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Office of Educator Preparation and Quality

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Policy Advisory: District-Based *Variety of Fields* Programs

Effective immediately, this advisory clarifies definitions and approval procedures for forthcoming initial licensure programs that are presented to the Department under the *Variety of Fields* option.

History

In 2001, changes to the *Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval* (603 CMR 7.00) expanded opportunities for districts and other educator preparation program providers to deliver accelerated, alternative route post-baccalaureate programs focused on addressing high need licensure areas, such as mathematics and science. Under that authorization, the MINT (Massachusetts Institute for New Teachers) initiatives in Worcester and Lawrence and a variety of other alternative programs leading to the first Initial teaching license completed the program approval process and came on line.

The conceptual framework for the *Variety of Fields* option in the alternative licensure setting evolved out of the Department's recognition of need for further flexibility in supporting districts in the preparation of teachers in fields (in addition to mathematics and the sciences) where there is also a strong hiring need. Guidelines for the development of *Variety of Fields* programs were thus established to encompass the eleven middle (5-8) and secondary (8-12) grades Initial licenses for which subject matter competence would be demonstrated through the MTEs (*Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure*).

Definition of *Variety of Fields* Programs

Variety of Fields programs are:

- 1) accelerated, alternative route post-baccalaureate programs with a strong and expanded practical foundation, most typically delivered in the district-based setting to prepare Route 3 (*Teacher of Record*) candidates for the Initial teaching license
- 2) built around intensive licensure preparation activities and pedagogical/practical preparation associated with the specific 5-8 and/or 8-12 licenses for which the MTEL is a unique measure of candidate preparedness in the following content areas:
 - biology
 - chemistry

- earth science
 - English
 - general science
 - humanities
 - history
 - mathematics
 - mathematics/science
 - physics
 - political science/philosophy
- 3) prioritized for sponsoring organizations that seek to deliver preparation for initial licensure in the mathematics and sciences, but may also include preparation in the other content area licenses encompassed in the grades 5-8 and 8-12 ranges noted in this advisory
- 4) established and delivered with careful attention to focused differentiation of assignments and experiences complementary to pedagogical practical approaches appropriate to the specific subject matter areas in which candidates are to be licensed.

**** NOTE: Programs designed to prepare teachers for other Initial licenses such as those in special, elementary, and early childhood education and those that are offered for other grade levels and subject matter areas not noted in this advisory (e.g., the PreK-8, PreK-6, 1-6, 5-12, and All levels licenses) are required to undergo a separate approval process.

Approval Procedures for New *Variety of Fields* Programs

Organizations that wish to develop new *Variety of Fields Programs* should contact their program approval coordinator for technical assistance before proceeding. Approval for new *Variety of Fields* programs will adhere to Department policies and procedures as currently employed in the undertaking of informal review, within the grade-level and subject matter area specifications noted in this advisory.

Specifications for Organizations that Currently Hold *Variety of Fields* Approvals

Organizations that currently hold state approval to deliver *Variety of Fields* programs will retain authorization to implement educator preparation programming in all licensure areas previously approved, as noted in their letters of formal or informal approval. Effective with the next formal review process, these organizations will adhere to the guidance offered in this advisory pertaining to definitions and approval procedures for *Variety of Fields* programs.