*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

### 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906 Telephone: (781) 338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Jeffrey C. Riley  *Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner |
| **Date:** | April 20, 2023 |
| **Subject:** | Proposed Amendments: Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval Regulations, 603 CMR 7.00 |

I am presenting to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) this month proposed amendments to 603 CMR 7.00, the Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval, for a vote to solicit public comment, anticipating a final vote by the Board in June 2023 following the public comment period.

The proposed amendments will expand options for licensure as follows:

* Allow educators with Initial and Professional licenses to obtain Provisional licenses in certain fields;
* Create a new grade span, PreK-2, for two licenses: teacher of students with moderate disabilities and teacher of students with severe disabilities;
* Permit applicants for Provisional licenses to meet a requirement through demonstrating knowledge, as an alternative to meeting the requirement by taking a course or seminar; and
* Create a new Provisional license for school nurses.

These amendments are all designed to enable more educators to enter fields in which school districts report major staffing challenges, while maintaining key qualifications for educators seeking these licenses.

**Proposed amendments to allow Initial and Professional license holders to obtain a Provisional license in special education areas and in English as a Second Language.**

The Provisional license is an entry license, generally granted to an individual who has passed the required Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL) tests and holds a bachelor’s degree. Provisional license holders need to complete an approved educator preparation program to advance to an Initial license. Currently, a teacher with an Initial or Professional license is unable to obtain a Provisional license in any new field, because the regulations require that their first license in a new field be at the level (Initial or Professional) of their current license.

The proposed amendments would allow educators with Initial or Professional licenses, who have at least two years of experience modifying curriculum for students with disabilities, to obtain a Provisional license as teacher of students with moderate disabilities, teacher of students with severe disabilities, teacher of the deaf and hard-of-hearing, or teacher of the visually impaired. Provisional licenses in English as a Second Language (ESL) would also be available to educators who hold Initial or Professional licenses in other fields. Demonstration of the subject matter knowledge requirements for the license sought is required to obtain the Provisional licenses. For example, an educator seeking a license in ESL must pass the ESL MTEL test. Provisional license holders wish to advance their licenses to the Initial or Professional level in these fields need to complete an internship of 150 hours.

**Proposed amendments to create a new grade span, PreK-2, for two licenses: teacher of students with moderate disabilities and teacher of students with severe disabilities.**

The Department offers an Early Childhood license, for teaching in Pre-Kindergarten through second grade, that requires passing the Communication and Literacy Skills, Foundations of Reading, and Early Childhood MTEL tests. To obtain the Moderate Disabilities PreK-8 license, the required MTEL tests are Communication and Literacy Skills, Foundations of Reading, and General Curriculum. To obtain the Severe Disabilities PreK-8 license, the required MTEL tests are Communication and Literacy Skills and General Curriculum. Under the proposed PreK-2 special education licenses, the Department would accept either the Early Childhood or General Curriculum MTEL test. We anticipate that some educators who have passed the Early Childhood MTEL would pursue a moderate or severe disabilities PreK-2 license, which would not require passing the General Curriculum test. Individuals pursuing the PreK-2 special education licenses would also need to demonstrate the subject matter knowledge of moderate and/or severe disabilities.

**Proposed amendments to permit Provisional licensure applicants to meet a requirement through a demonstration of knowledge, as an alternative to meeting the requirement by taking a course or seminar.**

To obtain elementary, early childhood, and special education Provisional licenses, applicants must complete a course or seminar “on ways to prepare and maintain students with disabilities for general classrooms.” We propose to allow applicants to meet this requirement by means of demonstrated knowledge gained through experiences, such as the [Structured Guidance and Supports](https://www.doe.mass.edu/licensure/academic-prek12/sgs/) performance-based assessment, in an appropriate classroom.

**Proposed amendment to create a new Provisional license for school nurses.**

In the health care industry and in our schools, nurses are in high demand. Creating a Provisional license for school nurses will streamline entry for qualified nurses who wish to serve students in our schools. Candidates for the Provisional School Nurse license would need to pass the Communication and Literacy Skills MTEL test and possess a bachelor’s degree or master’s degree in nursing as well as a valid license as a Registered Nurse. While employed under the Provisional license, the school nurse would need to complete the required orientation program and gain two years of experience under their RN license in a child health, community health, or other relevant clinical nursing setting to advance to an Initial license.

Jamie Camacho, Director of the Office of Special Education Planning and Policy; Brian Devine, Director of Educator Licensure; Liz Losee, Director of Educator Effectiveness Policy; and Lucy Wall of our legal staff will join us for the discussion at the April 25 meeting.

With the Board’s approval, the Department will invite public comment on these proposed amendments. After reviewing all the comments and determining whether further changes are needed, I plan to bring the amendments back to the Board in June 2023 for final adoption.

A redlined version of the regulations is attached, along with a motion to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments.

Enclosures:

603 CMR 7.00 Strikethrough version of relevant portion of regulations showing amendments

Motion