



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

To: Superintendents, Principals, Teachers
From: Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner
Date: November 14, 2014
Re: Licensure Policy Proposals

We are writing to let you know that we are revamping the materials that are guiding the discussion on potential revisions to educator licensure. ***In short, we are rescinding the draft options that link licensure to educator evaluation.*** We received overwhelming testimony in opposition to linking licensure to evaluation. We appreciate the stakeholder feedback, and agree with it. While the draft options we presented were intended to be a catalyst for exploring potential design principles and policies, it is clear that the options are impeding rather than encouraging thoughtful discussion of refinements to our licensure system.

As you know, the Department has been soliciting stakeholder feedback about the educator licensure system. The Department has been conducting meetings with stakeholders to elicit feedback on draft design principles and draft policy options. While we are not interested in linking evaluation with licensure, we are interested in suggestions for refinements to licensure. To this end, we continue to look for input on current and potential requirements for licensure. Among the refinements we are seeking feedback on is the statutory requirement that “demonstration of successful performance¹” be a feature of licensure.

As we continue discussions with stakeholders, we are interested in feedback on the possibility of three categories of licensure: beginning licensure, re-licensure, and advanced licensure. Among the questions that we will be interested in are:

1. What are the shortcomings of the existing licensure system?
2. What are the “keepers” in the existing licensure system?
3. Should Massachusetts pursue a three-tier licensure system (beginning licensure, re-licensure, and advanced licensure)?
4. Should competence be a criterion for beginning licensure? For license renewal? For advanced licensure?
5. If competence should be taken into consideration, how should competence be determined?
6. Beside consideration of competence, what additional factors should be required for beginning licensure? For license renewal? For advanced licensure?

We appreciate the feedback you have provided to date. We look forward to continued discussion about opportunities and challenges in rethinking the Commonwealth’s licensure system.

Thank you for your continued interest in and support of this work.