

SENATE No. 2293

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Ten

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 2008 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by inserting at the end of section 38G the following 2 paragraphs:-

3 All teachers who apply for initial Massachusetts educator license on or after June 1, 2011
4 shall receive training and preparation in the use of augmentative and alternative communication
5 for students who are nonverbal or who have limited speech as a requirement for such licensure.
6 Such training and preparation shall include coursework in augmentative and alternative
7 communication and practical experience in the classroom with children who use augmentative
8 and alternative communication, including but not limited to children with Autism Spectrum
9 Disorder, acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy and other disabilities that result in limited or no
10 verbal abilities. The coursework and practical experience must be included for all fields, grade
11 levels and types of Massachusetts educator licensure; provided that a teacher shall not be
12 required to receive such coursework and practical experience if he is applying for a second or
13 any subsequent licenses, and further provided that practical experience for regular education

14 teachers who apply for licensure at the secondary level shall include experience in the classroom
15 with individuals who use augmentative and alternative communication, and if classroom settings
16 are unavailable practical experience may include other settings with individuals who use
17 augmentative and alternative communication. Teacher and specialist teacher licensure
18 requirements, subject matter knowledge requirements for teachers, professional standards for
19 teachers, requirements for field-based experiences and educator preparation program approval
20 requirements shall specifically address augmentative and alternative communication
21 competencies to educate students with disabilities who are nonverbal or have limited verbal
22 abilities; provided that a teacher shall not be subject to such requirements if they are applying for
23 a second or subsequent licenses.

24 The term “alternative and augmentative communication” shall mean methods of
25 communication other than oral speech that enhance or replace conventional forms of expressive
26 and receptive communication to facilitate interaction by and with persons with disabilities who
27 are nonverbal or have limited speech, including, but not limited to: specialized gestures and
28 signs; communication aids such as charts, symbol systems and language boards; mouth sticks;
29 facilitated communication; and electronic communication devices such as switches, head
30 pointers, eye tracking, dynamic displays, auditory scanning and speech synthesizers.

31 SECTION 2. Said section 38Q of said chapter 71 is hereby amended by inserting after
32 the word “styles” in line 13 as so appearing the following : “, including those students who are
33 non-verbal or who have limited speech and rely on augmentative and alternative communication,
34 as defined in section 38G”.