



**Mohammed Choudhury**  
State Superintendent of Schools

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**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education

**FROM:** Mohammed Choudhury, State Superintendent of Schools

**DATE:** July 26, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Waiver of COMAR 13A.12.01.11C *Conditional Teacher Certificate*

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this item is to approve the State Superintendent’s recommendation for a waiver of Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 13A.12.01.11C *Conditional Teacher Certificate* related to the requirements associated with the renewal of the Conditional Teacher Certificate.

**BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:**

In March 2020, a state of emergency was declared in Maryland because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, many Conditional Teaching Certificate holders employed in Maryland public schools, State-operated schools, and nonpublic schools approved under COMAR 13A.09.10 made the decision to focus their professional learning on virtual instruction, and in some instances, were not able to complete the coursework and tests required to renew the Conditional Teaching Certificate or advance to a professional certificate.

In April 2020, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) approved a Continuing Professional Development experience for professionally certified employees to allow for the issuance of credit to those who demonstrated implementation of their employer’s Continuity of Learning Plan during the COVID-19 pandemic. This enabled professionally certified teachers who implemented Continuity of Learning Plans to renew their certificates if they had not completed the required coursework prior to the pandemic. Conditional Teacher Certificate holders were not able to use the CPD credit to renew their certificates or advance to a professional certificate.

The MSDE has received numerous emails, letters, and phone calls from local school system Conditional Teacher Certificate holders who were terminated or forced into long-term substitute positions because they were not able to meet the requirements for renewal by July 1, 2022. As was shared by Dr. Goldson, Chief Executive Officer of Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) in a letter to elected officials on June 30, 2022, PGCPS lost 800 or 8% of the district’s teachers this year due to Conditional Teacher Certificate holders not having met the requirements to renew.

Maryland districts employed 3,567 conditionally certified teachers during the 2021-2022 school year, double the number employed five years ago. Additionally, Conditional Teacher Certificate holders are significantly more likely to be black or African-American. Recruiting career changers into the classroom by means of issuing a Conditional Teacher Certificate is a critical means of diversifying the teaching profession.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Conditional Teacher Certificate is a two-year certificate that may be renewed on one occasion. COMAR 13A.12.01.11C limits the number of Conditional Teacher Certificates to one per person and requires the certificate holder to submit coursework and test requirements to renew the certificate.

In light of the request from PGCPs for an extension of the Conditional Teacher Certificate due to challenges emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, the State Superintendent of Schools recommends the State Board of Education grant the waiver of COMAR 13A.12.01.11C, collectively for all LEAs, State-operated schools, and nonpublic schools approved under COMAR 13A.09.10 for good cause.

The waiver will be as follows:

COMAR 13A.12.01.11C(1)- *An applicant may hold **only one** Conditional Teacher Certificate which may be renewed in accordance with this regulation.*

Effective July 26, 2022, a local education agency, State-operated school, or nonpublic school approved under COMAR 13A.09.10 may renew a Conditional Teacher Certificate with an expiration date between July 1, 2020, and July 1, 2023, if that entity has hired the certificate holder to serve as a teacher of record in the subject area on that person's Conditional Teacher Certificate and attests to the certificate holder's ability to serve in that position on a Department-approved attestation form. This includes those certificate holders who have already held both the initial and renewed Conditional Teacher Certificate for a total of four years.

COMAR 13A.12.01.11C(2)- *A Conditional Teacher Certificate may be renewed for 2 years, only one time, upon the recommendation of the local superintendent of schools, if the applicant has:*

***(a) Completed a minimum of 12 semester hours of course work toward the professional certificate during the 2-year period; and***

***(b) Achieved a qualifying score on the basic skills teacher certification test if required under Regulation .05A(3) of this chapter.***

Effective July 26, 2022, a local education agency, State-operated school, or nonpublic school approved under COMAR 13A.09.10 may renew a Conditional Teacher Certificate with an expiration date between July 1, 2020, and July 1, 2023, without the submission of the requirements established in COMAR 13A.12.01.11C(2) if that entity has hired the certificate holder to serve as a teacher of record in the subject area on that person's Conditional Teacher Certificate and attests to the certificate holder's ability to serve in that position on a Department-approved attestation form. The renewed certificate will be valid for two years and is not eligible for subsequent renewal.

The State Board is authorized to grant the waiver pursuant to its authority under Education Article § 2-205 and COMAR 13A.01.01.02-1 Waiver from Regulations. The term of the waiver, if granted, is July 26, 2022, through July 25, 2025. Should COMAR 13A.12.01.11C be amended or repealed during the term, the waiver will cease at that time.

**ACTION:**

Approve the State Superintendent's recommendation for a waiver of COMAR 13A.12.01.11C Conditional Teacher Certificate as follows:

Effective July 26, 2022, a local education agency, State-operated school, or nonpublic school approved under COMAR 13A.09.10 may renew a Conditional Teacher Certificate with an expiration date between July 1, 2020, and July 1, 2023, if that entity has hired the certificate holder to serve as a teacher of record in the subject area on that person's Conditional Teacher Certificate and attests to the certificate holder's ability to serve in that position on a Department-approved attestation form. This includes those certificate holders who have already held both the initial and renewed Conditional Teacher Certificate for a total of four years.

Effective July 26, 2022, a local education agency, State-operated school, or nonpublic school approved under COMAR 13A.09.10 may renew a Conditional Teacher Certificate with an expiration date between July 1, 2020, and July 1, 2023, without the submission of the requirements established in COMAR 13A.12.01.11C(2) if that entity has hired the certificate holder to serve as a teacher of record in the subject area on that person's Conditional Teacher Certificate and attests to the certificate holder's ability to serve in that position on a Department-approved attestation form. The renewed certificate will be valid for two years and is not eligible for subsequent renewal.



## OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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July 12, 2022

Mr. Mohammed Choudhury  
Superintendent  
Maryland State Department of Education  
200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Superintendent Choudhury,

During the June 28, 2022, Maryland Board of Education meeting, a Prince George's County Public School (PGCPS) conditional teacher eloquently shared her experience with taking the Praxis examination numerous times, without success, in order to meet the state requirements. Her plight is no different from many other qualified teachers with the "conditional" designation that work with our students daily to meet their academic needs.

While our school system, the second-largest in Maryland, is often portrayed as having a revolving door of teachers, our data tells a much different story. Consistently, PGCPS retention rates remain above 80 percent, which is on par with national averages of voluntary teacher resignations and retirements. When comparing the number of vacancies relative to the total number of teacher positions (approximately 10,000), PGCPS ranks fifth among all Maryland school systems.

As with other school systems, we too have seen an increase in educators leaving this year, mainly due to Maryland certification requirements that are more stringent than surrounding areas such as Virginia and the District of Columbia. For instance, 800 educators are leaving this year due to steep state requirements for teacher certification. While 85% of PGCPS teachers hold a professional certificate; for those who do not, it is virtually impossible to complete the certification requirements within two years while teaching a full load of classes.

Yet, these efforts are undercut by mandatory state certification requirements that impact many teachers with demonstrated expertise who want to remain in the profession and, more importantly, in Prince George's County Public Schools, including those 800 educators we lost as of June 30. With all that we have experienced over the past two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is a travesty that provisions have not been made to assist teachers by extending the time frame needed to meet the state requirements.

I humbly ask for a waiver of COMAR 13A.12.01.11C (Conditional Teacher Certificate) and allowing additional time for conditional teachers to meet state requirements as long as they have received satisfactory evaluations, agreed to continue to meet with their assigned mentor teacher monthly with frequent feedback, and are committed to taking the appropriate courses each semester to meet the state requirements.



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Mr. Mohammed Choudhury  
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I would be remiss if I did not request a review of all tests required for certification in Maryland, with special attention on the percentage of minority candidates passing the Praxis examination. According to the January 6, 2022 Maryland Teacher Supply and Demand Overview presentation, teachers of color will more than likely need to take the Praxis exam more than once to meet the state requirement while more than one-third ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ) of our African American candidates will never pass the examination.

Changes must be made at the state level that allow districts to validate a teacher's professional knowledge and skills through alternative means, such as job embedded professional development; systemic and state-wide professional development; mentor teacher partners with frequent feedback on pedagogy; and a rigorous teacher evaluation system. With Maryland importing 68% of its educators, it is time to rethink how we recruit and retain teachers.

Thank you for your time consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Monica E. Goldson, Ed.D.  
Chief Executive Officer

## 13A.12.01.11

**.11 Renewal of Certificates.**

## A. General.

(1) An applicant who receives a certificate is responsible for initiating the renewal of the certificate.

(2) Renewal requirements shall be received at the Department within 90 days of the expiration date listed under "Period of Validity" on the certification in order for the certificate to be considered continuous.

(3) Failure to Meet Requirements. Failure to meet the requirements of this section results in loss of the professional certificate. The local school system may request a conditional certificate pursuant to Regulation .08 of this chapter for an employee who fails to meet the renewal requirements of the professional certificate.

(4) Fee. The fee for the renewal of a certificate is provided in Education Article, §6-704(b), Annotated Code of Maryland, and shall be made payable to the Maryland State Department of Education by money order, certified check, cashier's check, or electronic payment.

**(5)** If a teacher has not submitted the required semester hours in reading course **work**, the acceptable credit needed shall include:

(a) 12 semester hours in reading theory and methodology for early childhood, elementary, or special education at that level taken at an IHE or through CPDs, which shall include:

(i) Processes and acquisition of reading skills;

(ii) Best practices in reading instruction that include the cuing systems of graphophonics, semantics, and syntactics;

(iii) Use of reading assessment data to improve instruction; and

(iv) Materials for teaching reading in order to gain literary experience, perform a task, and read for information;

(b) 6 semester hours in reading methods for secondary education or special education at that level, taken at an IHE or through CPDs which shall include:

(i) Types of reading;

(ii) Use of reading assessment data to improve instruction;

(iii) Skills in reading including cognitive strategies in reading;

(iv) Reading instruction including reading aloud strategies and methods for diagnosing reading difficulties and making instructional modifications and accommodations for the student;

(v) Strategies for intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for reading;

(vi) Teaching students to learn from text by applying theories, strategies, and practices in daily classroom use including additional content in types of reading using authentic texts;

(vii) Skills in reading including processing of multimedia information and strategies to connect reading with study skills; and

(viii) Reading instruction that integrates content area goals with reading goals including strategies for students to communicate effectively orally and in writing about what they have read in content area texts; or

(c) 6 semester hours as provided in §A(S)(b) of this regulation for certification at the PreK-12 level.

(6) To maintain the specific certification areas of the certificate, at least 6 semester hours are required in each renewal period until the required semester hours under §A(S) of this regulation are completed.

(7) A teacher is exempt from submitting the required semester hours in reading course work required under §A(S) of this regulation if the teacher presents evidence of a qualifying score as established by the State Superintendent of Schools on the test approved by the State Board of Education.

## B. Professional Certificates.

(1) The Professional Eligibility Certificate shall be renewed for 5 years by an applicant not currently employed as a professional in a Maryland local school system, by presenting 6 semester hours of acceptable credit as set forth in Regulation .05C of this chapter and §A(5) of this regulation.

(2) The Standard Professional I Certificate shall be renewed only once upon the request of the local superintendent of schools for an applicant whose service was interrupted during the validity period of the Standard Professional I Certificate, preventing the applicant from meeting the experience requirement under Regulation .06C(1)(b) of this chapter, if the applicant presents 6 semester hours of acceptable credit as set forth in Regulation .05C of this chapter and §A(5) of this regulation.

(3) The Standard Professional II Certificate may not be renewed.

(4) The Extended Standard Professional II Certificate may not be renewed.

(5) The Advanced Professional Certificate shall be renewed for 5 years if an applicant is:

(a) Continuously employed as a professional in a Maryland school during the validity period of the certificate upon the request of the local superintendent of schools and upon presenting all of the following:

(i) A professional development plan for the subsequent Advanced Professional Certificate designed by the employee and reviewed by the local superintendent of schools that includes at least 6 semester hours of acceptable credit under Regulation .05C of this chapter and §A(5) of this regulation, or the equivalent once the required semester hours of reading course work are completed;

(ii) 6 semester hours of acceptable credit under Regulation .05C of this chapter and §A(S) of this regulation, or verification by the local superintendent of schools that the employee has earned the equivalent of 6 semester hours of credit in professional growth activities during the validity period of the current certificate once the required semester hours of reading course work are completed; and

(iii) Verification of 3 years of satisfactory school-related experience completed within the 5 years immediately preceding the issuance of the renewed Advanced Professional Certificate; or

(b) Not continuously employed as a professional in a Maryland school during the validity period of the certificate, upon the request of the applicant and upon the applicant presenting 6 semester hours of acceptable credit under Regulation .05C of this chapter and §A(5) of this regulation.

## C. Conditional Teacher Certificate.

(1) An applicant may hold only one Conditional Teacher Certificate which may be renewed in accordance with this regulation.

(2) A Conditional Teacher Certificate may be renewed for 2 years, only one time, upon the recommendation of the local superintendent of schools, if the applicant has:

(a) Completed a minimum of 12 semester hours of course work toward the professional certificate during the 2-year period; and

(b) Achieved a qualifying score on the basic skills teacher certification test if required under Regulation .05A(3) of this chapter.

## D. Resident Teacher Certificate. A Resident Teacher Certificate may not be renewed.