

## **How to Become a Teacher as a Career Changer or Recent College Graduate**

Deciding to become a teacher even though you didn't think about it in college and then making it happen can be a daunting task! Perhaps you've heard from friends that you might as well forget it. There is just too much hassle.

Well, Maryland has worked hard in the past few years to open some doors just for you and for others like you who may have decided to change careers or who have just graduated from college and find you now wish to teach. Maybe you are in the armed forces and due to separate from the service and begin to "serve again", as the Troops to Teachers motto suggests. You have come to the right place as Maryland has many programs from which to choose.

If you already have a bachelor's degree, you are ready to begin looking at choices. In Maryland, you will need to have a Master's degree, or the equivalent of a Master's degree, within ten years of receiving your initial certification. Given that fact, you may want to enroll in a program that concludes with both your certification (your license to teach) and a master's degree! You might start your search for the perfect fit by reviewing the list of Maryland Approved Programs (MAP) at the following link, <http://directory.msde.state.md.us/map/LocalFrames.asp>. You will want to type in the search box the area for which you will want to seek certification – what you want to teach. That search will give you a listing of all of Maryland's programs, but you will be looking for those colleges and universities that offer the Master's of Arts in Teaching, or the MAT. There will also be telephone numbers and links for you to access a real person to see if a particular program interests you. These programs may be full time, or may be offered on a part-time basis, and are really all over the state. Remember, these are not alternative programs and will take up to two years to complete, but for many individuals, this is the best choice.

However, your available time – or your available funds for immediate use – may be limited and you may be seeking a more direct and less expensive route, to acquiring that license you desire. The Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program (MAAPP) option may better suit your needs. For a listing of programs currently available in Maryland, type Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Programs Directory into your search engine. As you investigate the various offerings, you will see that some programs may be "rolled" into a master's degree as a part of the course of study. They may entail many of the same costs as programs you found on the MAP listing. However, you will receive what is called the Resident Teacher Certificate early on in the program, and will be entitled to teach with a state-recognized license. So, you are teaching – and being paid as a teacher with full benefits – while you are completing the master's degree. For the most part, the programs in partnership with a four-year college or university fall into this category.

Some MAAPPs are less costly and provide a quicker entry into teaching with less college coursework or no college coursework required for program completion. In many instances, some of the cost is underwritten by the partnering school system. It is important to understand that, when considering an alternate route to teacher certification, recruiting by partnerships is targeted to meet very specific needs since your employment is guaranteed through the program. There are continuing needs for teachers of mathematics, science, special education and of children for whom English is not the

primary language. You will see several programs in partnership with a community college or a private provider such as The New Teacher Project or Teach for America, or programs offered by school systems themselves. These programs do not include post-employment coursework that may conclude with the degree; however, all programs to require post-employment training during the first one or two years. All programs, whether for elementary or secondary certification, require the candidate – you – to include courses about how to teach reading. Program length varies from six months to a year from the time of acceptance to the time of entry into the classroom as the teacher of record.

In all cases, the program participant will receive the Resident Teacher Certificate and will be eligible to teach in schools in the county that is shown as the partner on the listing of programs. What does this partnership business mean? Well, MAAPPs are very specific to a school system. As you look at the list, you will see that each program lists partners. If a particular program seems to suit you because of your location relative to the program location, or you know someone who completed the program, please understand that the ability to be hired as a teacher is specific to the county school system listed as a partner in that program. For example, you could not decide that you would like to work with The New Teacher Project to acquire your certification unless you enroll in the two specific programs offered in the state – one in Prince George’s County Public Schools, and other in Baltimore City Public School System. If you are intent on teaching in Howard County, only one program currently exists in partnership with Howard Community College.

You may now be wondering what qualifications you need to have to get into one of these kinds of programs. To enroll in a MAT program (remember the first list of programs you looked at, the MAP list?) you will need to have a bachelor’s degree and meet the college or university entrance requirements in terms of grade point average. If you are at the point of considering such a move, you will want to contact the institution directly and discuss your various options.

If you are more inclined toward the MAAPP (alternative route), begin by looking at your own undergraduate transcript because these programs require a bachelor’s degree, as well. Look at those courses that clearly identify them as content for the subject you think you want to teach and for which you would like to seek certification. Can you locate 30 hours of the content you would like to teach? Can you locate at least 15 hours with 15 hours of related coursework that might count toward that content? (If you are not sure about what a “related” course might be, call the person listed as the contact person for the program you find most interesting in the directory and ask for some help.) If you think you want to teach elementary school, look for six credits each of math, English, science and social studies. If you add up your grades in that content area, and you have a 2.75 GPA in the area for which you will seek certification, you have met one requirement for many of the programs. Some programs may require a 3.0 in that content area, but some do not. For very detailed explanations of the finer points of transcript analysis leading to eligibility for entry into a MAAPP, please look on the same list as the MAAPP listing mentioned before and look at the rest of the documents. Both the MAP and the MAAPP require internships – supervised experiences in the classrooms with kids – prior to entering the profession. All programs will offer mentoring and support.

Maybe transcript analysis is not your strong suit. That is okay, too, because your program provider will most certainly assist you in this. The “do-it-yourself” approach just gives you a chance to make an educated guess as to where you may stand when you meet with your program provider.

One thing is certain for all programs – MAP or MAAPP. **You will need to successfully complete a test designed to measure your basic academic** competency in mathematics, reading and writing. There are no waivers or exceptions of any kind for required testing. If you are serious about teaching, you might want to begin the process of getting this test under your belt. The table below provides the information you need to know in order to proceed.

Academic Skills Assessments			
All beginning teachers in all content areas must take <i>Praxis I</i> , <i>SAT</i> , <i>GRE</i> , or <i>ACT</i> .	<b>Pre-Professional Skills Tests (PPST or CPPST)</b>	Test Code	MD Score
	PPST Reading (mc - 60 min.) or	<u>0710</u>	177
	Computerized PPST Reading (mc - 75 min.)	<u>5710</u>	177
	PPST Writing (mc & cr - 60 min.) or	<u>0720</u>	173
	Computerized PPST Writing (mc & cr - 75 min.)	<u>5720</u>	173
	PPST Mathematics (mc - 55 min.) or	<u>0730</u>	177
	Computerized PPST Mathematics (mc - 75min.)	<u>5730</u>	177
	SAT (prior to April,1995)	-	1000
	SAT (after April, 1995)	-	1100
	GRE	-	1000
	ACT	-	24

Applicants may meet the testing requirement in one of two ways by submitting: individual scores at or above the state qualifying scores on *Praxis I: Reading, Writing, and Mathematics* or a composite score that is at or above the state qualifying score on *Praxis I, SAT, GRE, or ACT*. The composite score is the combined total of state qualifying scores on the three *Praxis I* assessments. The composite score for the *PPST* and *CPPST* is 527; the composite score for the *Computer-Based Test (CBT)* is 966. There is no composite score if the applicant took a combination of *PPST* and *CBT*. ETS no longer offers the *CBT*. The composite score on the *SAT* taken prior to April 1995 is 1000; the composite score on the *SAT* taken after April 1995 is 1100. The composite score on the *GRE* is 1000; the composite score on the *ACT* is 24.

Maryland is working hard to provide an online opportunity for those not already located in the state. At this time, there are no programs offered in Maryland. We hope that will change very soon.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Maryland State Department of Education with any questions you may have. Our contact for further information is Ms. Karen Gardner, Assistant to Ms. Michelle Dunkle, Coordinator for Alternative Preparation Programs. Ms. Gardner will direct you to the place you might receive the best

information for your questions. You can reach her at [kgardner@msde.state.md.us](mailto:kgardner@msde.state.md.us), or at 410-767-5654.

Meanwhile, good luck in your quest to become a Maryland Public Schools teacher!!!