

# HOUSE . . . . . No.

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

***Natalie M. Blais, (BY REQUEST)***

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to multiple relationships in approved private special education schools.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Benjamin Tobin</i>	<i>51 South St Williamsburg MA 01096</i>	<i>2/15/2022</i>

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By Ms. Blais of Sunderland (by request), a petition (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Benjamin Tobin relative to multiple relationships in approved private special education schools. Education.

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act relative to multiple relationships in approved private special education schools.

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

1           Instructors who work in the approved private special education schools established under  
2 chapter 71B work with a highly vulnerable population of students. Students who are placed in  
3 these programs have usually struggled in the public school system for many years, and families  
4 typically have to reach a settlement with a school district to gain a placement in one of these  
5 taxpayer funded private programs. Students are meant to gain the skills they need to be able to  
6 thrive in the general education setting. Currently, there is no oversight of the ethics and teacher  
7 preparedness in out of district placements. There is very little oversight in general. As such, there  
8 are a high number of incidents related to poor boundaries between students and staff. These  
9 multiple relationships have the potential to cause damage to both students and staff. The balance  
10 of power in student/teacher relationships is also much more unevenly balanced in a special  
11 education setting, so the primary objective of this legislation is to protect students.

12           Definition of Multiple Relationships:

Multiple relationships occur when the educator is in a professional role with one or more members of the school community and also has a personal relationship with that person or a member of that person's family. Multiple relationships have the potential to impair objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing his or her functions as an educator

- National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification

#### Requirements:

1. Educators must consider the risks that multiple relationships could impair objectivity and increase the likelihood of harm to students' learning and well-being or diminish educator effectiveness;
2. Considering the risks and benefits of a professional relationship with someone with whom the educator has had a past personal relationship and vice versa;
3. Considering the implications and possible ramifications of engaging in a personal or professional relationship with parents and guardians, student teachers, colleagues, and supervisors;
4. and Ensuring that professional responsibilities to paraprofessionals, student teachers or interns do not interfere with responsibilities to students, their learning, and well-being.
5. Educators must disclose any and all multiple relationships to the administrator of the school. The administrator must then report the multiple relationship to the sending district and to the department of education.

6. Administrators must report any and all multiple relationships to the school community, the sending district, and the department of education.

Consequences:

1. Any educator who is found to be in a multiple relationship must undergo training and professional development.

2. Based on the extent of the relationship, and the potential harm to the student, the commissioner must immediately revoke the licensee's licensure.

3. The department of education must immediately open an investigation into the licensee and the multiple relationship.

4. If it is found that there are multiple relationships, and unreported multiple relationships, occurring in any school, the school will immediately be put on probation and be unable to collect tuition from sending districts if the staff or administrator continue to work at the school.

Professional Development:

Professional Development in approved private special education schools cannot be internally driven. Outside professionals must be brought into the school to provide training and guidance for staff and administrators in the school. The department of education will design a five week long professional development course around the ethics of special education and the harmful nature of multiple relationships. This training will be mandatory for all out of district staff.