

# SENATE . . . . . No. 267

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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 Reform Educator Licensure in the Commonwealth..

*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 Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the board of  
2 elementary and secondary education is hereby authorized and directed to promulgate regulations  
3 to replace all “Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure”, so-called, with the “Praxis I and II”,  
4 so-called, not later than January 1, 2011.

5           SECTION 2 The board shall promulgate regulations to develop licenses in all core  
6 subject areas that are consistent with the following grade spans: PreK-2, K-6 and 5-12. Special  
7 education, art and performing arts, health and family and consumer sciences, instructional  
8 technology, music, library, physical education, specialist, education support professional licenses  
9 and any others deemed necessary by the commissioner of education, shall be valid for grades  
10 Pre-K through 12.

11           SECTION 3 Chapter 71 of the general laws, as appearing in the 2006 official edition, is  
12 hereby amended by striking out section 38G and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

Section 38G. As used in this section the following words shall have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“Board”, the board of elementary and secondary education established by chapter 15 of the general laws, herein referred to as the board.

“Commissioner”, the commissioner of the department of elementary and secondary education, herein referred to as the commissioner.

“Endorsement”, - an addition to an initial or professional license to indicate completion of coursework and practical experience as established by the board. Said endorsement will allow the holder to assume instructional leadership positions as defined by individual school districts, and including the role of new teacher developer.

“Field experience”, – a combination of observation of practitioners and planning and delivering classroom instruction in the full range of grade levels covered by the licenses sought. Both observation and instruction should occur in both urban and suburban school districts. Rural districts shall be included if proximate to and partnered with an approved teacher preparation program. Field experience will be a requirement for attainment of an initial license.

“Initial license” –a license issued to a person who has successfully completed an approved educator preparation program and passed Praxis I and II. Said license shall be valid for 10 years of employment as an educator in the public schools of the commonwealth and may not be renewed.

“New Teacher Developer”, – a teacher employed in a district who holds a professional license and has professional teacher status as defined by section 41 of chapter 71 of the general

laws. This person may conduct on-site seminars for pre-service teachers' field experiences and may serve as a mentor for teachers who hold preliminary or initial licenses and are in their first, second and third years of employment.

“Preliminary license”, a license issued to a person to teach an area of high need, as identified by the commissioner. High need areas shall be reviewed and updated every 3 years. This license shall be valid for 3 years of employment in the public schools of the commonwealth and may not be renewed.

“Professional license”, a license to teach issued to a person with an Initial License in the same area who has completed 3 years of successful teaching under the initial license as certified by the superintendent of schools; and (1) a masters program, approved by the board of education for the preparation of teachers; or (2) attained certification by the national board of professional teaching standards; or (3) attained an additional educator license as defined by this section; or (4) completed another program approved by the board. The professional license shall be valid for renewable terms of 5 years.

“Regionally licensed or certified educator”, a person who has been granted a regional license by another state jurisdiction under terms of a contract entered into pursuant to chapter 748 of the acts of 1968, the interstate agreement on certification of educational personnel. Said regional license shall be considered equivalent to an initial license.

“Reciprocity of licensed educators”, the process and requirements established by the commissioner for candidates who have attained the equivalent of a professional license issued by another state or who have attained certification by the national board of professional teaching

standards to obtain a Massachusetts educator license. Such license or certificate shall be equivalent to the professional license.

“Support Team”, the supervisors of teacher candidates participating in an approved educator preparation program. Said supervisors shall include a new teacher developer, an academic advisor from the educator preparation program and anyone else deemed appropriate by the participants in the teacher residency partnership.

“Teacher Residency Partnership”, each teacher preparation program must enter into a formal association with at least two types of school districts: urban, suburban and/or rural. Teacher residency partnerships are collaborations between the preparation programs and the school district which share decision-making about candidate progression and the content of in-district field experiences and seminars. All field experiences and seminars must occur in the partnership districts.

The commissioner shall have the authority to grant, upon application, preliminary licenses, initial licenses and professional licenses to persons who have satisfied the requirements for such licenses as established by the board. The board shall define the knowledge of subject matter and demonstration of competencies commensurate with attainment and renewal of such licenses.

To be eligible for a preliminary license, the candidate shall (1) hold a bachelor’s degree in arts or sciences from an accredited college or university with a major course in the arts or sciences appropriate to the instructional field; (2) pass a test established by the board which shall consist of three parts: a pre-service test of reading, writing and mathematics; a subject matter

test; and a test of pedagogical knowledge; (3) be of sound moral character; and (4) be approved by the commissioner to teach in an area of high need as identified by the commissioner.

To be eligible for an initial license, the candidate shall (1) hold a bachelor's degree in arts or sciences from an accredited college or university with a major course in the arts or sciences appropriate to the instructional field; (2) pass a test established by the board which shall consist of three parts: a pre-service test of reading, writing and mathematics; a subject matter test; and a test of pedagogical knowledge; (3) complete an approved educator preparation program and (4) be of sound moral character. Candidates who complete the requirements in this paragraph shall be issued an initial license which will permit them to seek employment in teaching positions requiring an educator license in public school districts in the commonwealth.

Districts seeking to employ a teacher with a preliminary license shall have an in-district program of support and mentoring; or shall partner with a college or university to provide such a program; or shall be a member of a regional collaborative as defined by section 4E of chapter 40 of the general laws, which shall provide a support and mentoring program. Each program must be approved by the department. The board shall establish professional standards for the training, support and supervision of teachers with preliminary licenses, which must be met before department approval is granted for said program.

During the period of employment, a person holding a preliminary license pursuant to this section shall be under the direct supervision of the principal or other appropriate supervisor who shall regularly observe and evaluate the educator's performance of assigned duties, in conjunction with the support and mentoring program. Such evaluation shall be according to relevant, nationally recognized professional standards for personnel evaluation.

After 3 years of employment with a preliminary license, a teacher must have obtained an initial license in order to continue to be employed in the public schools of the commonwealth.

Each professional license shall be valid for 5 years and continued every 5 years thereafter upon the successful completion of an individual professional development plan that meets the subject matter knowledge and teaching skill requirements set by the board. Such plan shall be designed to increase the ability of the person to improve student learning. All professional licenses must be renewed by their expiration date, or they will be considered invalid.

Certificates granted by the board prior to October 1, 1994 are hereby deemed professional certificates which shall be renewed every 5 years. All such certificates must be renewed.

The commissioner shall develop alternative paths for licensing school management and educational leadership personnel which shall facilitate a process whereby persons with significant managerial experience can obtain such licensure.

Any license issued by the commissioner may be revoked for cause, pursuant to standards and procedures established by the board.

The board shall have the authority to promulgate, amend and rescind such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section. Such regulations shall be presented to the joint committee on education for informational purposes ninety days before implementation.

All applications for any licenses granted under this section shall be accompanied by a fee to be determined annually by the commissioner of administration and finance under the provisions of section 3B of chapter 7 of the general laws. Said fees shall be established and

119 limited to allow the department to carry out the licensure and license renewal responsibilities but  
120 in no case shall said applications exceed \$100 per year with an annual increase no greater than  
121 the consumer price index.

122 No person shall be eligible for employment as a teacher, guidance counselor, director,  
123 school psychologist, school adjustment counselor, school social worker, school nurse, library  
124 teacher, school business administrator, principal, supervisor, director, assistant superintendent of  
125 school, and superintendent of schools by a school district unless he has been granted by the  
126 commissioner a provisional, or standard certificate with respect to the type of position for which  
127 he seeks employment; provided, however, that nothing herein shall be construed to prevent a  
128 school committee from prescribing additional qualifications; and provided further, that a  
129 superintendent may upon request be exempt by the commissioner for any one school year from  
130 the requirement in this section to employ licensed personnel when compliance therewith would  
131 in the opinion of the commissioner constitute a great hardship in securing teachers for that school  
132 district. During the time that such a waiver is in effect, service of an employee of a school district  
133 to whom the waiver applies shall not be counted as service in acquiring professional teacher  
134 status or other rights under section 41 of the general laws.

135 In addition to any other requirements of this section, the board shall require, as a  
136 provision of an administrator's or educator's initial license, that all educators and administrators  
137 shall have training in strategies for effective inclusive schooling for children with disabilities,  
138 instruction of students with diverse learning styles and classroom organization and management.  
139 Such training shall include, at a minimum, practical experience in the application of these  
140 strategies.

141 In addition to any other requirements in this section, in order to receive an initial license,  
142 persons applying for such license shall have completed such courses or training sessions as the  
143 board shall require in second language acquisition.

144 Competence in braille instruction shall be a requirement for initial licensure as a teacher  
145 of students with vision impairments. Such competence shall be verified through a testing  
146 program which meets the standards of the library of congress national library service for the  
147 blind or its successor.

148 For the purposes of granting an initial license to educators, the board shall establish  
149 policies and guidelines and the commissioner may approve preparation programs devoted to the  
150 preparation of teachers and other educational personnel. A college or university or school or  
151 district or other institution offering such an approved program, in conjunction with the district  
152 residency program, shall certify to the commissioner that a student has demonstrated satisfactory  
153 competence in the skills and knowledge expected of college graduates in the most advanced  
154 nations, and has completed the program approved. The college or university or school district or  
155 other institution shall also provide the commissioner with a transcript of the student's record.

156 At the end of each five-year period each professional educator shall attest to and provide  
157 appropriate supporting evidence and documentation to the department, in such form and at such  
158 time as the commissioner shall prescribe, that the educator has successfully completed a  
159 professional development plan which meets the standards set by the board.

160 In addition to any other requirements of this section, the board shall require, as a  
161 provision of an administrator's or educator's license renewal, that all educators and  
162 administrators shall have training in strategies for effective inclusive schooling for children with



disabilities, instruction of students with diverse learning styles and classroom organization and management. Such training shall include, at a minimum, practical experience in the application of these strategies.

It shall be one of the objectives of all school districts' professional development plans to satisfy the individual professional development plans required by this section; provided, however, that this requirement shall not be construed to require that a school district or the commonwealth provide funding for the fulfillment of the professional development requirements of this section and section 38Q beyond the foundation budget.

The board shall establish policies and guidelines for approval for any continuing education units, inservice seminars, projects, courses and other activities which would be deemed sufficient to maintain the development of professional skills and the knowledge of subject matter pertinent to particular licenses in accordance with the same procedures used for initial approval of teacher preparation programs.

The board shall establish for each license alternate methods for fulfilling the professional development requirement, at least one of which must be at no cost to persons employed by a school district, including paraprofessionals or assistant teachers, who are engaging in such an activity for the purpose of satisfying the professional development requirements for license renewal of this section.

Such policies shall provide that a teacher who is to be employed in a position in an area of licensure in which he is not currently employed, but for which he held a certificate which had been valid within five years immediately preceding the starting date of employment in this position, shall be given a reasonable period, as determined by the board, to fulfill a professional

185 development plan which demonstrates currency in the subject matter knowledge and requalify  
186 him for licensure in said area. In every instance, all evaluations and assessments shall follow  
187 nationally recognized professional standards.

188         Each local and regional school district shall attest to the department, in such form and at  
189 such time as the commissioner shall prescribe, that professional development activities for which  
190 credit toward license renewal is granted meet the requirements set by the board and are  
191 documented in accordance with procedures established by the board.

192         The board shall, in establishing said policies and criteria for professional development,  
193 give special consideration to the best interests of the students in the commonwealth, including  
194 the need for high quality teachers of english language learners programs established under  
195 chapter 71A for limited english proficient students and the need to maintain the highest  
196 performance standards of teachers while taking into proper consideration the financial or time  
197 constraints these policies may require. In developing such policies, guidelines and assessment  
198 methods, the board shall obtain the input of teachers, administrators, educational experts,  
199 parents, business leaders and others interested in the improvement of the professional status of  
200 teachers.

201         Except as otherwise specifically provided in this section, no rights of any employees of a  
202 school district under the provision of this chapter shall be impaired by the provisions of this  
203 section.

204         Anyone granted either an initial or professional license under this section shall be  
205 required to maintain the development of professional skills and the knowledge of subject matter  
206 pertinent to the areas of licensure.

207 This section shall not apply to trade, vocational, temporary substitute teachers, exchange  
208 teachers, regionally licensed or certified teachers or to teaching or administrative interns;  
209 provided, however, that approval for the employment of such personnel shall be generated by the  
210 board under such rules and regulations as it may adopt.

211 The requirements of this section shall not apply to the licensure of teachers of adult  
212 education. Nothing in this section or section 1H of chapter 69 shall be construed to prohibit a  
213 school committee from employing a teacher licensed under this section to teach adult education.

214 SECTION 4 The board shall promulgate regulations for the development and oversight  
215 of the field experience requirement. There shall be three field experience requirements as  
216 follows: (1) weekly classroom observations and participation in on-site seminars led by a new  
217 teacher developer totaling 150 hours; (2) classroom observation, weekly teaching experiences  
218 and on-site seminars totaling 150 hours; and (3) a 300-hour internship coupled with 100 hours of  
219 on-site seminars that increases in responsibility for the teacher candidate.

220 SECTION 5 Chapter 71 of the general laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
221 inserting after section 38G the following new section:-

222 Section 38G ½. The secretary of education, in conjunction with the boards of elementary  
223 and secondary education and higher education shall promulgate regulations for approval of  
224 teacher preparation programs. To be approved, teacher preparation programs must enter into  
225 residency partnerships with school districts as a means for offering pre-service field experiences  
226 and for reporting between the two entities for the purpose of collaboration and assessment of the  
227 candidate's qualifications. Each approved teacher preparation program must partner with at least  
228 two demographically different districts.

In order to qualify as a district with a teacher residency program, a district must partner with an approved teacher preparation program. A district residency program shall provide pre-service opportunities to students in the teacher preparation programs through the three specified field experiences. A district with a residency program shall employ a teacher in the role of new teacher developer to assist pre-service students in their field experiences. Each residency district must collaborate with the teacher preparation program to evaluate teacher candidates throughout the field experiences.

At the conclusion of each field experience of the approved educator preparation program, the chairperson of the support team shall prepare a comprehensive evaluation report of the teacher candidate's performance. The teacher candidate, the district and the educator preparation program shall receive a copy of the report. The final comprehensive evaluation report on each teacher candidate, after the completion of all required field experiences, shall be made on forms provided by the department. Said report shall include an assessment of the individual's competence and one of the following recommendations:

(1) Approved: recommends that the initial license be granted upon completion of the other preparation and eligibility requirements as established by the board;

(2) Insufficient: recommends that the candidate be allowed to continue participation in an approved educator preparation program for a time to be determined by the support team; or a candidate found insufficient twice shall not be allowed to continue participation in an approved educator preparation program; or

(3) Disapproved: recommends that the initial license not be granted and that the candidate not be allowed to continue in an approved educator preparation program.

251           The support team chairperson shall provide the teacher candidate with a copy of the  
252 written evaluation report and licensure recommendation before submitting it to the department.

253           If the recommendation is to disapprove, the teacher candidate may, within 15 days,  
254 submit to the chairperson written materials documenting the reasons why the teacher candidate  
255 believes a recommendation of insufficient should be granted.