***Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley  *Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner |
| **Date:** | October 15, 2020 |
| **Subject:** | Proposed Amendment to Educator Licensure Regulations, 603 CMR 7.00 (Pilot Alternative Assessments for Licensure), for Final Approval |

In January 2020, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) voted to solicit public comment on a [proposed amendment to the licensure](http://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2020/2020-01/item3.docx) and educator preparation regulations, 603 CMR 7.00, that would allow the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) to pilot alternative assessments to the existing Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL). The Department has reviewed the public comments and they are included in full as an enclosure to this memo. I recommend that the Board vote at the October 20 meeting to adopt the proposed amendment with one change based on the timeline associated with the amendment.

The proposed regulatory amendment creates flexibility to pilot alternative assessments to the MTEL for educator licensure.[[1]](#footnote-2) The amendment is designed to:

* Identify, pilot and learn more about alternative ways to assess prospective educators’ content knowledge and communication and literacy skills that are equally rigorous to the MTEL;
* Be responsive to feedback from the field; and
* Maintain a high standard for assessing educators’ knowledge and skills.

With the Board’s approval of the amendment, I will work with Department staff and stakeholders to identify the alternative assessments to pilot over the next three years and update the Board at least annually.

**Public Comment and Change to Amendment Language**

The public comment period began on February 12, 2020 and closed on March 13, 2020. We received comments on the proposed amendment from over 300 individuals and groups. The comments received were largely favorable, with 84% supporting the amendment.

In the enclosures for your review, we have included:

* A summary of the public comment received and the Department’s response
* A full report with all the responses to the public comment survey, and
* The submitted public comment letters

The public comment falls largely into the following categories of feedback:

* Support for the amendment
* Concerns generally about standardized testing
* Questions about educator candidates’ access to the alternative assessments
* Individual experiences with assessment and licensure
* Evaluation of the pilots

We originally planned to bring this amendment to the Board for a final vote in April 2020 but postponed the action due to the press of time-sensitive matters relating to the pandemic. For this reason, we are proposing to extend the timeline for the pilot from the original proposed end date of June 30, 2023 to June 30, 2024, to ensure sufficient time for a three-year effort to pilot and evaluate these alternatives. This timeline change is the only modification I am recommending to the proposed regulation that the Board reviewed in January.

At the October 20, 2020 Board meeting, Senior Associate Commissioner Heather Peske and Meagan Comb, Director of Educator Effectiveness, Center for Instructional Support, will be available to answer your questions.

Enclosures:

1. 603 CMR 7.00 – Summary of Public Comments Received and Department Response
2. 603 CMR 7.00 – Public Comment Letters Received by the Department
3. 603 CMR 7.00 – Summary Report of All Responses
4. 603 CMR 7.00 – Strikethrough version of regulations incorporating proposed amendment and change to timeline for the pilot
5. 603 CMR 7.00 – Clean version of regulations incorporating proposed amendment and change to timeline for the pilot
6. Motion

**Enclosure #4 – Proposed Amendment to Educator Licensure Regulations, 603 CMR 7.00 (Pilot Alternative Assessments for Licensure), for Final Approval – Strikethrough Version**

**Presented to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for initial action: Jan. 28, 2020**

**Period of public comment: Feb. 12–Mar. 13, 2020**

# Final action by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education anticipated: Oct. 20, 2020

# The proposed amendment is indicated by underline (new language) in 603 CMR 7.04 (2)(e). The one change from the version initially approved by the Board to solicit public comment in January 2020 is indicated in red, with the deleted text ~~struck through~~. For the complete text of the current regulations, 603 CMR 7.00, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html>

**603 CMR 7.04 Types of Educator Licenses, Requirements for Licensure, Licenses Issued, and Requirements for Field-Based Experience**

**(1) Types of Licenses.**

(a) Provisional

(b) Initial

(c) Professional

(d) Temporary

**(2) Requirements for Teacher Licensure.**

(a) **Provisional**. This is available only for licenses under 603 CMR 7.04 (3) (a)

1. Possession of a bachelor's degree.
2. Passing score on the Communication and Literacy Skills test.
3. Passing score on the subject matter knowledge test(s) appropriate to the license sought, based on the subject matter knowledge requirements set forth in 603 CMR 7.06, where available.
4. Competency Review for candidates seeking the following licenses:
   1. Teacher of students with moderate disabilities, teacher of students with severe disabilities, teacher of the deaf and hard-of-hearing, and teacher of the visually impaired.
   2. Fields for which there is no subject matter knowledge test available.
5. Additional requirements for the early childhood, elementary, teacher of students with moderate disabilities, teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing (Oral/Aural) and teacher of the visually impaired licenses:
   1. Seminars or courses on ways to prepare and maintain students with disabilities for general classrooms; for example, use of strategies for learning and of behavioral management principles.
   2. Passing score on the Foundations of Reading test.
6. Additional requirements for the teacher of students with severe disabilities, and teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing (American Sign Language/Total Communication) licenses: Seminars or courses on ways to prepare and maintain students with disabilities for general classrooms; for example, use of strategies for learning and of behavioral management principles.
7. Evidence of sound moral character.

(b) **Initial**

1. Possession of a bachelor's degree.
2. Passing score on the Communication and Literacy Skills test.
3. Passing score on the subject matter knowledge test(s) appropriate to the license sought, based on the subject matter knowledge requirements set forth in the Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines. Where no test has been established, completion of an approved program will satisfy this requirement.
4. Completion of an approved route for the Initial license sought as set forth in 603 CMR 7.05.
5. For core academic teachers, possession of an SEI Teacher Endorsement.
6. Evidence of sound moral character.

(c) **Professional**

1. Possession of an Initial license in the same field as the Professional license sought.
2. Completion of a one-year induction program with a mentor and at least 50 hours of a mentored experience beyond the induction year.
3. At least three full years of employment under the Initial license.
4. Completion of one of the following:
   1. An approved licensure program for the Professional license sought as set forth in the Guidelines for Program Approval.
   2. A program leading to eligibility for master teacher status, such as those sponsored by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and others accepted by the Commissioner.
   3. For those who have completed any master's or higher degree or other advanced graduate program in an accredited college or university, at least 12 credits of graduate level courses in subject matter knowledge or pedagogy based on the subject matter knowledge of the Professional license sought; these may include credits earned prior to application for the license.
5. Additional requirement for the teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing license (American Sign Language/Total Communication): Passing score on a test of sign language proficiency approved by the Department.

(d) **Temporary**

1. Possession of a bachelor's degree.
2. Possession of a valid educator license or certificate from another state or jurisdiction.
3. At least three years of employment under such valid license or certificate.
4. Has not failed any part of the applicable licensure tests required by 603 CMR 7.04 (2) (a) 2. and 3.
5. Evidence of sound moral character.

(e) **Alternative Assessment Pilot**

The Department may conduct a pilot of alternative assessments identified or developed to satisfy the requirements of 603 CMR 7.04 (2) (a) (2) and (3), and 603 CMR 7.04 (2) (b) (2) and (3), and 603 CMR 1.06 (4) (a). Any alternative assessment identified or developed for this purpose shall be determined by the Commissioner to be comparable to the MTEL Communication and Literacy Skills test or subject matter knowledge test. The alternative assessment pilot period shall continue through ~~June 30, 2023~~ June 30, 2024. Any candidate who passes an alternative assessment during that period will be deemed to have satisfied the requirements of 603 CMR 7.04 (2) (a) (2), or (a) (3), or 603 CMR 7.04 (2) (b) (2) or (b) (3), or 603 CMR 1.06 (4) (a), as applicable. During the period of the alternative assessment pilot, the Commissioner will report to the Board at least annually on any alternative assessments, including the number of candidates taking the alternative assessments, any evaluative information regarding these candidates, patterns of employment, and feedback from school districts and educator preparation programs. Prior to making any recommendations following the conclusion of the pilot, the Commissioner shall conduct or contract for an evaluation of the alternative assessment pilot.

**Enclosure #5 – Proposed Amendment to Educator Licensure Regulations, 603 CMR 7.00 (Pilot Alternative Assessments for Licensure), for Final Approval – Clean Version**

**Presented to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for initial action: Jan. 28, 2020**

**Period of public comment: Feb. 12–Mar. 13, 2020**

# Final action by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education anticipated: Oct. 20, 2020

# For the complete text of the current regulations, 603 CMR 7.00, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html>

**603 CMR 7.04 Types of Educator Licenses, Requirements for Licensure, Licenses Issued, and Requirements for Field-Based Experience**

**(1) Types of Licenses.**

(a) Provisional

(b) Initial

(c) Professional

(d) Temporary

**(2) Requirements for Teacher Licensure.**

(a) **Provisional**. This is available only for licenses under 603 CMR 7.04 (3) (a)

1. Possession of a bachelor's degree.
2. Passing score on the Communication and Literacy Skills test.
3. Passing score on the subject matter knowledge test(s) appropriate to the license sought, based on the subject matter knowledge requirements set forth in 603 CMR 7.06, where available.
4. Competency Review for candidates seeking the following licenses:
   1. Teacher of students with moderate disabilities, teacher of students with severe disabilities, teacher of the deaf and hard-of-hearing, and teacher of the visually impaired.
   2. Fields for which there is no subject matter knowledge test available.
5. Additional requirements for the early childhood, elementary, teacher of students with moderate disabilities, teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing (Oral/Aural) and teacher of the visually impaired licenses:
   1. Seminars or courses on ways to prepare and maintain students with disabilities for general classrooms; for example, use of strategies for learning and of behavioral management principles.
   2. Passing score on the Foundations of Reading test.
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7. Evidence of sound moral character.

(b) **Initial**

1. Possession of a bachelor's degree.
2. Passing score on the Communication and Literacy Skills test.
3. Passing score on the subject matter knowledge test(s) appropriate to the license sought, based on the subject matter knowledge requirements set forth in the Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines. Where no test has been established, completion of an approved program will satisfy this requirement.
4. Completion of an approved route for the Initial license sought as set forth in 603 CMR 7.05.
5. For core academic teachers, possession of an SEI Teacher Endorsement.
6. Evidence of sound moral character.

(c) **Professional**

1. Possession of an Initial license in the same field as the Professional license sought.
2. Completion of a one-year induction program with a mentor and at least 50 hours of a mentored experience beyond the induction year.
3. At least three full years of employment under the Initial license.
4. Completion of one of the following:
   1. An approved licensure program for the Professional license sought as set forth in the Guidelines for Program Approval.
   2. A program leading to eligibility for master teacher status, such as those sponsored by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and others accepted by the Commissioner.
   3. For those who have completed any master's or higher degree or other advanced graduate program in an accredited college or university, at least 12 credits of graduate level courses in subject matter knowledge or pedagogy based on the subject matter knowledge of the Professional license sought; these may include credits earned prior to application for the license.
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(d) **Temporary**

1. Possession of a bachelor's degree.
2. Possession of a valid educator license or certificate from another state or jurisdiction.
3. At least three years of employment under such valid license or certificate.
4. Has not failed any part of the applicable licensure tests required by 603 CMR 7.04 (2) (a) 2. and 3.
5. Evidence of sound moral character.

(e) **Alternative Assessment Pilot**

The Department may conduct a pilot of alternative assessments identified or developed to satisfy the requirements of 603 CMR 7.04 (2) (a) (2) and (3), and 603 CMR 7.04 (2) (b) (2) and (3), and 603 CMR 1.06 (4) (a). Any alternative assessment identified or developed for this purpose shall be determined by the Commissioner to be comparable to the MTEL Communication and Literacy Skills test or subject matter knowledge test. The alternative assessment pilot period shall continue through June 30, 2024. Any candidate who passes an alternative assessment during that period will be deemed to have satisfied the requirements of 603 CMR 7.04 (2) (a) (2), or (a) (3), or 603 CMR 7.04 (2) (b) (2) or (b) (3), or 603 CMR 1.06 (4) (a), as applicable. During the period of the alternative assessment pilot, the Commissioner will report to the Board at least annually on any alternative assessments, including the number of candidates taking the alternative assessments, any evaluative information regarding these candidates, patterns of employment, and feedback from school districts and educator preparation programs. Prior to making any recommendations following the conclusion of the pilot, the Commissioner shall conduct or contract for an evaluation of the alternative assessment pilot.

1. The pilot alternative assessments would be available to educators seeking licensure under [M.G.L. chapter 71, section 38G](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section38g). As teachers in Commonwealth charter schools are required to either hold a Massachusetts educator’s license or pass the MTEL appropriate for the role they hold (M.G.L. chapter 71, section 89(ii) and 603 CMR 1.06(4)(a)), the pilot alternative assessments would also be available to them. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)