



**Five employees with Hickory Public Schools recently achieved National Board Certification and were recently recognized during a January 2012 meeting of the HPS Board of Education. (From L-R): Sarah Byrd, Lora Snider, Richard Holmes, Tyler Grove (not pictured: Kim Howell)**

## **HPS Announces Five Teachers Achieve National Board Certification**

Five teachers with **Hickory Public Schools** recently achieved National Board Certification and they were recognized by the HPS Board of Education and HPS Superintendent, Dr. Walter Hart, during a board meeting this past January, 2012. The five teachers include **Sarah Byrd, Lora Snider, Richard Holmes, Tyler Grove, and Kim Howell.**

National Board Certification is part of the growing education reform movement that is advancing student learning, improving teaching and making schools better. District and state officials—across the nation—know National Board Certified Teachers make a positive difference in student learning. They also know National Board Certified Teachers are powerful teacher leaders who help advance agendas for school improvement.

National Board Certification is an advanced teaching credential that complements, but does not replace, a state's teacher license. National Board Certification is achieved upon successful completion of a voluntary assessment program designed to recognize effective and accomplished teachers who meet high standards based on what teachers should know and be able to do. Teachers who achieve National Board Certification have met high standards through study, expert evaluation, self-assessment and peer review.

**Sarah Byrd** teaches the Academically/Intellectually Gifted (AIG) program at both Oakwood Elementary and Viewmont Elementary Schools. A teacher for the past eight years, this is her second year serving Hickory Public Schools. She also taught secondary English at North Wilkes High School in Wilkes County. A native of Ashe County, Sarah Byrd earned her degree in secondary English education from Appalachian State University (ASU) and followed-up with an add-on licensure for K-12 AIG programs. She is currently attending graduate school at ASU.

“I chose to seek National Board Certification because I felt it would allow me to grow as a teacher, and it did. While completing the portfolio pieces, I was forced to closely examine why I taught particular students and subject matter the way I did,” said Byrd. “The greatest reward of being a teacher is being able to do what I love every day—and get paid for it. I love kids and I love learning—teaching is one of the few jobs that allows me to combine the two. It is so rewarding to share my enthusiasm for learning with my students by making learning fun and stimulating their minds to help them realize their potential.”

**Lora Snider** teaches third grade at Longview Elementary School. She has been teaching for eleven years—all with the third grade at Longview. A native of Pulaski, Virginia, Lora Snider earned her undergraduate degree with honors in elementary education with a minor in French from Lenoir-Rhyne University. She is currently attending graduate school at Gardner-Webb University.

“I always knew I wanted to be a teacher,” said Snider. “The joy I receive daily is enough to make me want to get up regardless of the alarm, how tired I am, how many things I have to do, and even how sick I may feel—because I have always realized that even on my worse day, I may be some small child’s greatest hope,” she said. “If I can make one child at school realize their potential, their worth, and their gift in this world then my entire career will have meant something extraordinary. Not everyone has amazing parents to go home to so it is my job to make sure their third grade classroom is as amazing as it can be.”

**Richard Holmes** is a band teacher and has been teaching for 22 years. He has been teaching band at Grandview Middle School for the past nine years—with one year at Northview Middle. Prior to joining Hickory Public Schools, Holmes also taught in Robeson County, Gaston County and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The son of a US Navy veteran, Holmes adjusted to frequent moves when he was very young, but most of his years growing up were spent in Gaston County. With an undergraduate degree in music education from Winthrop University, Holmes also earned his masters of music education with a concentration in band directing from Appalachian State University.

“The greatest reward as a teacher is seeing a student ‘get it’ with what the class is learning about at that time,” said Holmes. “Going through the National Board process—I really reflected on what and how I do things in my classroom—and as a result—I now do many things differently. Earning a pay raise through the National Boards doesn’t hurt either!” he said.

**Tyler Grove**, a native of Richmond, Virginia, teaches sixth grade language arts and social studies at Northview Middle School. While this is his second year at Northview, Grove previously taught for three years at the former Catawba Valley High School. Prior to joining Hickory Public Schools, Grove also served Wilkes County Schools. With an undergraduate degree in history and secondary education from Warren Wilson College, Tyler Grove also earned his master's degree in secondary education from Appalachian State University.

“My greatest reward as an instructor in public education is being able to foster strong, positive and productive relationships with students from all backgrounds,” said Grove. “I sought National Board Certification as a tool to advance my teaching by critically analyzing and improving my classroom practice.”

**Kim Howell** teaches world history and honors civics and economics at Hickory High School. A teacher for the past seven years, she has dedicated six of those years with the students at Hickory High.

A native of Bradford, Arkansas, Howell earned her degree in secondary education, social studies, at Lenoir-Rhyne University.

“The greatest reward that I receive in education is watching my students grow academically and watching them become active citizens who truly care about their communities and country,” said Howell. “That type of growth lets me know that our next generation will accomplish much more than my generation; it lets me know that our country is in safe hands for the future,” she said.

Each of the five recognized teachers received an HPS logo-etched paperweight and a one-time \$500 bonus. National Board Certified teachers also receive a 12 percent salary increase from the state.

***Congratulations to all for your excellent achievement!***

