

HOUSE No. 3978

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, July 21, 2021.

The committee on Education to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 545) of Christine P. Barber and others for legislation to require training and preparation in the use of augmentative and alternative communication for students who are nonverbal or who have limited speech for certain educator licenses, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 3978) ought to pass.

For the committee,

ALICE HANLON PEISCH.

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

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 2018 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by inserting at the end of section 38G the following paragraph:-

3 The board shall make available to all regular education teachers an optional program
4 designed to train and prepare teachers in the use of augmentative and alternative communication
5 for students who are nonverbal or who have limited speech. The program shall include
6 coursework in augmentative and alternative communication and practical experience in the
7 classroom with children who use augmentative and alternative communication, including but not
8 limited to, children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy and
9 other disabilities that result in limited or no verbal abilities; provided that practical experience
10 shall include experience in the classroom with students who use augmentative and alternative
11 communication, and if classroom settings are unavailable, practical experience may include other
12 types of interactions with and observations of individuals who use augmentative and alternative
13 communication. The board may require that individual professional development plans required

- 14 pursuant to this section address the learning needs of students who are nonverbal or have limited
- 15 speech.