

Laura Williams, NBCT Early Adolescence Mathematics
Math Teacher, Chesapeake High School
Testimony: SB957

Dear Whomever It May Concern:

I am writing to show my support for SB957. My name is Laura Williams, and I have been a math teacher in AACPS for 28 years. I grew up attending Ft. Smallwood Elementary, Chesapeake Bay Middle, and Chesapeake High, graduating in 1993. I then went to Towson to work toward my life-long goal of becoming a teacher. I graduated from TU in 1998 and began working immediately. I have been working in AACPS since 1998, and my children now attend Chesapeake High as well. I take deep pride in my work, and I have been loyal to AACPS since the beginning of my career. I care about the community and work tirelessly to do my job to the best of my ability, having supported thousands of students along the way.

I earned my Master's degree in 2004, and then I achieved National Board Certification in 2007. I achieved it when you had to complete all four portions of the certification process in the same year. It was a grueling process, writing pages upon pages as I reflected upon my teaching, taking videos of my lessons and analyzing them, compiling student work that supported the effectiveness of my teaching. I did this back before you could split the process up into parts. There were also no Professional Learning Facilitators (PLF) to help us through the process as there are now. It was an intense amount of work to complete, especially when still teaching full time, but the process taught me to really reflect on my teaching, and I was rewarded by achieving NBC status. At that time, I earned an additional \$4,000 per year for holding this certification. \$2000 was awarded from the state and \$2000 was awarded from the county. That was quickly reduced to only \$3000 just a short time later. That was the first time the monetary incentive was reduced from what we were told it would be.

Eight years later, it was time for me to renew my certification (so that it would be completed in the 10-year time frame). Even though AACPS pay scales had been frozen for quite some time, and I lost a lot of money, I still stayed loyal to AACPS and went through the process of renewing my National Board Certification. During the renewal, I again had to complete four components. I had to describe four Professional Growth Experiences (PGEs) I had since my initial certification. Again, I wrote pages and pages describing the effectiveness of my teaching and its impact on student learning. Again, I videotaped my lessons, watched them as I analyzed and reflected on my teaching. Again, I compiled student work demonstrating their learning. Now, at this time, AACPS was starting to offer some support and assistance with the NBC process, but not to the extent that there is today. In 2017, I renewed my National Board Certification.

Since then, the Blueprint for MD Schools was developed and adopted. This requires that teachers maintain their National Board Certification every 5 years, rather than every 10 years. Teachers that completed renewal before December 2021 have been told that they are not eligible for the Maintenance of Certification increases, which is absolutely inequitable. AACPS

is all about equity, and this is an area where that is severely lacking. After completing my renewal, I even served as a Professional Learning Facilitator, helping other teachers to achieve NBC, yet, I am not eligible for the increases that Maintenance of Certification (MOC) is now offering. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has even recently acknowledged that the renewal process is equivalent to TWO maintenance of certifications. (The MOC is comprised of two components, compared to the four components of the renewal process). Below is a screenshot from a memorandum from the NBPTS on 12/10/2026:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the National Board hereby recognizes successful completion of the Renewal process under the prior 10-year certification system as equivalent to completion of two consecutive MOC cycles for all purposes related to recognition, reporting, and eligibility for state and district incentives tied to MOC achievement.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

This means that I should be earning an additional \$15,000 (+ \$8000 for the first MOC and \$ 7000 for the second MOC), yet I am earning none of that additional money. At the same time, a teacher that achieved an MOC after 2021, a teacher that I may very well have helped through the process when I was a PLF, will be eligible for that increase before I will. HOW IS THIS FAIR OR EQUITABLE? I have stayed loyal to AACPS through salary scale freezes and a salary scale collapse. I have worked to make it to the top of the salary scale, which is only 25 years, even though retirement doesn't come until 30 years. The top of the scale isn't eligible for step increases, and the COLAs don't cover cost increases on almost everything now. At this time, I am only earning the additional \$10,000 for holding my NBC. If I achieve maintenance of certification this year, I won't find out until December 2026, and the additional \$8000 wouldn't even go into effect until the beginning of the 2027-2028 school year. I should be earning that money (and the additional \$7000) NOW. Recognizing the renewal process as the equivalent of TWO MOCs, and awarding us that money retroactively, is the only way to make this situation EQUITABLE, FAIR, and RIGHT. Please continue to advocate for this bill and I hope it is passed in the very near future.

I have gained a lot of experience in my 28 years of working for AACPS. I want to continue teaching and serving my students and other members of the community. I work extremely hard everyday, year in and year out, to ensure that my students reach their full potential. I am only asking for what is FAIR. I am asking on behalf of myself and the many other educators who achieved during the same time frame that I did. The ones who have completed the work, but are being told they are not eligible for the pay increases. If you truly value your educators, please SHOW us. This would be one way to do so.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Laura Williams, NBCT
Chesapeake High School