



Nancy S. Grasmick  
State Superintendent of Schools

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**TO:** Members of the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board  
**FROM:** Jean E. Satterfield *JES*  
**DATE:** June 2, 2011  
**SUBJECT:** Reconfiguration of the Current Certification Structure Final Report

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this item is to present the Final Report of the Reconfiguration of the Current Certification Structure.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

In support of Maryland's Third Wave of Reform, our Race To The Top (RTTT) submission, and recent legislative action directing the Maryland State Department of Education to adopt regulation which aligns teacher performance, in part, with student growth in public schools, MSDE has convened a Certification Work Group to reconfigure the current certification structure.

At the Maryland State Board of Education meeting in January 2010, the Division of Certification and Accreditation presented a conceptual framework which strengthened the link between certification, continuing professional development, and continued satisfactory experience to educator certification.

Consistent with practice in the development of regulations, Department staff identified a variety of constituents including human resource directors, local school system and nonpublic school administrators, education association/union representatives, and representatives from higher education. The Final Report (attached) specifies the recommendations of the Work Group.

**SUMMARY:**

Since its initial meeting in September 2010, the Reconfiguration of the Current Certification Structure Work Group has discussed a variety of issues: the equitable application of the requirements for all certificate holders, the need to expand professional development opportunities, the continuing importance of rigorous and relevant professional development, and the elimination of the master's requirement for teachers.

**ACTION:**

This item is presented for your information and discussion.

JES: lmb

Attachment

Maryland Public Schools: #1 in the Nation Three Years in a Row

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**Reconfiguration of Certification Structure Work Group  
Final Report**

**Presented to the  
Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board**

**June 2, 2011**

**MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

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**Ms. Jean E. Satterfield**  
*Assistant State Superintendent*  
*Division of Certification and Accreditation*

**Dr. Joann H. Ericson**  
*Chief, Certification Branch*

**Martin O'Malley**  
*Governor*

## ***WORK GROUP MEMBERS***

Dr. Alpheus Arrington  
Director of Human Resources  
Baltimore County Public Schools

Ms. Linda Bongiovano  
Education Program Specialist, Certification  
Division of Certification and Accreditation  
Maryland State Department of Education

Ms. Penny H. Bradley  
Personnel Coordinator  
Caroline County Public Schools

Ms. Gail Epps  
Maryland State Education Association  
Instructional Specialist  
Office of Human  
Resources and Development  
Montgomery County Public Schools

Dr. Joann Ericson  
Chief, Certification  
Division of Certification and Accreditation  
Maryland State Department of Education

Ms. Diane Hampton  
Director of Institutional Relations  
Maryland Independent College  
and University Association

Dr. Linda Jacobs  
Executive Director  
The Harbour School

Ms. Lucille Kidwell  
Certification Specialist  
Charles County Public Schools

Ms. Heather Lageman  
Teacher Effectiveness Specialist  
Division of Instruction  
Maryland State Department of Education

Ms. Lauri McGuire, Esq.  
Legal Counsel  
Office of the Attorney General

Dr. Mark Mechlinski  
Director of Juvenile Services  
Division of Career and College Readiness  
Maryland State Department of Education

Dr. Scott Pfeiffer  
Director of Instructional Assessment  
Division of Instruction  
Maryland State Department of Education

Ms. Jean Satterfield  
Assistant Superintendent for Certification and  
Accreditation  
Maryland State Department of Education

Ms. Sandy Sengstack  
Certification Coordinator  
Montgomery County Public Schools

Ms. Sarah Spross  
Chief, Nonpublic Schools  
Division of Certification and Accreditation  
Maryland State Department of Education

Ms. Cindy Stull  
Certificated Personnel Officer  
Frederick County Public Schools

Dr. Kenneth D. Witmer, Jr.  
Dean, College of Education  
Frostburg University

Ms. Tammy Woodhouse  
Baltimore Teachers Union  
Education Associate  
Forest Park High School

Ms. Lasheda Young  
Human Resource Specialist  
Howard County Public Schools

## ***INTRODUCTION***

### **Background**

The enactment of *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* in 2002 dramatically transformed expectations for educators responsible for the instructional programs in the public schools. The heightened emphasis on highly qualified teachers not only elevated the standards for entering the profession but also emphasized a new approach to accountability for both educators and local school systems.

In February 2009, with the passage of the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)*, \$4.35 billion was designated for the Race to the Top Fund, a competitive grant program designed to promote and compensate states who are creating conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvements in student achievement; closing achievement gaps; and implementing ambitious plans in four core education reform areas:

- Adopting standards and assessment to prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;
- Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how to improve instruction;
- Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially in the neediest schools; and
- Turning around low-achieving schools.

In conjunction with the award of RTTT funding, the General Assembly enacted the *Education Reform Act of 2010*, (HB 1263). The legislation included a revision in the probationary period for a teacher from two years to three years; inclusion of student growth as a significant component on which teachers and principals are to be evaluated; the establishment of locally negotiated incentives for highly effective classroom teachers and principals in certain schools; and rigorous standards for mentoring during the probationary period.

Federal legislation has provided the impetus for numerous regulatory changes regarding the certification of educators in Maryland since *NCLB*. In addition to the federal momentum, several local concerns necessitated the need to review existing certification practices and procedures.

### **Rationale**

The *Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)*, specifically, *COMAR13A.12.01, General Provisions*, delineates the requirements for professional public education staff in the State. Furthermore, *COMAR13A.12.01.03, Personnel*, specifies personnel subject to certification as teachers, specialists, and administrators in public schools, State-Operated schools, and certain non-public schools approved under *COMAR13A.09.10, Educational Programs in Non-Public Schools and Child Care and Treatment Facilities*.

For the past several years, certification regulations have been applied differently for certain populations not employed in one of the entities required to hold certification. However, due to

the increased expectations for accountability now placed on public school teachers and principals, it seems timely that the Department reconsiders this practice so that there is fidelity to the regulations.

Under the auspices of Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools, as an integral component of Maryland's Third Wave of Reform, Ms. Jean E. Satterfield, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Certification and Accreditation, convened a Work Group and charged the Work Group to revise the certification system to:

- Reflect educator effectiveness;
- Focus on professional development for those required to hold a certificate; and
- Serve the needs of all certificate holders in the State.

### ***WORK GROUP PROCEEDINGS***

#### **Meeting Dates**

The Work Group met on the following dates: September 15, October 14, November 8 and December 1, 2010 and January 11, February 8, and April 13, 2011. All meetings were conducted at the Maryland State Department of Education.

#### **Conceptual Framework**

After considerable discussion, the Work Group determined the following principles to serve as the basis for recommendations:

1. The current certification structure requires revision so that regulatory requirements are equitably applied.
2. Licensure is an affirmation that the individual has met the threshold eligibility requirements necessary to execute the responsibilities of the position.
3. The *Education Reform Act of 2010* augmented the accountability for certificated individuals in public schools; therefore, ensure that certificates continue to be issued to those individuals required to hold certification.
4. Satisfactory experience and rigorous and relevant professional development are requisite for initial and continued certification for those required to hold a certificate; rigorous and relevant professional development is also requisite for continued licensure.
5. Performance (outputs) rather than credentials only (input) have assumed more importance.

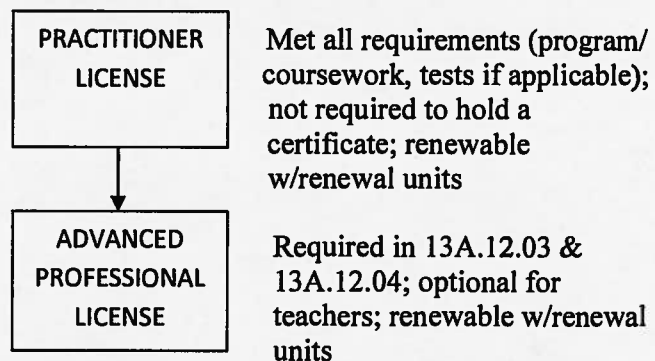
6. There are many ways to demonstrate advancement in the profession; an advanced degree is but one. Research supports that, on the average, master's degrees in education for a teacher bear no direct relation to student achievement.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

#### **Rationale:**

Current regulations are not equitably applied to all certificate holders. Many of those for whom there is no regulatory requirement to hold a Maryland certificate can renew the certificate without having met the existing stipulated requirements (satisfactory experience and a professional development plan) currently in regulation. This practice must be discontinued but allow for those individuals who meet eligibility requirements to hold a credential. This recommendation has no impact on those required by regulation to hold a certificate.

**Recommendation 1:** Revise the current certification system to include a license for those individuals who are not required by regulation to hold a certificate.



#### **Rationale:**

The requirement that individuals obtain a master's degree or master's equivalency within ten years from first obtaining professional certification and employment in a Maryland school system has been a mainstay of the certification system for decades. While it would seem that advanced degrees would help teachers be more effective, the preponderance of educational research conducted over the last fifty years does not support this assumption. There are some data to suggest that advanced degrees in mathematics and the sciences may directly contribute to student achievement in those areas; however, most teachers do not pursue advanced degrees in content areas.

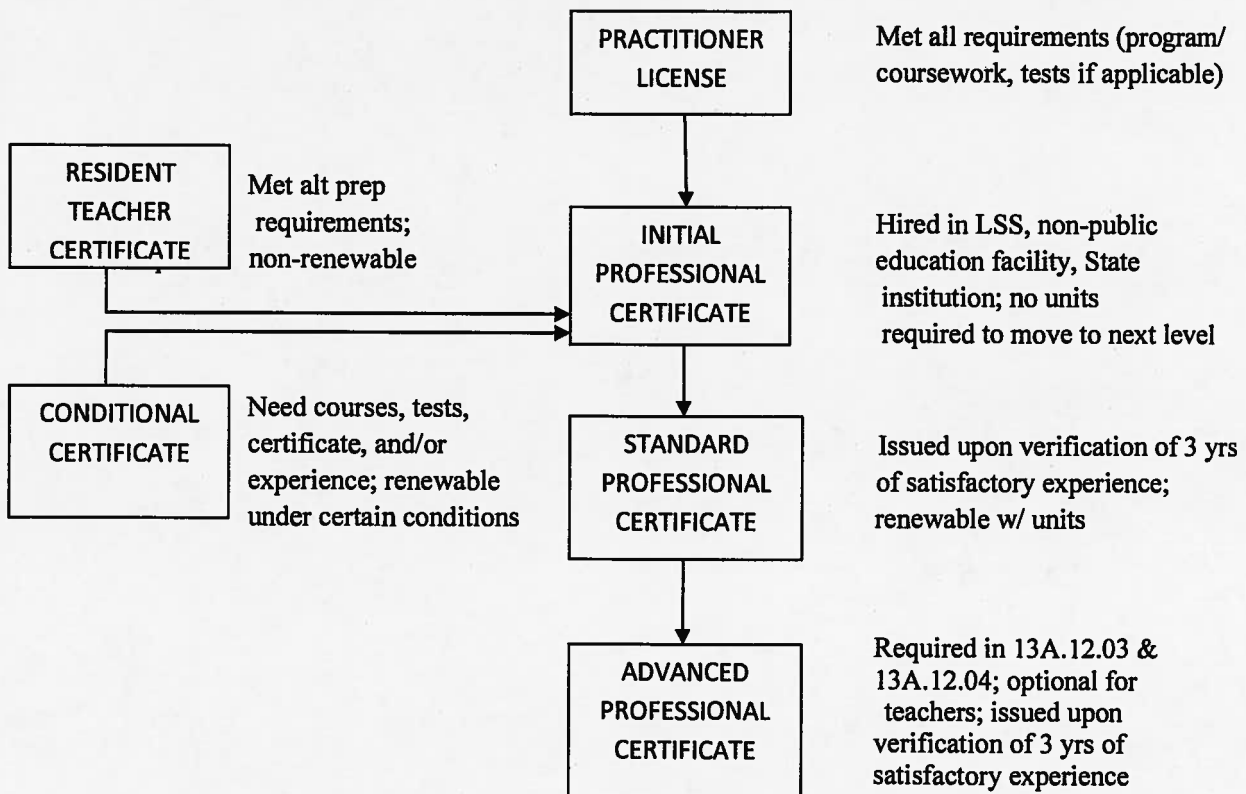
**Recommendation 2:** Eliminate the requirement for obtaining a master's degree for teachers. The master's degree remains the requirement for those seeking certification as

an Administrator or Supervisor (*COMAR13A.12.04*) and/or Specialist (*COMAR13A.12.03*).

**Rationale:**

Maryland has initiated its third Wave of Reform designed to achieve national status as a leader in educational excellence. Federal and state mandates have increased accountability demands on public school educators; therefore, it became important to provide a distinction between the credential for an individual required to hold certification and the individual who chooses to hold certification. A license gives permission to practice; the issuance of a certificate confirms that the individual performs the practice satisfactorily.

**Recommendation 3:** Differentiate the credential for those required to hold certification and those who are not required to hold certification.





**Rationale:**

There are more demanding expectations (both federal and State) for those employed in public schools, State-operated institutions, and certain non-public schools in terms of performance and accountability. These educators must demonstrate stronger content knowledge; adherence to the State Curriculum; a deeper understanding of pedagogy; an understanding of the learners and their development including how to assess and scaffold learning, how to assist students with learning differences, and how to support the learning of language and content for those who are not yet proficient in the language of instruction. In addition, the connection between effectiveness and continued student achievement is highly transparent.

A 2000 study by the National Staff Development Council examined award-winning professional-development programs at eight public schools that had made measurable gains in student achievement. The study found that in each of the schools, "the very nature of staff development [had] shifted from isolated learning and the occasional workshop to focused, ongoing organizational learning built on collaborative reflection and joint action." Specifically, the study found that the schools' professional-development programs were characterized by collaborative structures, diverse and extensive professional-learning opportunities, and an emphasis on accountability and student results (*Education Week*, May 17, 2011).

**Recommendation 4:** Recommit to the importance of rigorous and relevant professional development as a continued requirement for certification and certificate renewal. Moreover, expand opportunities for continuing professional development which will contribute to student growth and achievement. Encourage the use of job- embedded professional development activities. Limit the use of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to specific certificate holders, such as School Psychologists, Guidance Counselors, School Social Workers, whose respective professional organizations provide relevant professional development activities and experiences.

**Rationale:**

In recent years the research on the value of pre-service teacher preparation has accelerated. Nearly every state requires teachers to have earned at least a bachelor's degree and completed a certain number of professional education courses in order to receive a state license/certificate. State-approved programs typically complete an approval process which is standards-based, and, in recent years, there has been an increased emphasis on performance outcomes to be demonstrated by the graduate.

Local school system superintendents report that each year graduates whom they employ must complete additional requirements designed to facilitate their success in the respective school systems. Novice teachers need to devote themselves to acclimating to the respective school system's expectations and concentrate on refining beginning skills without the burden of taking additional courses to renew a certificate.

**Recommendation 5:** Facilitate the novice teacher's entry into the profession and world of practice; eliminate the need for additional renewal credits while on the Standard Professional Certificate 1. (See diagram in Recommendation 3).

**Rationale:**

As local school systems implement ways to provide meaningful professional development aligned with evaluations and student growth, the availability of relevant professional development activities will increase. In addition, many colleges/universities, as well as the Department, are offering on-line professional development experiences.

A review of neighboring state requirements for certificate renewal ranged from a low of 75 hours (Wyoming) to 300 (Arkansas). Although the emphasis on the continuing professional development should focus on results and not inputs, for certification purposes at this time, it is necessary to identify a certain number of renewal units.

**Recommendation 6:** Require 135 units for renewal. Renewal units may be college/university credits and /or Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits or other approved equivalent experiences determined by the local school system. A committee of stakeholders should be convened to identify the guidelines for determining the equivalency of the units. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) would be acceptable for specific certificate holders, such as School Social Worker, School Psychologist, Guidance Counselor.

**SUMMARY**

The following chart depicts a comparison between the existing certificate structure and the proposed structure as it relates to those individuals required by regulation to hold a certificate.

Certificate	CURRENT			PROPOSED			
	Valid	Requirements	Renewable	Certificate	Valid	Requirements	Renewable
PEC	5 yr	Approved program and tests or coursework, experience, and tests	Yes (6 credits each renewal cycle)	Practitioner License	5 yr	Approved program and tests or coursework, experience, and tests	Yes (6 credits each renewal cycle)
RTC	2 yr.	Requisite degree; GPA, testing, pre-employment training, and enrolled in a MAAPP	No	No change			No
CDC/CNC	2 yr.	Applicant does not meet professional requirements	Yes, under certain conditions	No change			Yes, under certain conditions as specified in regulation
SPC1	5 yr.	Employed in LSS; meets all course work, experience (internship if approved program, one year verified if transcript analysis) and test requirements	Yes (if service is interrupted)	Initial Professional Certificate	5 yr.	Employed in entity required by regulation to hold certification	Yes; renewable one time if service is interrupted
SPC 2	5 yr.	Must advance to next certificate level meeting degree and experience requirements; PDP required	No	Standard Professional Certificate	5 yr.	Employed in entity required to hold certification by regulation; based on a minimum of 3 yr. of satisfactory experience; renewable with requisite units and continued satisfactory experience	Yes; demonstration of continued rigorous and relevant professional development and continued satisfactory experience
EXT SPC 2	3 yr.	Employed in LSS, consecutively holds or held a 3 yr SPC 1 and a 5 yr SPC 2 and has satisfied all requirements for APC except course work	No				
APC	5 yr.	Requires master's; master's equivalent (21 graduate, 15 undergrad or CPDs) or National Board Certification and 12 graduate credits; a min of 6 credits shall be related to teacher's specific discipline or the specialist's specific assignment; and experience (3 yr) requirements; PDP required	Yes (6 credits each renewal cycle)	Advanced Professional Certificate	5 yr.	Optional; Master's degree required for specialist and administrator areas	Yes; demonstration of continued rigorous and relevant professional development and continued satisfactory experience

## ***CONCLUSION***

**Policymakers and practitioners are confronted with a monumental task: to construct a 21st century teaching profession that fully accommodates the needs of students who enter our public schools now and in the future. The Reconfiguration of Certification Structure Work Group was formed to begin this reconstruction through a critical examination of the existing certification structure. Motivated by national and State initiatives, the Work Group has proposed revisions to the current certification structure which will strengthen the process, ensure the equitable application of regulations to all applicants/certificate holders, and align certification renewal with demonstration of continued satisfactory experience and presentation of a professional development plan based on the educator's identified needs, strengths and interests.**

# APPENDIX

1. **HB 1263**  
<http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/bills/hb/hb1263e.pdf>
2. **Race to the Top Executive Summary**  
[http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/race to the top](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/race%20to%20the%20top)
3. **Maryland's 3<sup>rd</sup> Wave of Reform**  
[http://www.msde.maryland.gov/NR/rdonlyres/167F463A-3628-47B7-8720-353C3216AD1A/25538/3W\\_ExecSum\\_July2010\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.msde.maryland.gov/NR/rdonlyres/167F463A-3628-47B7-8720-353C3216AD1A/25538/3W_ExecSum_July2010_FINAL.pdf)
4. **Separation of Degrees: A State by State Analysis of Teacher Compensation for Master's Degrees**  
[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/07/pdf/masters\\_degrees.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/07/pdf/masters_degrees.pdf)
5. **Center for Educator Compensation Reform: General Compensation Questions**  
[http://cecr.ed.gov/researchSyntheses/Research%20Synthesis\\_Q%20A2.pdf](http://cecr.ed.gov/researchSyntheses/Research%20Synthesis_Q%20A2.pdf)
6. **Indicators of Teacher Quality**  
<http://www.ericdigests.org/2004-1/quality.htm>
7. **The HR Exchange, October, 2009**  
[http://www.tasb.org/services/hr\\_services/hrexchange/2009/Oct09/halt\\_extra\\_pay for m.aspx](http://www.tasb.org/services/hr_services/hrexchange/2009/Oct09/halt_extra_pay_for_m.aspx)
8. ***Education Week***  
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/professional-development/>