

MT. VERNON & REGION

MVTHS faculty members named National Board Certified teachers

BY APRIL TOLER

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MT. VERNON — Three more Mt. Vernon Township High School teachers recently learned they have received one of the top certifications in education.

MVTHS teachers Holly McKay, Jessica Pilson and Nikki Prost were recently named National Board Certified Teachers, the highest certification a teacher can achieve.

"This is tough and it's very grueling," said MVTHS Superintendent Terry Milt. "To make it through, it's a great accomplishment."

They are three of six national board certified teachers working at MVTHS, giving the school more board certified teachers than any other high school in Southern Illinois.

Melissa Cockburn, special education teacher, Ann Garrett, language arts, and Sheila Stowers, English teacher, are also board certified.

To apply to become National Board Certification teachers must: hold a bachelor's degree; have completed three full years of teaching/counseling experience; and possess a valid state teaching/counseling license for that period of time,

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TERRY MILT,
SUPERINTENDENT

or, if teaching where a license is not required, have taught in schools recognized and approved to operate by the state.

Pilson, who has been with the high school for eight years, said while she is glad she completed the program, she admits it was a long and strenuous process.

"The test was harder than I expected it to be," she said.

But well worth it, she added, and a journey she would recommend to any of her fellow teachers.

"It makes you evaluate the way you teach and think about if this is useful for the students and are they getting out of it what I want them to get out of it," Pilson said.

McKay agrees and said while the process was harder

than any of the college degrees she earned, it made her a better teacher.

"It will definitely change the way I teach," she said. "You learn to reflect on whatever you do everyday as a teacher, and how it help[s] students."

According to the NBPTS Web site, more than 55,000 teachers have achieved national board certification since 1987.

In Illinois, the certification is good for 10 years with renewal available every 10 years through the State Board of Education and the state provides a scholarship, for those who apply, to help cover costs.

Illinois also allows certified teachers to earn an annual \$3,000 stipend for National Board Certified Teachers with additional stipends for those

who provide mentoring or assist candidates teaching in at-risk schools.

Milt said the program is based on proven research and is a great program for teachers on not only how to teach but how to reach kids.

"A National Board Certified Teacher just has an extensive training background with working with kids, with proven methodology that works," he said.

According to research conducted by Arizona State University, "48 comparisons [4 grades, 4 years of data, 3 measures of academic performance], students of NBCTs surpassed students of non-NBCTs in almost three-quarters of the comparisons. The learning gains were equivalent [on average] to spending about an extra month in school."

There are currently more teachers working on obtaining certification, Milt said, and he welcomes more teachers to take on the challenge.

"Congratulations to those three and we look very forward to having many more," he said.

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