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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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Senate Bill 957 – Education – Career Ladder – National Board Certification Associated Salary Increases

Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

Senate Bill 957 addresses a narrow but important technical issue within Maryland’s teacher career ladder system established under the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future.

Under current law, teachers who earn National Board Certification (NBC) receive salary increases as they progress through the career ladder. These incentives are intended to recognize professional excellence and encourage highly qualified educators to remain in the classroom.

However, when the National Board transitioned from 10-year certifications to a 5-year maintenance cycle, Maryland statute did not fully account for teachers who still hold the earlier 10-year certification structure.

As a result, many veteran teachers who earned their certification under the older system must wait longer than newer NBC teachers before becoming eligible for salary increases tied to certification renewal or maintenance. In effect, the current statute unintentionally delays compensation incentives for some of Maryland’s most experienced educators.

SB 957 corrects this oversight.

The bill clarifies that teachers holding these earlier 10-year National Board Certifications are eligible for the same career ladder salary increases associated with renewal and maintenance of certification. It also establishes the appropriate salary increase structure for those renewals to align with the existing framework used for the 5-year certification cycle.

Importantly, this bill does not create a new incentive program. Rather, it ensures that teachers who earned their certification under the prior system are treated fairly within the framework the General Assembly already established.

According to the Department of Legislative Services, approximately 446 teachers statewide hold these qualifying certifications and have not yet received the maintenance-related salary increases available to other NBC teachers.

The fiscal impact is modest relative to the statewide education budget—estimated at about \$2.4 million annually beginning in FY 2027, shared between the State and local school systems under the existing Blueprint funding formula.

At its core, this bill is about fairness and consistency.

The teachers affected are, by definition, long-serving educators who have demonstrated professional excellence through National Board Certification. They should not be disadvantaged simply because they earned their certification under an earlier system.

By closing this technical gap in statute, SB 957 ensures that Maryland's most accomplished teachers receive the recognition and compensation the career ladder system was designed to provide.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 957.