

My name is Amy Young-Buckler and I am a library media specialist and National Board Certified Teacher in Anne Arundel County. This year is my 28th year teaching. As a veteran educator at the top of my salary scale, the only additional salary I receive comes from my National Board Certification salary enhancement and cost of living increases.

I started my National Board Certification journey in 2008. I was a middle school library media specialist in Prince George's County. I was looking for a professional challenge and had a choice: work towards another Master's Degree or pursue National Board Certification. I chose National Board Certification because I wanted the opportunity to examine my professional practice, understand how my work impacts student achievement, and identify ways to strengthen my teaching to benefit my students. I achieved my National Board Certification after completing all four components in one year. When it was time to renew my certification, I saw it as a new challenge - I was teaching in a different school district and teaching elementary students. This would give me a new and different challenge - comparing my past practice with older students to my newer practice with elementary students. I achieved my Maintenance of Certification in 2018, a year before my initial certification expired in 2019.

In the spring of 2024, AACPS teachers received information about the Career Ladder and how the salary enhancements would work for National Board Certified teachers. I was excited when I heard that not only would I be receiving the \$10,000 salary enhancement for my initial certification but would also be eligible for an additional enhancement of \$8,000 because I had maintained my certification with my renewal in 2019. My excitement was diminished in October 2024 when the FAQ about the Career Ladder was shared. In that FAQ, I learned that because my MOC had been completed prior to December 2021, I would ONLY be eligible for the \$10,000 salary enhancement as a National Board Certified teacher.

What does this mean? That means that other teachers that have the same job that I have, that have the same license that I have, the same years of experience that I have, and have the same certification that I have started making \$8,000 more this school year (2025-2026) than me simply because of when they achieved National Board Certification and when they completed their maintenance of certification. For me, that means a loss of income of \$40,000 between this school year and the 2030-2031 school year; the next time I would be eligible for a salary enhancement if I renew my NBCT in 2029. These enhancements are counted as salary and factor into our pensions. Does that seem fair?

In December, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards released a Policy Guidance Memorandum that states that National Board Certified Teachers that currently hold a 10 year MOC should be recognized as having completed the equivalent of two 5 year MOC cycles. I am asking that the committee vote to move HB1115/SB957 out of committee for a full vote by the legislature this session. I am asking you to recognize the hard work of National Board Certified Teachers who started this process long before the current financial incentives. According to NBPTS Policy Guidance Memorandum, if adopted by the Maryland Legislature through HB1115/SB957, I should be eligible for two additional salary enhancements - \$8,000 for the first five year MOC and \$7,000 for the second five year MOC. This salary enhancement would be a boon to my family and a boost to my retirement savings.

Teaching is a demanding career. Educators who have worked to achieve National Board Certification and have put in the work to maintain that certification should be rewarded for their hard work, no matter when they achieved it. Too much time and energy is spent on trying to recruit new teachers; our veteran educators need to know that their knowledge, experience, and expertise is valued. Money talks.