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**Sabatier is Nationally Certified
Mount Vernon High physics teacher earns honor on first try.**

By Steve Hibbard

Charley Sabatier, a physics teacher at Mount Vernon High School, has been awarded national board certification, the gold standard of the teaching profession. Nationally, 63,800 teachers received National Board Certification, which is fewer than 2 percent of the 3.7 million teachers in the United States.

"Getting the certification justifies all the time and effort I put in creating lessons and trying to make the class exciting and interesting for kids," he says.

"The national board certification is very intense. It's like lawyers passing their bar exam," said Nicole Gillespie, senior program officer with the Knowles Science Teaching Foundation. "One of the most meaningful things is that it recognizes that teaching is a profession much like medicine or law, and it's setting very high standards for teachers. So we're extremely impressed that Charley got this on his first try."

Gillespie has known Charley since 2005 and describes him as "extremely passionate and dedicated. His own physics knowledge is very exceptional and he's always striving to learn more," she says.

An Arlington resident, Charley is in his sixth year at Mount Vernon, teaching IB and active physics, a conceptual physics class for students who are not quite ready to go into chemistry yet.

"You have to create opportunities for students to do the science, to do experiments and discover the concepts that we're studying for themselves," he says. "When you figure something out on your own, you're much more likely to understand it and remember it than just reading about it."

To that end, his students use Slinkys, toy cars, marbles and ramps in their lessons. "They get to see the science in action," he says. "It's very hands-on and minds-on at the same time."

At Mount Vernon, Charley is also a Professional Learning Community (PLC) leader, a co-sponsor of the Engineering and Robotics Club as well as the coach of the JV boys soccer team.

In addition, Charley is a 2005 Knowles Science Teaching Fellow. The five-year fellowship is awarded to a select few of the nation's math and science teachers. The Knowles Science Teaching Foundation emphasizes the application of scientific concepts to real-world situations. They accomplish this by providing their teachers with the mentoring, the instructive seminars and the sense of community that they need to improve their teaching strategies.

He grew up in Oxford, Miss., and graduated from the University of Mississippi with a bachelor's degree in physics in 2001. He earned his MA in science education from GMU in 2008.