



**Commission to Explore  
the Expanded Application of State Stipends  
for National Certification of Teachers**

**Final Report to the Governor March 31, 2008**

**Maryland State Board of Education**  
200 West Baltimore Street  
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**Martin O'Malley**  
Governor

## **Introduction**

During the spring 2007 legislative session, the Senate passed Bill 58 and the House of Representatives passed Bill 274 which called for the establishment of a Study Commission to Explore the Expanded Application of State Stipends for National Certification of Teachers. These two bills further required that the Commission “assess the rigor of national certification for speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, school psychologists, physical therapists, school counselors, and others” to determine how these national certifications compare to national teacher certification and make certain recommendations.

Pursuant to that charge, Governor Martin O’Malley appointed the study commission and named Dr. Susan Arisman, Interim Dean of the School of Education at Coppin State University, as its chairperson. Furthermore, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) was asked to provide staff. Accordingly, the Commission members were named and MSDE appointed Ms. June Marshall, Education Program Specialist, as staff person.

The Commission chairperson asked for an extension of the December 31, 2007 deadline to March 31, 2008. This extension was granted. The Commission then met on January 7, January 31, and February 7, 2008 to set a possible framework, hear testimony, and make final recommendations.

## **Work of the Commission**

At the first meeting on January 7, 2008, the Commission reviewed its charge and gathered information on stipends from Mr. Stephen Brooks, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Business Services and from Dr. John Smeallie, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Certification and Accreditation, both from MSDE. Mr. Wilbur Parks, Regional Outreach Director of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, provided detailed information regarding the requirements and processes for attaining National Board Certification for teachers. As stated in the legislation, the Commission determined that these requirements and processes would serve as a baseline for evaluating whether other professionals should be eligible for State stipends.

At the second meeting, the Commission heard testimony from representatives of the Maryland affiliates of the American Physical Therapy Association, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the National Association of School Psychologists, the National Association of Occupational Therapists, and the National Certified Counselor and National Certified School Counselor Associations.

At the third and final meeting on February 7, 2007, the Commission agreed on the conditions to be met in order to qualify for stipends. These conditions follow:

- National certification requires a rigorous, in-depth analysis of the candidate's own practice as it relates to national standards and impacts student development.
- National certification requires the achievement of a significantly higher standard of performance than is required for initial licensure.
- National certification entails experience, evidence of accomplishment, and performance-based assessment.
- National certification captures the standard for what accomplished professionals should know and be able to do in their particular field.
- National certification is sponsored by a nationally recognized organization that acts and functions as a voice for a professional group.

After careful review of the documents and testimony presented, the Commission came to the following conclusions.

Under the rules developed by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, national certification is gained by graduating from an accredited, post-baccalaureate program, completing appropriate field work, obtaining a passing score on a national certification exam, and agreeing to comply with the organization's code of conduct. In order to practice, occupational therapists must be licensed by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy. An in depth analysis of the candidate's practice is not required, but the organization relies on the accreditation of the program and its faculty. This is an initial license which is renewable, but does not require a significantly higher standard of performance. Experience and performance are not assessed. Although the certification is based on "a comprehensive job analysis," it is not clear that standards for individuals are available. National certification is sponsored by a nationally recognized organization that speaks for the members.

Physical Therapists are represented by the American Physical Therapy Association, which has a set of competencies that form the basis for the examination necessary to achieve initial licensure. These competencies include ones related to student development. However, this process does not require a higher standard of performance or accomplishment. The program leading to certification is extremely rigorous, and the association is moving toward requiring a doctorate for initial licensure. Once licensed, renewal is based on completing 75 continuing education units. There is no performance-based assessment of candidates other than that vouched for by the accredited program of study.

The National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) and the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) provide two ways in which counselors can be nationally certified. The NBPTS uses the same process as all other fields covered by this organization. Counselors certified by NBPTS are allowed to receive a stipend similar to that received by other teachers. NBCC-certified counselors must take the National

Counselor Exam and the National Certified School Counselor Exam to be certified. Although response to simulations is part of the exam, there is no performance assessment or way to measure that the person is an accomplished counselor. Therefore, it does not meet the same level of standards followed by NBPTS.

The National Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) is governed by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), the professional body for school psychologists. NASP has standards for individual performance, a portfolio and examination requirement to measure competence, and a case study requirement to demonstrate a high level of professional skills. The major differences between its system and the NBPTS are that NCSPs are required to complete the process for initial certification and not to measure their work as an accomplished school psychologist nor is it clear that performance is directly assessed.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) through its Council for Clinical Certification (CRFF) issues Certificates of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. These certificates are awarded after post-baccalaureate study, a supervised practicum, and an examination. The Speech-Language Pathologist also completes a Clinical Fellowship and is assessed three times on the attainment of 21 critical skills by a person who already possesses the certificate. There is no provision for the holders of these certificates to be assessed as accomplished practitioners.

### **Recommendations**

After considerable discussion and careful analysis of the case for State stipends put forth by the different groups named above, the Commission finds that none of the groups met all the conditions cited above. Although they were part of nationally recognized organizations, members do not receive national certification based on the rigorous analysis of their practice after initial certification and do not meet a significantly higher standard of performance than is required for initial licensure. Although some of the certificates were based on performance, some rely mainly on written examinations for licensure. The recipients are awarded national certification before they are accomplished professionals. Using the standards developed by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the national certifications received by these members do not meet the same high standards of assessment.

### **Final Thoughts**

The Study Commission wishes to thank the associations for their presentations and documents. They were very helpful. Although it did not recommend State stipends until the national certification went beyond initial certification to that of accomplished professional certification, local school systems are able to give local stipends if they so desire. Some of them already do.

The Commission also heard repeated testimony that the State stipend would be helpful in addressing already existing and future shortages. Confronting shortages beyond those of teachers should be considered by the state leadership.

Finally, because there are other certificates awarded by other national organizations, the Commission recommended that a process be developed to consider any petitions for State stipends in the future.

**Study Commission to Explore Expanded Application  
Of State Stipends for National Certification of Teachers**

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**Study Commission to Explore Expanded Application of National Board Certified  
Teacher Stipend**

**Fourth Floor of MSTA Building Conference Room A**

**Schedule of Presenters**

10:30a.m.	Physical Therapists	Susan Cerere
11:15a.m.	Speech, Language and Hearing	Janet Deppe
12:00a.m.	School Psychologists	Nick Silvestri, Kim Daniel, Stephanie Livesay, Pam McCoy Joan Bohmann, Leslee Frye
1:15 p.m.	Occupational Therapists	Teri A. Bell
2:00 p.m.	School Counselors	Andrea Smith, Penny Cummings