October 28, 2014

Dear Teacher of Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students or Special Education Administrator,

On October 21, 2014, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education passed Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval (603 CMR 7.00) and Educator Licensure Renewal (603 CMR 44.00): Requirements for Teachers of Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students (TODHHS).

New TODHHS seeking the designation for Oral/Aural (O/A) will continue to be required to take the Foundations of Reading Test as well as demonstrate completion of an approved Oral/Aural program or a competency review. If the TODHHS already has an undesignated license and wishes to obtain the O/A designation, demonstration of completion of an approved Oral/Aural Program is needed and the designation may be obtained at any time.

Changes in the requirements for TODHHS seeking the American Sign Language/Total Communication (ASL/TC) include:

1. Adding a requirement to demonstrate proficiency in American Sign Language (ASL) by passing the approved test as set by the Department, the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI). This requirement will affect all teachers seeking initial license for ASL/TC or renewing their current license and obtaining the ASL/TC designation;
2. Removing a requirement for teachers to pass the Foundations of Reading (FOR) test for teachers seeking the ASL/TC license. Subject matter knowledge requirements for reading will be addressed in the approved teacher preparation programs for this license.

In order to facilitate the rapid implementation of this requirement, the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH), in collaboration with Department of Elementary and Secondary education (ESE), will be offering SLPI testing, free of charge through the 2014-2015 school year. To take advantage of this incentive, please contact Aurora Wilber of MCDHH at 617-740-1690 or aurora.wilber@massmail.state.ma.us to schedule a SLPI test.

For further information regarding the SLPI, please see the announcement on ESE’s Website here: http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=7833. If you need additional assistance with general licensure questions, you can contact the Licensure Help Website here: https://gateway.edu.state.ma.us/ellar/licensurehelp/LicenseRequirementsCriteriaPageControl.ser.

Thank you for your continued dedication and service to students with disabilities in the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Marcia Mittnacht
State Director of Special Education