are not accepted. Where links are found hold down the control button (Ctrl) then click the link.

1. Proposed Start Date of Study: 7/1/2024 Today's Date: **June 12, 2024**
Submission Status (Check One): New Revisions (to address IRB Review Comments)
Proposed Review Category (Check One): Full Board (greater than minimal risk) Expedited
If Expedited, Indicate Category(ies) ([Link to Expedited Category Review Sheet](#)) *Click or tap to enter category.*
2. Project Title: Teacher Perceptions: A Study of One School System Sponsored National Board Cohort
3. Principal Investigator (PI): Sonya Price Degree(s): Ed. S
Degree(s): Ed. S.
Rank/Title: Graduate Student Department/School: EFLT
Role/responsibilities in this project: Principal researcher; AU graduate student responsible for obtaining informed consent; completing interviews and analyzing data
Preferred Phone Number: 251-923-8857 AU Email: smp0079@auburn.edu
- Faculty Advisor Principal Investigator (if applicable): **Dr. Ellen Hahn**
Rank/Title: Full Professor Department/School: EFLT
Role/responsibilities in this project: Major professor/Doctoral chair-Dissertation supervisor. Will provide feedback on dissertation and required revisions.
Preferred Phone Number: **334-844-3064** AU Email: reameseh@auburn.edu
- Department Head: **Dr. William Murrah** Department/School: EFLT
Preferred Phone Number: **334-844-4460** AU Email: wmm0017@auburn.edu
Role/responsibilities in this project: N/A
4. Funding Support: N/A Internal External Agency: *Click or tap here to enter text.* Pending Received
For federal funding, list funding agency and grant number (if available): *Click or tap here to enter text.*
5. a) List any contractors, sub-contractors, and other entities associated with this project: N/A
b) List any other AU IRB approved protocols associated with this study and describe the association: *Click or tap here to enter text.*
c) List any other institutions associated with this study and submit a copy of their IRB approval(s): *Click or tap here to enter text.*

Protocol Packet Checklist

Check all applicable boxes. A completed checklist is required.

- Protocol Review Form (All required signatures included and all sections completed)
(Examples of appended documents are found on the website: <https://www.auburn.edu/OVPR/jcm/compliance/irb/sampledocs>)
- CITI Training Certificates for key personnel
- Consent Form or Information Letter and any releases (audio, video or photo) that participants will review and/or sign
- Appendix A "Reference List"
- Appendix B if e-mails, flyers, advertisements, social media posts, generalized announcements or scripts, etc., will be used to recruit participants.

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
Document for use from
07/05/2024 to _____
Protocol # 24-962 EX 2407

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appendix C if data collection sheets, surveys, tests, other recording instruments, interview scripts, etc. will be used for data collection. Attach documents in the order they are listed in item 13c. Continued on Page 2
<input type="checkbox"/> Appendix D if they study will use a debriefing form or will include emergency plans/ procedures and medical referral lists. (A referral list may be attached to the consent document.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Appendix E if research is being conducted at sites other than Auburn University or in cooperation with other entities. A permission letter from the site/ program director must be included indicating their cooperation or involvement in the project. NOTE: If the proposed research is a multi-site project, involving investigators or participants at other academic institutions, hospitals or private research organizations, a letter of IRB approval from each entity is required prior to initiating the project.
<input type="checkbox"/> Appendix F Written evidence of approval by the host country, local IRB or institutions if research is conducted outside the United States

6. General Research Project Characteristics

6A. Research Methodology	
Check all descriptions that best apply to the research methodology.	
Data Source(s): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Data <input type="checkbox"/> Existing Data	Will recorded data directly or indirectly identify participants? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Data collection will involve the use of:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interview <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Locations or Tracking Measures <input type="checkbox"/> Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens <input type="checkbox"/> Surveys / Questionnaires <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Click or tap here to enter text.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internet / Electronic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Video <input type="checkbox"/> Photos <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Images <input type="checkbox"/> Private records or files
6B. Participant Information	6C. Risks to Participants
Check all descriptors that apply to the TARGET population. (link to definition of target population) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Males <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Females <input type="checkbox"/> AU students Vulnerable Populations <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant Women/Fetuses <input type="checkbox"/> Prisoners <input type="checkbox"/> Institutionalized <input type="checkbox"/> Children and / or Adolescents (under age 18 in AL; if minor participants, at least 2 adults must be present during all research procedures that include the minors) Persons with: <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Disadvantages <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Disadvantages <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Disabilities Will participants be compensated? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Identify all risks participants might encounter in this research. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Breach of Confidentiality* <input type="checkbox"/> Coercion <input type="checkbox"/> Deception <input type="checkbox"/> Physical <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Psychological <input type="checkbox"/> Social <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (COVID-19, other medical): Click or tap here to enter text. <small>*Note that if the investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.</small>
6D. Corresponding Approval/ Oversight	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the study include participant exposure to radiation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If yes indicate: <input type="checkbox"/> DEXA <input type="checkbox"/> PQCT <input type="checkbox"/> Other • Is IBC Approval required for this study? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If yes, BUA # Click or tap here to enter text. Expiration Date Click or tap to enter a date. • Is IACUC Approval required for this study? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No 	

If yes, PRN # [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) Expiration Date [Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

- Does this study involve the Auburn University MRI Center?
 Yes No
- Which MRI(s) will be used for this project? (Check all that apply)
- 3T 7T

Continued on Page 3

- Does any portion of this project require review by the MRI Safety Advisory Council?
 Yes No

Signature of one MRI Center Representative: _____

Required for all projects involving the AU MRI Center

Appropriate MRI Center Representatives:

Dr. Thomas S. Denney, Director AU MRI Center
Dr. Ron Beyers, MR Safety Officer

7. Project Assurances

7A. Principal Investigator's Assurances

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Auburn University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Auburn University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all Auburn policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
 - a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
 - b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the Office of Research Compliance
 - c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
 - d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and / or effects to the Office of Research Compliance in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has not been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise ORC, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the Office of Research Compliance before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

Sonya Price

Principal Investigator Name


Principal Investigator Signature

6/14/24

Date

7B. Faculty Advisor / Sponsor's Assurances

1. I have read the protocol submitted for this project for content, clarity, and methodology.
2. By my signature as faculty advisor / sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
3. I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
4. I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant incidents and / or adverse events and / or effects to the ORC in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.

5. If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the ORC by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.

Dr. Ellen Hahn
Faculty Advisor / Sponsor Name


Faculty Advisor Signature

6/14/24
Date

Continued on Page 4

7C. Department Head's Assurance

By my signature as department head, I certify that I will cooperate with the administration in the application and enforcement of all Auburn University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection and ethical treatment of human participants by researchers in my department

Dr. William Murrah
Department Head Name


Department Head Signature

6/14/24
Date

8. Project Overview:

8A. A summary of relevant research findings leading to this research proposal:

(Cite source; include a "Reference List" as [Appendix A.](#))

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

There is current and relevant scholarly literature examining the need to train teachers to a high level and to retain in-service teachers in the field (Ingersoll, et. al., 2020; Hoornick-Lockard, 2023). The School System Sponsored National Board Cohort may be useful in providing these experiences for teachers (NBPTS, 2010; Will, 2017). Presently there is a gap in the literature regarding the role of leadership in school system sponsored national board cohorts (Martin, Goldwasser & Galento, 2017; Summowski & Grimes, 2019; Witteveen, 2015). This gap warrants further research to learn how the role of leadership plays into the success of the national board cohort model and if any positive outcomes from participation might be helpful to develop, train, and retain teachers in an effort to stem the present teacher shortage facing school systems in Alabama (Wiggin, et. al., 2021). The purpose of this study is to identify positive outcomes from participation in the school system led national board cohort. Results of this study will serve as a source of insight into the participants' perceptions of positive outcomes manifested as both intrinsic and external rewards gained from their participation and how leadership played a role in their participation and in the school system sponsored national board cohort. The results will create awareness into how these perceptions may affect the participants' intentions on remaining in the field. These perceptions and responses will serve as a resource for school system leadership in Alabama and other states in their continuous quest to support, train, and retain highly qualified teachers in the field and for their use should they choose to support their teachers through the certification process by developing their own school system national board cohort. See Reference list, Appendix A.

8B. A brief summary/abstract of the study methodology, including design, population, and variables of interest.

(350 word maximum, in language understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study. Note this summary/abstract can be used to prepare the concise summary in the consent document.):

Based on limited current research on the perceptions of teachers regarding national board cohort participation, a qualitative approach will be used to gain insight from the perspectives of the participants when considering the effect of leadership on their participation in the certification process (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Schwandt, 2015). This approach will allow coding of responses to discover common themes. The participants will come from one established school system sponsored national board cohort in Alabama, chosen through expert recommendation (Schwandt, 2015). A request for interview email will be sent and interested participants will give consent to be interviewed. The interviews will be recorded on a cellular device that is password protected. The interviews will be sorted by themes then coded (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

9. Purpose

9A. State the purpose of the study and all research questions or aims. (Include a sentence that begins, "The purpose of this study is...")

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of teachers who participated in a school system sponsored national board cohort. Results of this study will serve as a source of insight into the participants' perceptions of positive outcomes manifested from their participation and how leadership played a role in their experience. The results of this study will create awareness into how these perceptions may affect the participants' outlook on teaching, including their outlook on remaining in the field. These perceptions and responses will serve as a resource for school system leadership in Alabama and other states in their continuous quest to support, train, and retain highly qualified teachers in the field and for their use should they choose to support their teachers through the certification process by developing their own school system national board cohort.

9B. Describe how results of this study will be used? (e.g., presentation? publication? thesis? dissertation?)

The results of this study will be used for dissertation work, presentations and publications.

10. Key Personnel. Describe responsibilities as specifically as possible. Include information on research training or certifications related to this project. **To determine key personnel see decision tree at <https://cws.auburn.edu/QVPR/pm/compliance/irb/training>. Submit a copy of CITI training documentation for all key personnel.** (For additional personnel, add lines as needed).

To determine Auburn University HIPAA – covered entities click link to [HIPAA Policy](#).

If any key personnel have a formal association with institutions/entities involved in the study (for example is an employee or supervisor at the site research will occur), describe that affiliation. For all non-AU affiliated key personnel, submit a copy of their IRB approval.

Principal Investigator: Sonya Price
Email Address: smp0079@auburn.edu

Rank/Title: Graduate Student
Degree(s): Ph. D. Candidate

Dept / Affiliation: EFLT

HIPAA Covered Entity? Yes No

Roles / Responsibilities: To design, conduct, and report research project, to protect the rights and privacy of participants of the study, and to ensure protection of the data.

- AU affiliated? Yes No If no, name of home institution: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Plan for IRB approval for non-AU affiliated personnel? N/A

- Do you have any known competing financial interests, personal relationships, or other interests that could have influence or appear to have influence on the work conducted in this project? Yes No

- If yes, briefly describe the potential or real conflict of interest: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Completed required CITI training? Yes No If NO, complete the appropriate [CITI basic course](#) and update the revised Exempt Application form.

- If YES, choose course(s) the researcher has completed:

AU Basic RCR Training for ALL Faculty, Staff, Postdocs, and Students (ID 269966) **27-March-2027**; Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects (ID 110748) **27-March-2027**; Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID 110761) **6/1/2027**; IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher - IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral **3/27/2027**; Emphasis - AU Personnel (ID 72746) **3/27/2027**; Responsible Conduct of Research for Social and Behavioral - Social, Behavioral and Education Sciences RCR (ID 38149) **6/1/2027**; Workers as Research Subjects - A Vulnerable Population (ID 32249) **6/1/2024**

Individual: Ellen Hahn
Email Address: reamsh@auburn.edu

Rank/Title: Full Professor
Degree(s): Ed.D

Dept. / Affiliation: EFLT

HIPAA Covered Entity? Yes No

Roles / Responsibilities: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- AU affiliated? Yes No If no, name of home institution: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Plan for IRB approval for non-AU affiliated personnel? **N/A**

- Do you have any known competing financial interests, personal relationships, or other interests that could have influence or appear to have influence on the work conducted in this project? Yes No

- If yes, briefly describe the potential or real conflict of interest: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Completed required CITI training? Yes No If NO, complete the appropriate [CITI basic course](#) and update

the revised Exempt Application form.

- If YES, choose course(s) the researcher has completed:

Responsible Conduct of Research 22-January 2026; History and Ethical Principals 28-Sept 2025; International Research 30-Sept-2025; Social and Behavioral Emphasis 29-Jan 2026; Workers as Vulnerable populations 30- Sept 2025; Research and Public Elementary and Secondary Schools 29-January 2025; Audio-Visual 29-Jan 2025; Research with Children 29-Jan 2025.

11. Location of research.

11A. List all locations where data collection will occur. If applicable, attach permission letters as Appendix

E. (School systems,

organizations, businesses, buildings and room numbers, servers for web surveys, etc.) **Be as specific as possible.**

(See sample letters at <https://cws.auburn.edu/OVPR/pm/compliance/irb/sampledocs>)

Data Collection will occur with teachers from the Tuscaloosa City School System, Tuscaloosa, AL, in who have participated in their school system sponsored national board cohort. See attached letter from TCS in Appendices. Data Collection will occur on a password protected phone.

11B. Will study data be stored within a HIPAA covered facility? Yes No

If yes, which facility(ies) (To determine AU HIPAA covered entities, go to VII of the [HIPPA Hybrid Entity Policy](#)):

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

12. Participants (If minor participants, at least 2 adults must be present during all research procedures that include the minors.)

12A. Describe the targeted/ intended participant population for the study. Include the anticipated number of participants and inclusion and exclusion criteria and the procedures to ensure more than 1 adult is present during all research procedures which include the minor.

Check here if existing data will be used and describe the population from whom data was collected including the number of data files.

Check here if permission to access existing data is required and submit a copy of the agreement to access.

Participants of this qualitative study will be teachers or former teachers in Alabama who participated in the Tuscaloosa City Schools System sponsored national board cohort. Participants will be contacted by email and will receive a letter of consent form as an attachment. If they agree to participate, I will receive written consent from each one before beginning to gather data. The researcher's recruitment script (email) will include how the data will be used. Participants will be reminded to obtain a copy of the informed consent for their own records.

12B. Describe, step-by-step in lay language all procedures to recruit participants. Include in [Appendix B](#) a copy of all e-mails, flyers, advertisements, recruiting scripts, invitations, etc., that will be used to invite people to participate. (See sample documents at <https://cws.auburn.edu/OVPR/pm/compliance/irb/sampledocs>)

The researcher, Sonya Price, does not have any formal relationship with any of the participants. Participant list will come from Tuscaloosa school system national board cohort leadership representative. I will then reach out via email to determine the willingness of the participant to participate in the study. If they agree to participate, they will be sent an informed consent to sign and return. Upon receipt of the informed consent form the researcher will contact the participant by email and/or telephone to schedule an interview.

12C. Minimum number of participants required to validate the study? 8

Number of participants expected to enroll? 10

Provide the rationale for the number of participants. Eight participants will be enough to provide greater context and data for data analysis

Is there a limit to the number of participants that will be included in the study?

No Yes, the number is [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

12D. Describe the process to compensate, amount and method of compensation and/or incentives for participants. [AU Procurement and Business Services \(PBS\) policies](#) (benefits to participants are NOT compensation)

If participants will not be compensated, check here:

Indicate the amount of compensation per procedure and in total: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Indicate the type of compensation: Monetary Incentives

Raffle or Drawing incentive (Include the chances of winning.)

Extra Credit (State the value)

Other

Describe how compensation will be distributed (USPS, email, etc.): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

13. Project Design & Methods

13A. Describe, step-by-step, all procedures and methods that will be used to consent participants. If a waiver is being requested, indicate the waiver, and describe how the study meets the criteria for the waiver. If minors will be enrolled describe the process to obtain parental/ legally authorized guardian permission.

Waiver of Consent (including using existing data)

Waiver of Documentation of Consent (use of Information Letter)

Waiver of Parental Permission (for college students 18 years or younger)

All research activities include the use of participants' names, which will be changed to pseudonyms. I will obtain consent for each participant by explaining what the research study is about, what they will be asked to do, the length and time commitment, what the risks and benefits are, how the data will be used, how their privacy will be protected, and that their participation is voluntary. Before beginning the study, each participant will return a signed consent form by email. They will then be contacted to agree upon a time for a 45-minute interview.

13B. In lay language, understandable by someone not familiar with the area of study, describe the complete research design and methods that will be used to address the purpose. Include a clear description of who, when, where and how data will be collected. Include specific information about participants' time and effort.

The research design for this study is a qualitative case-study focusing on interviews. Once an informed consent is received by the researcher, the participant will be contacted by phone or email to set up an interview. The 45-minute interview will take place and be recorded on a personal cellular device which is password protected. The cellular service on the phone will be turned off when the phone is used to record interviews and will not be reinstated until the interview is put in BOX and deleted from the phone. The interview will be transcribed for specific codes and themes related to leadership supports and deterrents and positive outcomes from participation. Any additional documents will be volunteered by the participants, and, therefore, do not require any additional permissions. The frameworks utilized in this study are the literature review conceptual framework.

13C. List all data collection instruments used in this project, in the order they appear in [Appendix C](#). (e.g., surveys and questionnaires in the format that will be presented to participants, educational tests, data collection sheets, interview questions, audio/video taping methods etc.)

Data collection instrumentation includes: 1. The interview protocol. 2. Interview data will be collected on a cellular device using a voice recording app. These recordings will not be stored in the cloud to ensure the confidentiality of the information. The device is password protected. The cellular service on the phone will be turned off when the phone is used to record interviews and will not be reinstated until the interview is put in BOX and deleted from the phone.

13D. Data analysis: Describe how data will be analyzed. If a data collection form (DCF) will be used, submit a copy of the DCF.

Interview data will be analyzed to gather preliminary information regarding participants' knowledge, experiences, and perspectives related to participation in the school system sponsored national board cohort. The interviews will be recorded, reviewed, transcribed, and evaluated. Upon completion of data analysis, interpretations and conclusions will be drawn.

13E. List any drugs, medications, supplements, or imaging agents that participants will ingest/ receive during participation in the study or indicate not applicable (N/A).

N/A

14. Risks & Discomforts: List and describe all the risks participants may encounter in this research including risks from item 6d of this form, in this research. If deception will be part of the study, provide the rationale for the deception, describe the debriefing process, and attach a copy of the debriefing form that will be used as Appendix D. (Examples of possible risks are in section #6C)

The risks and discomforts associated with this study are minimal. However, there is a chance of a breach of confidentiality. The probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in this study is not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered during daily life or everyday conversation. There could be some psychological risk of a participant experiences any discomfort with an interview question.

15. Precautions / Minimization of Risks

15A. Identify and describe all precautions that will be taken to eliminate or reduce risks listed in items 6.c. and 14. If participants can be classified as a "vulnerable" population, describe additional safeguards that will be used to assure the ethical treatment of vulnerable individuals. If applicable, submit a copy of any emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists in Appendix D. (Sample documents can be found online at <https://cws.auburn.edu/OVPR/pm/compliance/irb/sampledocs> precautions)

The data from this study will be collected by the primary researcher and stored on a secure server in AU Box and confidentiality of information is maintained. The data will only be available to the researchers. Direct access to interviews will only be available to the primary researcher and the dissertation chair. To eliminate and reduce risks of breach of confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used to replace participant names. The code list for real names will be kept in a separate location from the data files. To reduce risk of participant discomfort, participants will be reminded that they are not required to respond to any interview question that creates discomfort for them.

15B. If the internet, mobile apps, or other electronic means will be used to collect data, describe confidentiality and/or security precautions that will be used to protect (or not collect) identifiable data? Include protections used during collection of data, transfer of data, and storage of data. If participant data may be obtained and/or stored by apps during the study, describe.

The information collected will only be used for its intended purpose and will not be provided to any other organization or entity. The information will be stored on a secure server in AU Box. Audio recordings will be stored on the researcher's personal cellular device that is password protected. The cellular service on the phone will be turned off when the phone is used to record interviews and will not be reinstated until the interview is put in BOX and deleted from the phone. Audio results will not be stored in the cloud to minimize risk in a breach in confidentiality. Once transcription is complete, all audio recordings will be destroyed.

15C. Does this research include purchase(s) that involve technology hardware, software or online services?

YES NO

If YES:

A. Provide the name of the product and the manufacturer of the product [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

B. Briefly describe use of the product in the proposed human subject's research.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

C. To ensure compliance with AU's Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Policy, contact AU IT Vendor Vetting team at vetting@auburn.edu to learn the vendor registration process (prior to completing the purchase).

D. Include a copy of the documentation of the approval from AU Vetting with the revised submission.

15D. Additional Safeguards

Will DEXA, pQCT, or other devices which emit radiation be used? Yes No

If yes, the IRB will notify the Auburn Department of Risk Management and Safety, who will contact the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) and secure approval. Research which includes device(s) which emit radiation may NOT be initiated NOR will IRB stamped consent documents be issued until the IRB is notified of ADPH approval.

Will a Certificate of Confidentiality (CoC) issued by NIH be obtained Yes No If yes, include CoC language in consent documents and include the documentation of CoC approval. Research which includes a CoC may not be initiated NOR will IRB stamped consent documents be issued until the IRB is notified of CoC approval. [AU Required CoC Language](#)

Is the study a [clinical trial](#)? Yes No

If yes, provide the National Clinical Trial (NCT) # [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) and include required clinical trial information in all consent documents. [AU Clinical Trial Information](#)

16. Benefits

16A. List all realistic direct benefits participants can expect by participating in this study. (Compensation is not a benefit) If participants will not directly benefit check here.

Participants are teachers or former teachers in Alabama schools. The benefits of participation are academic benefits to deepen knowledge of their time spent in the national board cohort and the outcomes that participation afforded them and an opportunity to reflect on leadership support during the process.

16B. List realistic benefits for the general population that may be generated from this study.

As the research on teachers' perceptions of their time spent in the school system national board cohorts expands, and the role that leadership played, the results will create awareness into how these perceptions may affect the participants' intentions on remaining in the field. These perceptions and responses will serve as a resource for school system leadership in Alabama and other states in their quest to support, train, and retain highly qualified teachers in the field and for their use should they choose to support their teachers through the certification process by developing their own school system national board cohort. This study of will fill a gap in current research and help support districts and school principals in leadership for their organizations.

17. Protection of Data

17A. Data are collected:

Anonymously with no direct or indirect coding, link, or awareness by key personnel of who participated in the study (skip to item E)

Confidentially, but without a link to participant's data to any identifying information (collected as "confidential" but recorded and analyzed "anonymous") (Skip to item E).

Confidentially with collection and protection of linkages to identifiable information.

17B. If data are collected with identifiers and coded or as coded or linked to identifying information, describe the identifiers and how identifiers are linked to participants' data.

he interviews will be confidential but will only occur with participants who agree to be interviewed. After the participant provides an email address, they will be contacted to schedule an interview. The interviews will not be linked to email addresses. Pseudonyms will be used for participants.

17C. Provide the rationale for need to code participants' data or link the data with identifying information.

Pseudonyms are needed so the researcher can keep participant data consistent.

17D. Describe how and where identifying data and/or code lists will be stored. (Building, room number, AU BOX?) Describe how the location where data is stored will be secured. For electronic data, describe security measures. If applicable, describe where IRB-approved and participant signed consent documents will be kept on campus for 3 years after the study ends.

Once the data has been collected, it will be stored on a secure, encrypted server (AU Box) to ensure security and confidentiality of information is maintained. The code list linking the participants to pseudonyms will be kept in a separate location from the data and will be destroyed after all data has been collected and names have been changed to pseudonyms. The secure server for data storage will be AU BOX.

17E. Describe how and where data will be stored (e.g., hard copy, audio/ visual files, electronic data, etc.), and how the location where data is stored is separated from identifying data and will be secured. For electronic data, describe security. Note use of a flash drive or portable hard drive is not appropriate if identifiable data will be stored; rather, identifying participant data must be stored on secured servers.

All participants will be asked to maintain confidentiality. All identifying information will be coded and kept in a separate file. All identifiable data, code lists, etc. will be kept in AU Box.

17F. List the names of all who will have access to participants' data? (If a student PI, the faculty advisor must have full access and be able to produce study data in the case of a federal or institutional audit.)

Sonya Price, the primary investigator, and Dr. Ellen Hahn, faculty advisor, will have access to the participants which will be coded with pseudonyms.

17G. When is the latest date that identifying information or links will be retained and how will that information or links be destroyed? (Check here if only anonymous data will be retained)

All identifying information and links (coding list) will be retained until all data from data sources referenced above have been collected and transcribed. Once interviews have been transcribed and accuracy verified, audio recordings and code lists will be destroyed, no later than July 1, 2025.

Version Date: [Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

Recruitment Email

RECRUITMENT EMAIL (sent to present and former members of school system national board cohort per list provided by Tuscaloosa City School System (The Case Study School System)).

My name is Sonya Price. I am from the College of Education, Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology at Auburn University. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study I am conducting on "Teacher Perceptions of the School System Sponsored National Board Cohort" I believe your perspective and insight would add great value to this body of research. I am hoping you would be willing to consider participation in this research.

As a participant, you will be asked to schedule a time to conduct a forty-five-minute interview, during which time you will be asked a series of questions about your experiences in the national board cohort. The entire process should take no more than forty-five minutes.

(Briefly review information outlined in Informed Consent that might be influence the participant's interest in the study)

Risks: Breach of confidentiality is a minimal risk of the study, due to identifiable data being collected. However, pseudonyms will be used once data has been collected to minimize any associated risk.

Compensation/Benefits: There is no compensation and no direct benefits associated with participation. However, indirect benefits may include reflection on leadership experiences that lead to personal growth or professional development. Additionally, information from this study may be used to help better prepare and support school and system leaders in leading and developing a national board cohort that supports teachers. However, I cannot promise that you will receive any or all of the benefits I have described.

Cost: There is no cost associated with participation in this study.

Privacy: Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. The researchers will use pseudonyms and will not use any identifiable data in the analysis or presentation of information. Findings of the study will be used for presentations or publications.

If you would like to participate in this research study, please respond to this email by returning the attached informed consent document signed and dated. I will provide you with a copy of the document for your records. Upon receiving your informed consent document, you will be contacted to schedule the interview

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them by responding to this email, Dr. Ellen Hahn, at reamseh@auburn.edu or Sonya Price, at smp0079@auburn.edu.

ATTACHED:
Informed Consent Form

<p>The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this Document for use from <u>07/05/2024</u> to <u>-----</u> Protocol # <u>24-962 EX 2407</u></p>
--

Interview Questions for Participants

Opening to the interview:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I have us scheduled for an hour together. Does this still work for you? I want to honor our time constraints. Therefore, while I encourage you to elaborate on your answers to my questions, we will be sure to cover all the issues within this one-hour time frame (Tracy 2020).

- 1) Tell me a little about you and your professional career.
- 2) What brought you to teaching?
- 3) Why are you pursuing national board certification?
- 4) How will it benefit you as a teacher?
- 5) What do you think of the process so far?
- 6) Talk me through the outcomes have you experienced from your participation in the school system sponsored national board cohort? (Intrinsic and external)
- 7) What sort of barriers and facilitators have you experience from your school leadership while participating in the cohort? (Helps and/or hinderances)
- 8) What sort of barriers and facilitators have you experience from your School System (Central Office) leadership while participating in the cohort? (Helps and/or hinderances)
- 9) How has participating in the cohort affected your outlook on remaining in the teaching field?

(Assigned pseudonym):

Date:

Beginning Time:

End Time:

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07/05/2024 to -----
Protocol # 24-962 EX 2407



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, LEADERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

(NOTE: DO NOT SIGN THIS DOCUMENT UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL STAMP WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

**INFORMED CONSENT
for a Research Study entitled**

**Teacher Perceptions:
A Case Study of One School System Sponsored National Board Cohort**

You are invited to participate in a research study to explore perceptions of teachers who have participated in a school system sponsored national board cohort. The study is being conducted by Sonya Price – PhD candidate, under the direction of Dr. Ellen Hahn, in the Auburn University College of Education. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a member of former member of a school system sponsored national board cohort and are age 19 or older.

What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to engage in a 45-minute interview with the researcher that includes 10 questions. The interview will be recorded through a voice recording application located on the researchers' personal cellular phone. The cellular service on the phone will be turned off when the phone is used to record interviews and will not be reinstated until the interview is put in BOX and deleted from the phone. This data will be transcribed by the researchers and destroyed when the study is complete. Your total time commitment will be approximately 60 minutes which includes your response to the initial request for interview email.

Are there any risks or discomforts? The risks associated with participating in this study are breach of confidentiality by someone gaining unapproved access to your data or the online data being hacked or intercepted, as occasionally occurs when information is provided via an online format. To minimize these risks, we will use a secure system to collect this data, store all data on a password protected computers, external drives, and cellular devices. The cellular service on the phone will be turned off when the phone is used to record interviews and will not be reinstated until the interview is put in BOX and deleted from the phone. However, these measures cannot completely eliminate the potential risk. We will use a pseudonym and all identifying information will be maintained separately from your research data, thus preventing the ability for the data to be linked to you should a breach occur. We will destroy any identifying information after the study has been completed.

Participants Initials_____

Page 1 of 2

4036 Haley Center, Auburn, AL 36849-5221; Telephone: 334-844-4460; Fax: 334-844-3072

w w w . a u b u r n . c d u



Are there any benefits to yourself or others? If you participate in this study, you can expect to contribute to the data that could provide valuable knowledge and insight related to teacher perceptions of the school system sponsored national board cohorts. This information will help current and future educational leaders understand teacher perception of their experiences in the system sponsored national board cohort and the role that leadership support played in those perceptions. This will inform future research about how school and system leaders can support teachers through the national board cohort. We cannot promise you that you will receive any or all the benefits described.

Will you receive compensation for participating? Participation in this study is voluntary and there is not an associated compensation.

Are there any costs? If you decide to participate, you will not incur any costs associated with participation in this study. Auburn University has not provided for any payment if you are harmed as a result of participating in this study.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn if it is identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University or the Department of Education.

Your privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Information obtained through your participation may be stored securely on the researchers' computers which will be de-identified and will not include any of your personal contact information. If we quote you, we will use pseudonyms (fake names).

If you have questions about this study, please ask them now or contact Dr. Ellen Hahn at (334) 844-3067 or by email at reamseh@auburn.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you to for your records.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844- 5966 or e-mail at IRBadmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR

WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

Participant's Signature Date

Printed Name

Investigator Obtaining Consent Date

Printed Name

Co-Investigator Date

Printed Name

Page 2 of 2

Version Date (date document created): _____

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Email:** reamseh@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** efit
- **Phone:** 7065737563

- **Curriculum Group:** Responsible Conduct of Research
- **Course Learner Group:** AU Basic RCR Training for ALL Faculty, Staff, Postdocs, and Students
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - RCR
- **Description:** This course is for investigators, staff and students with an interest or focus in **Biomedical Research**. This course contains text, embedded case studies AND quizzes.

- **Record ID:** 50319525
- **Completion Date:** 22-Jan-2023
- **Expiration Date:** 22-Jan-2026
- **Minimum Passing:** 90
- **Reported Score*:** 94

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Authorship (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16597)	01-Oct-2022	5/5 (100%)
Collaborative Research (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16598)	01-Oct-2022	5/5 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest and Commitment (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16599)	22-Jan-2023	3/5 (60%)
Data Management (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16600)	22-Jan-2023	5/5 (100%)
Mentoring (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16602)	22-Jan-2023	5/5 (100%)
Peer Review (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16603)	22-Jan-2023	5/5 (100%)
Research Misconduct (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16604)	22-Jan-2023	5/5 (100%)
Plagiarism (RCR-Basic) (ID: 15156)	22-Jan-2023	4/5 (80%)
Using Animal Subjects in Research (RCR-Basic) (ID: 13301)	22-Jan-2023	5/5 (100%)
Research Involving Human Subjects (RCR-Basic) (ID: 13566)	22-Jan-2023	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 954)
- **Institution Email:** reamseh@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** efit
- **Phone:** 7065737563

- **Curriculum Group:** IRB Additional Modules
- **Course Learner Group:** History and Ethical Principles - SBE
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 51739705
- **Completion Date:** 29-Sep-2022
- **Expiration Date:** 29-Sep-2025
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 80

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	29-Sep-2022	4/5 (80%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS***

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Email:** reamseh@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** efl
- **Phone:** 7065737563

- **Curriculum Group:** IRB Additional Modules
- **Course Learner Group:** International Research - SBE
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 51764711
- **Completion Date:** 01-Oct-2022
- **Expiration Date:** 30-Sep-2025
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
International Research - SBE (ID: 509)	01-Oct-2022	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

• **Name:** Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
 • **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
 • **Institution Email:** reamseh@auburn.edu
 • **Institution Unit:** efi
 • **Phone:** 7065737563

• **Curriculum Group:** IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher
 • **Course Learner Group:** IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel
 • **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
 • **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Key Personnel (including AU Faculty, Staff and Students) and Faculty Advisors involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

• **Record ID:** 48419823
 • **Completion Date:** 30-Jan-2022
 • **Expiration Date:** 29-Jan-2025
 • **Minimum Passing:** 80
 • **Reported Score*:** 91

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127)	30-Jan-2022	3/3 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	30-Jan-2022	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	30-Jan-2022	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	30-Jan-2022	4/5 (80%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	30-Jan-2022	3/5 (60%)
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	30-Jan-2022	5/5 (100%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928)	30-Jan-2022	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?ka761743c-52eb-fd8-8a05-7b0f69cab2-f8419823

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Email:** reismeh@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** efit
- **Phone:** 7065737563

- **Curriculum Group:** IR03 Additional Modules
- **Course Learner Group:** Workers as Research Subjects - A Vulnerable Population
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 51764710
- **Completion Date:** 01-Oct-2022
- **Expiration Date:** 30-Sep-2025
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483)	01-Oct-2022	4/4 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS***

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Email:** reamseh@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** efit
- **Phone:** 7065737563

- **Curriculum Group:** IRB Additional Modules
- **Course Learner Group:** Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 48419807
- **Completion Date:** 30-Jan-2022
- **Expiration Date:** 29-Jan-2025
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	30-Jan-2022	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

• **Name:** Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
• **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
• **Institution Email:** reamseh@auburn.edu
• **Institution Unit:** eft
• **Phone:** 7065737563

• **Curriculum Group:** Research with Audio-Visual Mobile Data Collection Tools: Ethics and Regulations
• **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
• **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

• **Record ID:** 47037360
• **Completion Date:** 30-Jan-2022
• **Expiration Date:** 29-Jan-2025
• **Minimum Passing:** 80
• **Reported Score*:** 80

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Research with Audio-Visual Mobile Data Collection Tools: Ethics and Regulations (ID: 20426)	30-Jan-2022	4/5 (80%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

• **Name:** Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
• **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
• **Institution Email:** reamseh@auburn.edu
• **Institution Unit:** efl
• **Phone:** 7065737563

• **Curriculum Group:** IRB Additional Modules
• **Course Learner Group:** Research with Children - SBE
• **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

• **Record ID:** 51764709
• **Completion Date:** 30-Jan-2022
• **Expiration Date:** 29-Jan-2025
• **Minimum Passing:** 80
• **Reported Score*:** 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507)	30-Jan-2022	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* Scores on this Requirements Report (Part 1) reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. The Transcript Report (Part 2) lists more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Sonya Price (ID: 9165247)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Email:** smp0079@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Educational Leadership
- **Phone:** (334) 844-4446

- **Curriculum Group:** IRB Additional Modules
- **Course Learner Group:** Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 61525771
- **Completion Date:** 01-Jun-2024
- **Expiration Date:** 01-Jun-2027
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 80

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	01-Jun-2024	4/5 (80%)

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**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT****

** Scores on this Transcript Report (Part 2) reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. The Requirements Report (Part 1) lists the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Sonya Price (ID: 9165247)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Email:** smp0079@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Educational Leadership
- **Phone:** (334) 844-4446

- **Curriculum Group:** IRB Additional Modules
- **Course Learner Group:** Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 61525771
- **Current Score**:** 80

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	01-Jun-2024	4/5 (80%)

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

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- **Institution Email:** smp0079@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Educational Leadership
- **Phone:** (334) 844-4446

- **Curriculum Group:** Responsible Conduct of Research
- **Course Learner Group:** AU Basic RCR Training for ALL Faculty, Staff, Postdocs, and Students
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - RCR
- **Description:** This course is for investigators, staff and students with an interest or focus in **Biomedical Research**. This course contains text, embedded case studies AND quizzes.

- **Record ID:** 50322873
- **Completion Date:** 27-Mar-2024
- **Expiration Date:** 27-Mar-2027
- **Minimum Passing:** 90
- **Reported Score*:** 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Authorship (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16597)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Collaborative Research (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16598)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest and Commitment (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16599)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Data Management (RCR-Basic) (ID: 20896)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Mentoring and Healthy Research Environments (RCR-Basic) (ID: 20983)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Peer Review (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16603)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Research Misconduct (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16604)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Plagiarism (RCR-Basic) (ID: 15156)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Using Animal Subjects in Research (RCR-Basic) (ID: 13301)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Research Involving Human Subjects (RCR-Basic) (ID: 13566)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)

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COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT****

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- **Stage:** Stage 1 - RCR
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- **Record ID:** 50322873
- **Current Score**:** 100

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Plagiarism (RCR-Basic) (ID: 15156)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Research Involving Human Subjects (RCR-Basic) (ID: 13566)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Using Animal Subjects in Research (RCR-Basic) (ID: 13301)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Authorship (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16597)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Collaborative Research (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16598)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest and Commitment (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16599)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Data Management (RCR-Basic) (ID: 20896)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Mentoring and Healthy Research Environments (RCR-Basic) (ID: 20983)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Peer Review (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16603)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Research Misconduct (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16604)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)

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COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS***

* Scores on this Requirements Report (Part 1) reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. The Transcript Report (Part 2) lists more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

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- **Institution Email:** smp0079@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Educational Leadership
- **Phone:** (334) 844-4446

- **Curriculum Group:** IRB Additional Modules
- **Course Learner Group:** Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 42790730
- **Completion Date:** 01-Jun-2024
- **Expiration Date:** 01-Jun-2027
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 80

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Conflicts of Interest in Human Subjects Research (ID: 17464)	01-Jun-2024	4/5 (80%)

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT**

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- **Name:** Sonya Price (ID: 9165247)
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- **Institution Email:** smp0079@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Educational Leadership
- **Phone:** (334) 844-4446

- **Curriculum Group:** IRB Additional Modules
- **Course Learner Group:** Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 42790730
- **Current Score**:** 80

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Conflicts of Interest in Human Subjects Research (ID: 17464)	01-Jun-2024	4/5 (80%)

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COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS***

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• **Name:** Sonya Price (ID: 9165247)
• **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
• **Institution Email:** smp0079@auburn.edu
• **Institution Unit:** Educational Leadership
• **Phone:** (334) 844-4446

• **Curriculum Group:** IRB Additional Modules
• **Course Learner Group:** Workers as Research Subjects - A Vulnerable Population
• **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

• **Record ID:** 42790728
• **Completion Date:** 01-Jun-2024
• **Expiration Date:** 01-Jun-2027
• **Minimum Passing:** 80
• **Reported Score*:** 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483)	01-Jun-2024	4/4 (100%)

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**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT****

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• **Institution Unit:** Educational Leadership
• **Phone:** (334) 844-4446

• **Curriculum Group:** IRB Additional Modules
• **Course Learner Group:** Workers as Research Subjects - A Vulnerable Population
• **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

• **Record ID:** 42790728
• **Current Score**:** 100

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483)	01-Jun-2024	4/4 (100%)

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COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

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- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Email:** smp0079@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Educational Leadership
- **Phone:** (334) 844-4446

- **Curriculum Group:** IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Key Personnel (including AU Faculty, Staff and Students) and Faculty Advisors involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

- **Record ID:** 61525770
- **Completion Date:** 27-Mar-2024
- **Expiration Date:** 27-Mar-2027
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 94

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127)	27-Mar-2024	3/3 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928)	27-Mar-2024	3/5 (60%)

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COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT****

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- **Institution Email:** smp0079@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Educational Leadership
- **Phone:** (334) 844-4446

- **Curriculum Group:** IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Key Personnel (including AU Faculty, Staff and Students) and Faculty Advisors involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

- **Record ID:** 61525770
- **Current Score**:** 100

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127)	27-Mar-2024	3/3 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)

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- **Institution Unit:** Educational Leadership
- **Phone:** (334) 844-4446

- **Curriculum Group:** Responsible Conduct of Research for Social and Behavioral
- **Course Learner Group:** Social, Behavioral and Education Sciences RCR
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - RCR
- **Description:** This course is for investigators, staff and students with an interest or focus in **Social and Behavioral** research. This course contains text, embedded case studies AND quizzes.

- **Record ID:** 36886048
- **Completion Date:** 04-Jul-2020
- **Expiration Date:** 03-Jul-2025
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Authorship (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16597)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Collaborative Research (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16598)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest and Commitment (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16599)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Data Management (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16600)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Mentoring (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16602)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Peer Review (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16603)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Research Misconduct (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16604)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Plagiarism (RCR-Basic) (ID: 15156)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Research Involving Human Subjects (RCR-Basic) (ID: 13566)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)

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- **Record ID:** 36886048
- **Current Score**:** 100

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Plagiarism (RCR-Basic) (ID: 15156)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Research Involving Human Subjects (RCR-Basic) (ID: 13566)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Using Animal Subjects in Research (RCR-Basic) (ID: 13301)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Authorship (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16597)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Collaborative Research (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16598)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest and Commitment (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16599)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Data Management (RCR-Basic) (ID: 20896)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Mentoring and Healthy Research Environments (RCR-Basic) (ID: 20983)	27-Mar-2024	5/5 (100%)
Peer Review (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16603)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Research Misconduct (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16604)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Data Management (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16600)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)
Mentoring (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16602)	04-Jul-2020	5/5 (100%)

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Appendix B

Informed Consent Letter



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, LEADERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

(NOTE: DO NOT SIGN THIS DOCUMENT UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL STAMP WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

INFORMED CONSENT for a Research Study entitled

Teacher Perceptions: A Case Study of One School System Sponsored National Board Cohort

You are invited to participate in a research study to explore perceptions of teachers who have participated in a school system sponsored national board cohort. The study is being conducted by Sonya Price – PhD candidate, under the direction of Dr. Ellen Hahn, in the Auburn University College of Education. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a member of former member of a school system sponsored national board cohort and are age 19 or older.

What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to engage in a 45-minute interview with the researcher that includes 10 questions. The interview will be recorded through a voice recording application located on the researchers' personal cellular phone. This data will be transcribed by the researchers and destroyed when the study is complete. Your total time commitment will be approximately 60 minutes which includes your response to the initial request for interview email.

Are there any risks or discomforts? The risks associated with participating in this study are breach of confidentiality by someone gaining unapproved access to your data or the online data being hacked or intercepted, as occasionally occurs when information is provided via an online format. To minimize these risks, we will use a secure system to collect this data, store all data on a password protected computers, external drives, and cellular devices. However, these measures cannot completely eliminate the potential risk. We will use a pseudonym and all identifying information will be maintained separately from your research data, thus preventing the ability for the data to be linked to you should a breach occur. We will destroy any identifying information after the study has been completed.

Participants Initials _____

Page 1 of 2

4036 Haley Center, Auburn, AL 36849-5221; Telephone: 334-844-4460; Fax: 334-844-3072

w w w . a u b u r n . e d u

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? If you participate in this study, you can expect to contribute to the data that could provide valuable knowledge and insight related to teacher perceptions of the school system sponsored national board cohorts. This information will help current and future educational leaders understand teacher perception of their experiences in the system sponsored national board cohort and the role that leadership support played in those perceptions. This will inform future research about how school and system leaders can support teachers through the national board cohort. We cannot promise you that you will receive any or all the benefits described.

Will you receive compensation for participating? Participation in this study is voluntary and there is not an associated compensation.

Are there any costs? If you decide to participate, you will not incur any costs associated with participation in this study. Auburn University has not provided for any payment if you are harmed as a result of participating in this study.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn if it is identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University or the Department of Education.

Your privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Information obtained through your participation may be stored securely on the researchers' computers which will be de-identified and will not include any of your personal contact information. If we quote you, we will use pseudonyms (fake names).

If you have questions about this study, please ask them now or contact Dr. Ellen Hahn at (334) 844-3067 or by email at reamseh@auburn.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you for your records.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844- 5966 or e-mail at IRBadmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR

WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

Participant's Signature Date

Printed Name

Investigator Obtaining Consent Date

Printed Name

Co-Investigator Date

Printed Name

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Version Date (date document created): _____

Appendix C

Interview Questions for Participants

Opening to the interview: Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I have us scheduled for an hour together. Does this still work for you? I want to honor our time constraints. Therefore, while I encourage you to elaborate on your answers to my questions, we will be sure to cover all the issues within this one-hour time frame (Tracy 2020).

- 1) Tell me a little about you and your professional career.
- 2) What brought you to teaching?
- 3) Why are you pursuing national board certification?
- 4) What do you think of the process so far?
- 5) Talk me through the outcomes have you experienced from your participation in the school system sponsored national board cohort? (intrinsic and extrinsic)
- 6) What sort of barriers and facilitators have you experience from your school leadership while participating in the cohort? (Helps and/or hinderances)
- 7) What sort of barriers and facilitators have you experience from your School System (Central Office) leadership while participating in the cohort? (Helps and/or hinderances)
- 8) How has participating in the cohort affected your outlook on remaining in the teaching field?
- 9) When you complete your NB certification, have you considered ways you could give back to the school system?

(Assigned pseudonym):

Date:

Beginning Time:

End Time: