



PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

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Lawrence F. Camacho, Ed.D
COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION
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MEMORANDUM

DATE : November 21, 2025

TO : All Public School System (PSS) Employees

FROM : Acting Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT : Certification Salary Freeze

In accordance with the CNMI State Board of Education (SBOE) decision at the Special Board Meeting held on Saturday, November 1, 2025, a Certification Freeze impacting certification-based pay increases will be implemented. This action is part of the FY2026 Budget and Implementation Plan approved by the Board.

Effective December 2, 2025, the following approved proposed terms of the freeze are as follows:

Terms of Freeze

I. Grandfather Prior Applications

A. All certification applications already received before the date the Board approves this freeze will be processed as normal and, if approved, will be eligible for the associated salary adjustment. These will be the final batch of certification adjustments under the current policy.

II. No Salary Adjustment for New Applications

A. Certification applications submitted after the approval date will still be reviewed and issued, but will not trigger a salary increase during the freeze period.

III. Applies Regardless of Funding Source

A. The freeze applies to certification adjustments across all funding sources to include local, federal, or other grant-funded positions, so that no new certification increase is paid during the freeze.

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IV. No Retroactive Payments; Future Adjustments Only

A. When the freeze is lifted, new salary adjustments will take effect starting with the next pay period. No retroactive payments will be made for the freeze period. If funding is not available when the freeze is lifted, then certification adjustments may be deferred to the next fiscal year, still without retroactive payments.

V. Reclassification of Non-Highly Qualified to Highly Qualified (Teachers, Instructors, Librarians, Counselors, and School Administrators)

A. The salary adjustment freeze will apply to applicants reclassifying from a non-highly qualified status to a highly qualified status. This will apply to all highly qualified positions such as Teachers, Instructors, Librarians, Counselors, and School Administrators.

VI. Applies to Salary Adjustments for Years of Service

A. The salary adjustment freeze shall also apply to PSS employees who hold a valid certification and meet the required years of service for a salary increase (Example: Highly Qualified Teacher with a valid Standard Certification who met the required 5 years teaching experience to be eligible for a salary increase).

VII. Applies to Salary Adjustments for Higher Level Certification

A. The salary adjustment freeze shall also apply to PSS employees who qualify for the next level of certification and meet the minimum requirements for a salary increase (Example: Highly Qualified Teacher with a valid Standard Certification who meets the requirements to obtain a Professional Certification with 10 years of teaching experience and is eligible for a salary increase).

Salary Adjustment freeze for higher-level degrees

Due to the insufficient funding level, a temporary freeze on all personnel salary adjustments related to the attainment of higher-level academic degrees will be implemented until further notice.

When the freeze is lifted, new salary adjustments will take effect starting with the next pay period. No retroactive payments will be made for the freeze period. If funding is not available when the freeze is lifted, then certification adjustments may be deferred to the next fiscal year, still without retroactive payments.

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The SBOE Certification & Licensure Office (CLO) encourages all PSS Instructors, Teachers, Librarians, School Counselors, and School Administrators to maintain a valid certification throughout his/her contract term, to remain compliant with SBOE regulations. The CLO will continue to accept and process certification application packets. Complete certification application packets may be submitted via email at boe.certification@cnmipss.org or in person at the SBOE Office Building 1241 in Capitol Hill during business hours: Tuesday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., except Austerity Mondays, weekends, and holidays.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Che
Acting Commissioner of Education

cc: Members, State Board of Education