

# SENATE . . . . . No. 223

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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In the Year Two Thousand Nine  
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An Act to improve augmentative and alternative communication opportunities for children with disabilities..

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1           SECTION 1. Chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2006 Official Edition,  
2 is hereby amended by inserting at the end of section 38G the following paragraphs:- The board  
3 of elementary and secondary education shall promulgate revisions to the Regulations for  
4 Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval (603 CMR 7.00) to ensure that all special  
5 education and regular education teachers who apply for Massachusetts Educator certification or  
6 re-certification on or after June 1, 2011 shall receive training and preparation in the use of  
7 augmentative and alternative communication for students who are nonverbal or who have limited  
8 speech as a requirement for such certification or recertification. Such training and preparation  
9 shall include coursework in augmentative and alternative communication and for teachers  
10 applying for initial certification shall also include practical experience in the classroom with  
11 children that utilize augmentative and alternative communication, including but not limited to  
12 children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy and other  
13 disabilities that result in limited or no verbal abilities. The coursework and practical experience  
14 must be included for each level of Massachusetts educator certification and for all types of

teacher licenses referenced in 603 CMR 7.00, provided that practical experience for regular education teachers who apply for certification at the secondary level shall include experience in the classroom with individuals who utilize augmentative and alternative communication, and if classroom settings are unavailable practical experience may include other settings with individuals who utilize augmentative and alternative communication. Teacher and specialist teacher licensure requirements, subject matter knowledge requirements for teachers, professional standards for teachers, requirements for field-based experiences and educator preparation program approval requirements shall specifically address augmentative and alternative communication competencies to educate students with disabilities who are nonverbal or have limited verbal abilities. The term “alternative and augmentative communication” shall be defined as methods of communication other than oral speech that enhance or replace conventional forms of expressive and receptive communication to facilitate interaction by and with persons with disabilities who are nonverbal or have limited speech, including, but not limited to: specialized gestures and signs; communication aids such as charts, symbol systems and language boards; mouth sticks; facilitated communication; and electronic communication devices such as switches, head pointers, eye tracking, dynamic displays, auditory scanning and speech synthesizers.