*****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

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| Jeffrey C. Riley  *Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Superintendents, Leaders of Charter Schools and Educational Collaboratives, Directors of Bilingual Programs and Educators Seeking a Bilingual Education Endorsement |
| **From:** | Brian Devine, Director, Office of Educator Licensure  Paul Aguiar, Director, Office of Language Acquisition |
| **Date:** | October 9, 2019 |
| **Subject:** | Information about the Bilingual Education Endorsement |

As you may know, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) developed a Bilingual Education Endorsement in 2018. This memo provides an overview of the Bilingual Education Endorsement requirements and information that may be helpful to your school district if you are offering or planning to offer a bilingual education program.[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. **What you need to know from this memo**
2. Core academic teachers who provide instruction in a language other than English to students who are English learners must hold the Bilingual Education Endorsement.
3. A valid Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) license or Transitional Bilingual Learning (TBL) endorsement previously issued by the Department may be used in lieu of the Bilingual Education Endorsement.
4. Core academic teachers who provide instruction in English to an English learner in a bilingual education setting, must hold either the Bilingual Education Endorsement **or** the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Endorsement.
5. There are multiple pathways to earn the Bilingual Education Endorsement, including a “grandfather clause” that is in effect until June 30, 2020.
6. School districts may obtain a licensure hardship waiver to employ teachers in the role who have not yet obtained the Bilingual Education Endorsement.
7. The Department is updating the data we collect in order to assist districts in addressing the Bilingual Education Endorsement requirements.

**II.** **Background Regarding the Bilingual Education Endorsement**

On November 22, 2017, the Governor signed into law [An Act Relative to Language Opportunity for Our Kids](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2017/Chapter138) (LOOK Act). The LOOK Act provides more flexibility to school districts as to the type of English learner education programs they may implement. While most school districts in the Commonwealth utilize Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) programs, some school districts offer bilingual education programs, or are in the process of applying to the Department to begin new bilingual education programs. In accordance with the LOOK Act, on June 26, 2018, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education established the Bilingual Education Endorsement.

The Department’s [regulations](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=15) specify that a “core academic teacher responsible for the instructional component provided **in a language other than English** must hold the Bilingual Education Endorsement” if such a teacher is assigned to provide instruction **to an English learner** in a bilingual education setting, such as dual language education or two-way immersion program, or transitional bilingual education program.[[2]](#footnote-2) *See* 603 CMR 7.15(9)(c)1.a. For purposes of the Bilingual Education Endorsement, core academic teachers include teachers of students with moderate disabilities, teachers of students with severe disabilities, and teachers of the following academic subjects: English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, civics and government, economics, history, and geography, including early childhood and elementary teachers. *See* 603 CMR 7.02.

Core academic teachers responsible for the instructional component provided **in English to an English learner** in a bilingual education setting, must hold either the Bilingual Education Endorsement **or** the SEI Endorsement. *See* 603 CMR 7.15(9)(c)1.b.

A principal, assistant principal, or supervisor/director who supervises or evaluates a core academic teacher assigned to provide instruction to an English learner in a bilingual education setting must hold the Bilingual Education Endorsement **or** the SEI Endorsement. *See* 603 CMR 7.15(9)(c)2.

**III. Pathways for Obtaining the Bilingual Education Endorsement**

The Department’s regulations (603 CMR 7.14(3)) describe four pathways for an educator to obtain the Bilingual Education Endorsement In addition to the Department’s [Licensure Requirements Tool](https://gateway.edu.state.ma.us/elar/licensurehelp/LicenseRequirementsCriteriaPageControl.ser), a [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woAViQriPKc&list=PLlTu2uV3XQ20usKrF6CcF5IMkZZVd-BgJ&index=4&t=0s) about the Bilingual Education Endorsement has been added to the Massachusetts Educator Licensure Series (MELS) on the [Office of Educator Licensure’s You Tube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UClS1IAPHRGoqr6iyzNHTgqg).

**Pathway 1**

This pathway is for educators who have experience in bilingual education settings (sometimes thought of as a “grandfather clause”). To satisfy this pathway, an educator must:

1. Obtain a passing score on a foreign language test acceptable to the Department in the relevant foreign language[[3]](#footnote-3);
2. Have at least three years of employment experience in a bilingual education setting;
3. Demonstrate that he or she meets the relevant subject matter knowledge and skills requirements (see the [Department’s Office of Educator Licensure website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/licensure/forms-guidelines.html), which contains the Bilingual Education Endorsement: Demonstration of SMKs Form); and
4. Apply to the Department and complete the requirements in 1-3 above by **June 30, 2020**. *See* 603 CMR 7.14(3)(c).

**Pathway 2**

This pathway is available to all educators. To satisfy this pathway, an educator must:

1. Obtain a passing score on a foreign language test acceptable to the Department in the relevant foreign language (see footnote 3);
2. Demonstrate required subject matter knowledge and skills by successfully completing a Department approved course of study for providing bilingual education[[4]](#footnote-4); and
3. Complete at least 75 hours of field-based experience in a Pre-K through grade 12 bilingual education setting.[[5]](#footnote-5) *See* 603 CMR 7.14(3)(a).

**Pathway 3**

This pathway is available to educators prepared outside of Massachusetts. To satisfy this pathway, an educator must:

1. Obtain a passing score on a foreign language test acceptable to the Department in the relevant foreign language (see footnote 3); and
2. Possess an out-of-state license/certificate/endorsement that is comparable to the Bilingual Education Endorsement or complete a comparable bilingual education educator preparation program. *See* 603 CMR 7.14(3)(d).

For more information regarding this pathway, please contact the [Department’s Office of Educator Licensure](http://www.doe.mass.edu/licensure/) at 781-338-6600.

**Pathway 4**

We anticipate that this pathway will be available to all educators starting in 2020. To satisfy this pathway, an educator must:

(1) Obtain a passing score on a foreign language test acceptable to the Department in the relevant foreign language (see footnote 3);

(2) Obtain a passing score on the Bilingual Education MTEL exam, which is in development and is anticipated to be available in 2020;

(3) Complete at least 75 hours of field-based experience in a PreK through grade 12 bilingual education setting. *See* 603 CMR 7.14(3)(a).

**IV. Waiver Applications**

The Commissioner may issue a waiver to a school district, including a charter school and an educational collaborative, of the requirement that a core academic teacher assigned to provide instruction to an English learner in a bilingual education setting in a language other than English must hold the Bilingual Education Endorsement. *See* 603 CMR 7.15(9)(c)1.a.; 603 CMR 7.15(13)(d). Since this Bilingual Education Endorsement requirement is new in our state, the waiver process was designed to provide districts with some needed flexibility. To be granted a waiver, the school district must demonstrate that it has made a good faith effort to hire personnel with the Bilingual Education Endorsement, or the TBL Endorsement or TBE license as discussed in section V of this memo, and has been unable to find a candidate with the appropriate credential who is qualified for the position. The waiver is valid for a period of one school year, and may be renewed at the Commissioner’s discretion.

**V. Educators with Transitional Bilingual Credentials Previously Issued by the Department**

Some educators in the Commonwealth still hold a valid Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) license or Transitional Bilingual Learning (TBL) endorsement that was previously issued by the Department. For purposes of compliance with the Department’s regulations, a valid TBE license or TBL endorsement previously issued by the Department, is equivalent to the Bilingual Education Endorsement. Therefore, educators who have those credentials, if they are still valid, do not need to apply for the Bilingual Education Endorsement.

**VI. Future Edwin Analytics Reports**

The Department anticipates that starting in 2021, it will be able to provide school districts, including charter schools, with Edwin Analytics reports intended to assist districts with addressing the Bilingual Education Endorsement requirements.

If you have any questions regarding the Bilingual Education Endorsement requirements, please contact the [Department’s Office of Educator Licensure](http://www.doe.mass.edu/licensure/) at (781) 338-6600. If you are interested in establishing new bilingual education programs in your district, please see the Department’s [website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/resources.html?section=proposal) or contact the Department’s [Office of Language Acquisition](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/) at [ell@doe.mass.edu](mailto:ell@doe.mass.edu).

1. Bilingual education is defined as an educational program that involves teaching academic content in two languages, English and another language. Program types determine the varying amounts of each language used in instruction. Bilingual education programs include dual language education or two-way immersion and transitional bilingual education programs, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71A, § 2, and any other bilingual program types that may be approved by the Department. *See* 603 CMR 7.02. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A valid Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) license or Transitional Bilingual Learning (TBL) endorsement previously issued by the Department may be used to satisfy this requirement. *See* Section V of this memorandum. Similarly to the TBE license and TBL Endorsement, the Bilingual Education Endorsement is issued for the specific foreign language in which the educator has demonstrated proficiency. For example, Bilingual Education [Spanish] Endorsement. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Tests that can be used to satisfy the foreign language test requirement include the MTEL in the relevant language, as well as the Oral Proficiency Interview and Writing Proficiency Test offered through the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). For more information regarding the currently available tests, please see the Department’s [website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mtel/) and ACTFL’s [website](https://www.actfl.org/assessment-professional-development/assessments-the-actfl-testing-office). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Currently, there are approved courses of study at UMASS Amherst, Boston College, Bridgewater State College and Lesley College, and the Department is in the process of reviewing other proposed courses of study. Please see the Department’s [website](https://gateway.edu.state.ma.us/elar/licensurehelp/ProgramSearchPageControl.ser) to search for approved courses of study. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ordinarily, educators who complete a Department-approved course of study will satisfy the requirement for field-based experience through that course of study. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)