

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 167 (Senators Greenip and Colburn)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Education - Teacher Certification - National Organization Standards

This bill extends eligibility for programs currently available to individuals who have obtained or are seeking certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) to individuals who have obtained or are seeking certification from the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE). In addition, when considering teacher preparation programs for approval, the State Board of Education and the Maryland Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) must include the standards of ABCTE and any other national teacher certifying organization approved by the Maryland State Department of Education.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2008.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Because ABCTE certification is not currently an accepted route to a professional teaching certificate in Maryland, the bill is not expected to have a fiscal impact on the State.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The programs and benefits that would be extended to individuals who have obtained or are seeking certification from ABCTE are shown in the table below.

Current Program

Benefits

State and Local Aid Program for Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

The State and local school systems pay the certification fees for teachers who pursue NBPTS certification. In addition, aid may be provided to a participant for up to one retake of an unsuccessful entry on the NBPTS assessment.

National Board Certified Teacher Pilot Program

Schools participating in this program receive up to \$62,000 annually from the State to employ one staff development teacher. Eligible schools must have at least three teachers seeking NBPTS certification.

Quality Teacher Incentives

Classroom teachers and other nonadministrative school-based employees who hold NBPTS certification receive stipends from the State equal to the county grants for NBPTS certification, up to a maximum of \$2,000 annually per teacher.

Current Law: Only teachers who have obtained or are seeking NBPTS certification are eligible to participate in the programs described above. The State Board of Education and PSTEB jointly develop rules and regulations for the certification of teachers and other professional school personnel, as well as requirements for the preparation of teachers and other education personnel.

Background: Founded in 2001 with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, ABCTE is a bi-partisan, nonprofit organization with a mission to increase the supply of highly qualified teachers. ABCTE operates a “Passport to Teaching” program for career changers who are pursuing teaching licenses. Candidates for ABCTE certification must hold a bachelor’s degree, pass a background check, pass an ABCTE teaching knowledge exam, and pass an ABCTE subject area exam. According to the ABCTE web site, most people complete certification in 6 to 10 months. ABCTE reports that the certification fee for most of its “Passport to Teaching” programs is \$850. Maryland has not accepted ABCTE certification as a route to a professional teaching certificate.

NBPTS is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with a mission “to establish high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.” Its goal is to strengthen teaching and improve student learning through the following “core propositions”:

- teachers are committed to students and their learning;
- teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students;
- teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning;
- teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; and
- teachers are members of learning communities.

The fee for NBPTS certification is \$2,500. NBPTS reports that there are nearly 64,000 teachers certified by NBPTS in the United States; in the 2004-2005 school year, there were at least 574 working in Maryland. NBPTS certification often takes one to three years to complete.

State Fiscal Effect: Because ABCTE certification is not an accepted route to a professional teacher certificate in Maryland, it is assumed that the bill would have no fiscal impact on the State. If ABCTE certification is recognized at some point in the future and individuals in Maryland pursue and obtain ABCTE certification, the potential fiscal effects on the three programs addressed in the bill are discussed below.

State and Local Aid Program for Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

This program is limited to 1,000 participants per year selected by the State Board of Education, and the bill would not change that. The certification fee for ABCTE is actually lower (\$850) than the fee for NBPTS (\$2,500). If individuals seeking ABCTE certification are selected by the State board for participation in the program, the State pays two-thirds of the certification fee and the local school system employing the individual pays the other one-third.

National Board Certified Teacher Pilot Program

This program is currently limited to five schools selected by the State Superintendent of Schools, so the bill would not have a fiscal impact on the program. The program is scheduled to terminate at the end of fiscal 2010.

Quality Teacher Incentives

There is no limit on this program, so costs for the program could increase if Maryland teachers obtain ABCTE certification. Currently the State matches any stipends provided by local school systems to NBPTS-certified teachers, up to \$2,000 annually per teacher, and most school systems do provide the stipends. If local school systems decided to provide stipends to teachers holding ABCTE certification, general fund expenditures would increase by up to \$2,000 per ABCTE-certified teacher to match the local funds.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Department of Legislative Services

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