



National Board Certification and the Blueprint

A Guide for Affiliates

PART 1:

Understanding National Board Certification (NBC) and Its Connection to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future

NBC FAQs – INCLUDING BLUEPRINT REFERENCES

What is National Board Certification?

National Board Certification was designed to develop, retain, and recognize accomplished teachers and to generate ongoing improvement in schools nationwide. It is the most respected professional certification available in K-12 education. National Board Certification (NBC) is a **voluntary, advanced teaching credential** that goes beyond state licensure. NBC has national standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is the organization that certifies teachers who successfully complete its rigorous certification process.

Who can pursue National Board Certification?

To be eligible, an educator or counselor must submit proof of all employment, licensure, and education requirements prior to starting the certification process. The following three requirements must be verified using nbpts.org/certification/candidate-center/first-time-and-returning-candidate-resources/:

1. Have worked for at least three years in the same state-supported school district.
2. Hold at least a bachelor's degree for employment at this school (note that candidates registering for the Career and Technical Education certificate are required to hold a bachelor's degree only if their state requires one for their current license).
3. Hold a valid state teaching license (or school counseling license if you applied for the ECYA/ School Counseling certificate) for the three years of employment at this school.

Candidates are strongly urged to call 800.22.TEACH (83224) to clarify these rules prior to applying and making payment, as the application charge and initial fee are nonrefundable.

What are the benefits of pursuing certification?

Research shows that National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) have a positive impact on students. In addition, as per the Blueprint, the local school system career ladder may include opportunities for teachers who seek leadership positions in their schools and districts. To learn more, go to: nbpts.org/certification/benefits/



What is the financial incentive for achieving National Board Certification? Who is eligible?

Currently, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, in [Ed. §6-1009](#), provides language stating that teacher salary increases associated with the career ladder shall, at a minimum, include a salary increase for NBCTs, with an additional salary allotment for NBCTs working at a low-performing school.

Note 1: This change in the law is significant—previously, increases for NBCT status was a stipend; the law changes it to a salary adjustment for “teachers,” which makes the earnings pensionable.

Note 2: Teacher is defined in the law in section [§6-1001](#):

- “Teacher” means a certified public-school employee who is primarily responsible and accountable for teaching the students in the class. “Teacher” does not include, unless otherwise provided: curriculum specialists; instructional aides; attendance personnel; psychologists; social workers; clerical personnel; an individual with a Resident Teacher Certificate; or an individual with a certification for career professionals.
- Teachers in a co-teaching model (including a special education teacher or ESOL teacher), who may not be the “teacher of record” for the class, may be eligible for these salary increases if they meet all other eligibility criteria. Co-teaching time shall count towards the minimum required “teaching time.” The second criteria for salary increase require that the teacher hold an “active” National Board Certification.
- If another job title has formal job responsibilities that meet the eligibility criteria established in statute, this job title may receive salary increases unless explicitly excluded from the definition of teacher found in the Blueprint (See Ed. §6-1001(e)). The percentage of time responsible and accountable to teaching will vary, depending on each level of the career ladder (See [Ed. §6-1003](#) and See [Ed. §6-1004](#)).

Note 3: We interpret that any active “teacher” who has NBCT and meets the “teacher” definition outlined above, as of March 12, 2021 or after, will be eligible for this financial incentive, beginning July 1, 2022.

- Salary increases: Beginning on July 1, 2022, “teachers” shall receive the minimum following salary increases (See [Ed. §6-1009](#)).
 - NBC = \$10,000
 - NBC + Teaching in a low-performing school = an additional \$7,000

What is the financial incentive for maintaining National Board Certification (referred to as maintenance of certification)?

Salary increases associated with the maintenance of an NBC are subject to collective bargaining in accordance with [§6-408](#) of this title. The state share for the following salary increases provided under paragraph 10 of this subsection shall not exceed the following amount(s):

- Earning a first maintenance of NBC: \$8,000 salary increase.
- Earning a second maintenance of NBC: \$7,000 salary increase.
- Earning a third maintenance of NBC: \$6,000 salary increase.



How do I determine if my school is labeled as a low-performing school? What happens if my school ceases to be labeled as a low performing school?

Click [here](#) to see if your school is identified as a low-performing school. Low Performing schools will be identified annually using the defined methodology, known as the MSDE Framework for National Board Certified Teachers and Low Performing Schools. Local School Systems (LSSs) can add schools to the list of Low Performing Schools. A school may have the "Low Performing" designation added or removed each year. An NBC teacher that begins teaching at a school when it is not actively identified as Low Performing will not receive the salary increase but would be eligible for the increase if the school's status changes. An NBC teacher that receives the salary increase for teaching at a Low-Performing school will not lose the salary increase while teaching at the same school, even if the school ceases to be low performing. See [Ed. §6-1009\(c\)\(2\)](#).

When do financial incentives take place?

According to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, teacher salary increases associated with the career ladder begin July 1, 2022. Salary increases associated with maintenance of an NBC are subject to collective bargaining in accordance with [§6-408](#) of this title.

Is the National Board status increase a salary increase or stipend?

The Blueprint repealed Education Article §6-306, commonly referred to as the Quality Teacher Incentive Act of 1999 (QTIA). Education Article §6-306 was used to authorize a stipend to those classroom teachers and non-administrative school-based staff, employed by a county board, who held a Maryland professional certificate and a certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. **Note:** Several contracts also extended the same incentives to other educator categories.

If an MSEA member earned their NBC status from another state and is maintaining active certification with NBPTS, what is the time requirement for Maryland employment to be eligible for a salary benefit?

The individual status for a salary increase is based on the National Board Certification status as of March 12, 2021 and teacher status as defined by the Blueprint. It is not based on an individual's tenure if already achieved. We recommend that the individual submit their National Board Certification certificate to their local Human Resources department.

What are the four components of the Certification Process?

Component 1: Content Knowledge

Component 2: Differentiation in Instruction

Component 3: Teaching Practice and Learning Environment

Component 4: Effective and Reflective Practitioner

What is the timeline for the National Board process?

Candidates must submit all four components within the first three years of their candidacy. While it is possible to complete the process in as little as one year, there is a five-year window to achieve certification.



What is the initial cost of the NBCT certification process?

The initial cost for each of the four components is \$475 (the total cost for the initial attempt of all four components is \$1,900). Retake attempts require an additional fee. The Blueprint provides for candidate funding for the initial attempt and one retake attempt. Each teacher who pursues National Board Certification shall receive from the state an amount equal to the NBPTS fees associated with the initial attainment completion or maintenance of certification if applicable. Under this subsection [Ed. §6-1012](#), each teacher may only receive payment for one retake of each assessment on the NBPTS.

Is there a registration fee for the NBCT?

A \$75 nonrefundable and nontransferable registration fee is required and must be paid before purchasing a component. Components must be selected and purchased separately, prior to the registration deadline for each assessment cycle.

What are the portfolio school minimums for NBC?

To achieve the National Board Certification requirement, you must meet each of the following distinct score requirements:

1. Assessment score center section average score of at least 1.75.
2. Portfolio section average score of at least 1.75.
3. A total weighted scale score of at least 110.

Can I receive Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credit for completion of the process?

Educators who complete the NBC process are eligible for Continuing Professional Development Credits (CPDs), which may be used toward the renewal of their Maryland Educator Certificate. LSS CPD coordinators have the authority to issue CPD credits for the completion of the NBC process and additional credits for achieving National Board Certification.

What are the important national board certification dates?

A member interested in getting started should:

1. Go to nbpts.org/certification/get-started/
2. Contact their local office of human resources to partake in funding for pursuing National Board Certification. The law, §6-1008, provides funding for eligible candidates. Candidates need to complete an MOU with their local school system.
3. Check with MSEA for [candidate support sessions](#) offered in the fall (typically September) and winter (typically January).
4. Check NBPTS important deadlines. Below is a sample timeline for the 2021-22 assessment cycle. NBPTS provides a sample timeline each assessment cycle.



The following chart is applicable to candidates submitting components for scoring during the 2021-22 assessment cycle.

2021-22 IMPORTANT DATES/DEADLINES	
Registration Window	June 1, 2021 – February 28, 2022
Registration <i>(Includes payment of \$75 fee)</i>	February 28, 2022
Component Selection <i>(Includes payment of component fees)</i>	February 28, 2022
Change of Certificate and/or Specialty Area	February 28, 2022
Change of Component Selection	February 28, 2022
Withdrawal Deadline	February 28, 2022
ePortfolio Submission Window	April 1 – mid-May, 2022
Component 1: Content Knowledge Testing Window	March 1 – June 15, 2022
Score Release	On or before December 31, 2022

Guide to National Board Certification

PART 2:

MSEA Supports

What support does MSEA have for National Board Candidates and those considering NBC?

The MSEA Center for Education Policy and Practice (CEPP) provides professional development in the following topics related to NBC. Please contact us at CEPP@mseane.org to learn more. Please check out [MSEA's Professional Learning Portal for Jump Start Training Seminars](#).

- Introduction to National Board Certification
- National Board JumpStart Seminar
- NBC and Blueprint for Maryland's Future
- Introduction to Maintenance of Certification
- Maintenance of Certification JumpStart Seminar
- [MSEA Convention Workshops](#)
- [MSEA IPD Conference](#)