

## **OFFICE OF CERTIFICATION SUMMARY OF SERVICES**

The **Office of Certification** is responsible for ensuring that certificated staff achieve and maintain professional certification. This includes evaluating educator credentials, issuing and renewing certificates, and adding additional endorsements to the certificate. Our office is dedicated to ensuring that all certificated staff remain in good standing with MSDE certification. We offer the suggestions below to assist you with that goal.

### **CERTIFICATION INQUIRIES**

Now that you are our employee, do not contact MSDE directly. We are your point of contact, and all certification requests will be addressed by our office. Send inquiries to [certunit@bcps.org](mailto:certunit@bcps.org) or call us at 443-809-4147/5768.

Due to the volume of inquiries we receive, please note that it takes approximately 3-5 business days for us to send you a response on issues that must be researched.

We send responses to BCPS e-mail addresses, not personal e-mail addresses. Every question we receive is important to us, and we will send you a response as quickly as possible.

### **MAINTAINING YOUR CERTIFICATE**

If you have a professional certificate, it is vital that you print a copy of it. Go to the MSDE Website at [www.mdcert.org](http://www.mdcert.org) and follow the instructions for obtaining a copy. Keep this important document in your personal portfolio as a reference.

**CERTIFICATE RENEWAL:** Although professional certificates are 5-year certificates, it is important that you work on completing the renewal requirements during the entire validity period of your certificate. Renewal credits are to be received in our office at least 90 days before the certificate expires.

**PLEASE PLAN AHEAD.** Do not wait until the year before or the year when the certificate expires to begin taking credits. You will run the risk of running out of time to complete the requirements. The certificate is your license to teach, and failure to complete the requirements puts your employment status and tenure in jeopardy. There are no extensions.

**CONDITIONAL CERTIFICATION:** If you have a 2-year conditional certificate, please maintain frequent contact with our office. We will work with you to ensure you are completing the requirements. Failure to complete the requirements by the expiration date will result in termination. There are no extensions.

**CERTIFICATION REQUEST FORM:** Be aware that you must complete a Certification Request Form when requesting a copy of your growth chart additional endorsements, an evaluation for an area such as Administrator I, salary lane changes, or the additional requests listed on the form.

The form is found on our Web page at [www.bcps.org/offices/personnel/certification](http://www.bcps.org/offices/personnel/certification). It takes approximately 8-10 weeks for a request to be completed due to the large number of requests we receive.

**SALARY LANE ADVANCEMENT:** Once coursework is completed and required documentation is submitted and verified by our office, the effective date of the advancement will be the beginning of the first full pay period after receipt of all documentation. If applicable, retroactive pay may be expected within two pay periods after the receipt of the personnel action confirmation.

### **TUITION REIMBURSEMENT**

Be sure to send complete packets when requesting reimbursement (completed form, invoice, and official transcript).

We will accept an e-script sent directly from the college to [certunit@bcps.org](mailto:certunit@bcps.org) or an official paper transcript on college-secure paper sent through the U.S. mail. We do not accept photocopies, grade slips, or e-scripts sent to you then forwarded to us.

**Final Note:** Please visit our Web page often. We constantly update it with new and revised information. We welcome your inquiries. We will work with you to make the certification process easy and stress-free.