

Career Ladder FAQ

The following tool provides information regarding the Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) Teacher Career Ladder. Please note that any references to a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) throughout this document refers to both a State Certified/Licensed Teacher who also holds National Board Certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBCT) or a State Certified/Licensed Teacher whose state licensure subject area ([as identified by MSDE's Crosswalk found here](#)), does not have an NBC Assessment but has a master's degree in their state licensure subject area.

1. What is the purpose of the Career Ladder?

The purpose of the Career Ladder, as defined by Blueprint, is to attract and retain high-quality teachers who gain additional status and compensation as they gain additional experience and expertise. Blueprint defines this expertise as achieving and maintaining NBCT and, for teachers who are interested in other advancement, to move up the Career Ladder to assume instructional leadership positions (Level 4) while also remaining a classroom teacher.

2. How is the Career Ladder different than the current teacher salary scale?

Unlike the current salary scale, which is a step and lane structure, the Career Ladder, as defined by Blueprint, is structured where a teacher can move up the Career Ladder by achieving and maintaining NBCT and by pursuing instructional leadership positions, if desired.

Once teachers achieve NBCT, they move to **Level 3** on the Career Ladder. Per § 6-1009 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the following salary enhancements went into effect on **July 1, 2022**:

- Level 3 Teachers who meet the state definition of teacher, receive a \$10,000 salary enhancement; and
- Level 3 Teachers who meet the state definition of teacher and work in a [MSDE Identified Blueprint Low Performing School](#), receive a \$7,000 salary enhancement as funded under Maryland law, provided they meet the state funding requirements for eligibility.

Teachers wishing to pursue instructional leadership opportunities may be eligible to move to **Level 4** of the Career Ladder if hired as Lead or Distinguished Teachers.

In addition to these salary enhancements required under § 6-1009 of the Education Article, this statute requires the following salary enhancements effective **July 1, 2025**:

- Teachers serving as **Level 4 Lead Teachers** will receive a \$5,000 salary enhancement.
- Teachers serving as **Level 4 Distinguished Teachers** will receive an annual a \$10,000 salary enhancement.

These salary enhancements are in addition to those earned as a Level 3 Teacher on the Career Ladder.

Per § 6-1009 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the following salary enhancements will go into effect on **July 1, 2025**:

- NBCTs who meet the state definition of teacher and earned a maintenance of NBC on or after December 2021, will receive an \$8,000 salary enhancement. This maintenance is considered the

First Maintenance under Blueprint law regardless of how many renewals or maintenance prior to December 2021.

- NBCTs who meet the state definition of teacher and earn a **Second Maintenance**, will receive a \$7,000 salary enhancement.
- NBCTs who meet the state definition of teacher and earn a **Third Maintenance**, will receive a \$6,000 salary enhancement.
- All Maintenance salary enhancements are one-time increases, as demonstrated on the AACPS Blueprint Career Ladder Salary Scale.

See the link for additional information from [MSDE and AIB regarding the Career Ladder \(June, 2024; this information continues to evolve\)](#).

3. If I work in an MSDE Blueprint Low Performing School, and the school is later removed from the low performing school list, will I lose the additional compensation?

Teachers who hold a valid NBCT in July of the year that the school is identified by MSDE as a Blueprint Low Performing School, meet the definition of teacher, and teach for the minimum amounts required by law, will receive an additional \$7,000 salary enhancement for the identified school year. Teachers who received the salary enhancement at a school when it was identified and the school later is removed from the MSDE Blueprint Low Performing List will continue to receive the salary enhancement as long they remain at the school, continue to hold a valid NBCT, and continue to meet the definition of teacher for the minimum percentage of time as required by law.

4. I already have my NBC. What does this mean for me?

All current AACPS employees who meet the Blueprint definition of teacher and who hold an active NBCT will be placed on **Level 3** of the Career Ladder. In order to continue to receive the \$10,000 salary enhancement as provided by Blueprint, teachers must be on **Level 3** of the Career Ladder. No NBCT will receive a salary reduction moving to **Level 3** of the Career Ladder.

5. What if I have a NBCT Renewal or Maintenance of Certification prior to December of 2021?

Per Blueprint, only NBCT Renewals or Maintenance of Certifications after the passage of Blueprint is calculated as part of the First, Second, and Third Maintenance of Certifications, so even if a teacher achieved a Renewal or Maintenance of Certification prior to December of 2021, only the one after December of 2021, counts as their First Maintenance

6. What if I complete my Maintenance of Certification in Year 4 of my NBCT certification cycle? Does my Maintenance of Certification salary enhancements go into effect before my current NBCT Certificate expires?

No. Although NBCTs have the option of completing their MOCs over a two-year period, movement to the next level is aligned with the expiration date and issuance of a new certificate, not with their notification date of maintenance. For example, if your certificate expires in December of 2024, NBCTs could submit their MOC as early as the spring of 2023 and may receive notice of earning their MOC in December of 2023, but they will not be eligible to move to the next level until the July after their new certificate date that would begin in December of 2024 (which would be July 2025 in this example).

7. What is the effective date of all NBCT salary enhancements?

To align with state funding, all NBCT salary enhancements are effective the following July after achievement or maintenance.

8. Are Conditionally Certified teachers or Resident Teachers, eligible to join the Career Ladder?

Yes, Conditionally Certified or Resident Teachers may join the Career Ladder on **Level 1**. Advancing to **Level 2** will occur once they meet the requirements of either pursuing an NBC option or obtaining a master's degree in a content area that does not have an NBC option.

9. Am I eligible for MSDE tuition assistance for the NBC process if I do not currently meet the definition of teacher?

Yes. Beginning in the fall of 2024, all licensed educators are eligible to receive MSDE tuition assistance.

10. What does it mean to be “pursuing” a NBC?

Per Blueprint, a teacher enrolls for NBC candidacy with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and “complete an annual registration, and select components to submit. The candidacy may take anywhere from one to five years but all four of the required components must be attempted within the first three years. A teacher who is actively engaged in a candidacy may be considered “pursuing” National Board.”

11. What happens when I earn my NBC?

You will advance to **Level 3** of the Career Ladder and will receive the \$10,000 salary enhancement and \$7,000 if you are assigned to a [MSDE Blueprint Low Performing School](#). Please see this link for more information and examples.

12. What if I do not renew my NBC or fail achieve NBC?

Teachers who do not maintain NBC or fail to achieve NBC will be returned to the traditional salary scale at the appropriate step and lane. If you fail to maintain NBC, you will no longer be eligible for the NBC salary enhancements that exist on the Career Ladder.