

Chapter 226 of the Acts of 2014 (Excerpts)

AN ACT RELATIVE TO ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM AND OTHER INTELLECTUAL OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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SECTION 23. Section 38G ½ of said chapter 71, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting before the definition of “board”, the following definition:-

“Autism or autism spectrum disorders” shall have the same meaning as the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

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SECTION 24. Said section 38G ½ of said chapter 71, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by adding the following paragraph:-

The board shall provide an endorsement in autism which shall include both coursework and field experience for licensed special education teachers to acquire the competencies necessary to conduct assessments, develop appropriate individualized education programs, provide specially designed instruction and related services and consult and collaborate with other educators, including general education teachers, in order to meet the unique and complex educational needs of students with autism in the least restrictive environment. Competencies shall also include, but not be limited to, the impact of autism on verbal and nonverbal communication, social interaction, sensory experiences, behaviors, literacy and academic achievement. All content taught as part of this specialization shall be consistent with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq., for evidence based practices. The requirements for the endorsement in autism, as promulgated by the board, may also be used to satisfy course requirements necessary to obtain a professional license. The board shall promulgate regulations specifying the subject matter knowledge, skills and competencies required for such endorsement, including requirements to incorporate renewal of the endorsement as part of the individual professional development plan required pursuant to section 38G. Said regulations shall also specify components necessary for preparation programs offering an endorsement in autism, which shall be included in the department’s process for approving preparation programs.

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SECTION 31. For 1 year after the board has promulgated regulations as required under section 24, teachers who have previously been employed serving primarily students with autism shall be eligible to receive an autism endorsement, provided that they demonstrate the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to receive such endorsement, subject to regulations promulgated by the board of elementary and secondary education.

SECTION 32. The board of elementary and secondary education shall promulgate the regulations required pursuant to section 24 on or before June 30, 2015.

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