1. **What is a BCPS cohort?**
   A cohort is a group of individuals who begin and complete together an approved sequence of courses which are contracted for direct billing. Participants must join the cohort at the start of the cohort. All cohort courses must be taken in the approved sequence, in the identified semester, and at the contracted location.

2. **What is direct billing?**
   Direct billing occurs when BCPS contracts with a college or university to directly bill BCPS for tuition costs up to the negotiated amount of individual student reimbursement for approved, successfully completed cohort courses.

3. **What are some of the contracted cohort benefits?**
   - Reduced tuition
   - Direct billing
   - Convenient locations and/or online options

4. **How do I apply for a BCPS certification cohort?**
   To apply for a BCPS certification cohort, please complete an application for a teaching position at https://www.applitrack.com/bcps/onlineapp/. For a complete list of college and university partners for BCPS certification cohorts visit the Office of Certification Web site. Participants must be offered a contracted teacher position as a Conditional Teacher and join the cohort at the start of the program.

5. **Who can participate in a BCPS certification cohort?**
   Only permanent BCPS employees in active service are eligible to participate in one approved certification cohort program at a time. Participants must join the cohort at the start of the cohort and take all courses in the approved sequence, in the identified semester, and at the contracted location. Individuals requiring more flexibility need to enroll in non-cohort programs and seek individual tuition reimbursement if eligible.

6. **Am I eligible for direct billing?**
   Cohort members must be approved by the Office of Certification and college/university at the start of the cohort program in order to be eligible for direct billing. Additionally, cohort members must sign and return the Cohort Participant Agreement prior to the start of the cohort. If these requirements are not met, BCPS will not accept direct billing from the college/university.

7. **What are my financial responsibilities?**
   Cohort members are responsible for all costs over and above the contracted direct billing amount per course. Questions regarding your bill should be directed to the

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Office of Certification
Department of Human Resources Recruitment & Staffing
8. **Do I have to take all the courses in the cohort?**
   All cohort courses must be taken in the approved sequence, in the identified semester. The course sequence is specifically scheduled for Conditional teachers to satisfy MSDE renewal requirements and timelines.

9. **Are the same BCPS certification cohorts available at all colleges and universities?**
   No, all colleges and universities do not have the same contracted certification cohorts.

10. **Can I be in two BCPS contracted cohorts at the same time?**
    No, you cannot be in more than one BCPS certification cohort at a time.

11. **Am I eligible for reimbursement of other courses while I am participating in a BCPS contracted cohort?**
    Cohort members are not eligible for individual tuition reimbursement by BCPS while taking BCPS certification cohort courses. Please review the BCPS Cohort Participant Agreement you received from the college or university for additional information.

12. **What happens if I do not successfully complete a course?**
    Direct billing requires cohort participants to complete the course and receive a grade of "C" or better by the time the college/university originally posts grades. Cohort participants are responsible for all course costs for which a grade lower than a “C” or an “Incomplete” is received. **Courses are specifically designed for participants to complete certification requirements. Unsuccessful completion of courses may result in non-renewal of the participants employment contract.**

13. **Where are the courses held?**
    Most courses are held online or hybrid setting. If courses are in person, they are held in convenient locations, generally in BCPS schools or other central sites. Locations of cohort courses are subject to change.

14. **What day and time are courses?**
    The college or university determines the day, date, and time of each course. Courses will not begin before 4:30 p.m. Dates and times of cohort courses are subject to change. The college reserves the right to change the date and time of courses.

15. **Do courses need to taken in a specific sequence and semester?**
    Cohort courses must be taken in the approved sequence, in the identified semester, and at the contracted location.

16. **Can I drop out of a BCPS contracted cohort?**
    Yes, you may drop out of a BCPS contracted cohort. You are not eligible to rejoin the same cohort after dropping out. If you drop out during a course, you will be responsible...
for the full cost of tuition. **If you chose to drop out of a certification cohort, it will be your responsibility to complete required certification courses by your identified deadline.** To officially withdraw from a cohort or course, you must follow the college’s official withdrawal procedures.

17. **Do I still have class if BCPS is closed or closes early for inclement weather?**  
If the class is held on a BCPS site and the system is closed or closes early for inclement weather, then classes are cancelled. If the class is held at the college, please follow the college’s cancellation policy.

18. **Do I still have class if BCPS closes early due to heat-related conditions?**  
If the class is held on a BCPS site and the system closes early for heat-related conditions, cohort classes/meetings are cancelled. However, the college reserves the right to move the class from a BCPS site to the college campus if the system closes early for heat-related conditions. If the class is scheduled to be held at the college, please follow the college’s cancellation policy.

19. **Do I still have class if BCPS is closed for students but open for staff?**  
Yes, classes will be held as scheduled.

20. **What happens if I cannot take one of the courses?**  
Contact the Office of Certification to determine the best alternative to satisfy certification requirements.

21. **Can a BCPS contracted cohort be cancelled?**  
If a cohort’s enrollment drops below the contracted minimum number of participants at any time, the cohort may be cancelled.

22. **Whom do I contact with questions concerning my certification or a salary lane change?**  
Please contact the Office of Certification at certunit@bcps.org or 443-809-4147.