

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS FOR EDUCATOR  
LICENSURE AND PREPARATION PROGRAM APPROVAL, 603 CMR 7.00:  
AUTISM SPECIALIST ENDORSEMENT, 603 CMR 7.14(5)**

- As required by G.L. Chapter 71, section 38G-1/2, as amended by sections 23, 24, 31, and 32 of Chapter 226 of the Acts of 2014, *An Act Relative to Assisting Individuals with Autism and Other Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities*
- Presented to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for initial review and vote to solicit public comment: **April 28, 2015**
- Period of public comment: **through June 5, 2015**
- Final action by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education anticipated: **June 23, 2015**

To be added to section 7.14: Endorsements

(5) Autism Specialist Endorsement

(a) Prerequisite license:

1. An Initial or Professional license as a Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities, Teacher of Students with Severe Disabilities, Early Childhood, Teacher of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, or Teacher of the Visually Impaired; or
2. An Initial or Professional license as an Elementary Teacher or a core academic subject license.

(b) Demonstration of the subject matter knowledge and skill requirements set forth in 603 CMR 7.14 (5) (d), through the successful completion of a Department-approved course of study specific to providing services to students with autism. The Department will issue guidelines to govern program approval for this course of study.

(c) Field Experience Required: Completion of a 150 hour field-based experience that includes a minimum of 75 hours in an inclusive setting with students with autism and 75 hours of additional experience working with students with autism.

Teachers meeting the prerequisite license requirements outlined in 603 CMR 7.14 (5)

(a)(1) who can demonstrate at least one year of teaching experience working with students with autism are exempt from the field-based experience requirement.

(d) Subject Matter Knowledge:

1. Understanding of autism including the co-morbid conditions associated with autism spectrum disorders and the differences between a medical diagnosis of autism and the definition of the term autism under state and federal special education laws. Knowledge of the unique characteristics of autism as related

to communication, social/emotional development, behavior, sensory processing, cognition, and learning.

2. Assessment of students with autism including: an ability to identify, administer, and interpret a range of formal and informal tools in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner that assess the unique strengths, skills (including academic, social, behavioral and adaptive) and learning styles of students with autism ages 3-22.
3. Knowledge of how ongoing assessment and data collection can be used to inform instruction, services and supports; monitor progress and rates and patterns of skill acquisition; and ensure the maintenance and generalization of skills across settings.
4. Design of effective educational programs and individual supports based on peer reviewed research to the extent practicable to support students with autism in the least restrictive environment. Knowledge of the range of specialized and individualized instructional strategies and supports for students with autism, including assistive technology, to address: the verbal and nonverbal communication needs; the need to develop social interaction skills and proficiencies including the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment or teasing; the needs resulting from the student's unusual responses to sensory experiences; the needs resulting from resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines; the needs resulting from engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements; the need for positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address any behavioral difficulties; and other needs resulting from the student's disability that impact making progress in the general curriculum, including social and emotional skills.
5. Understanding and supporting the roles of other disciplines and professionals involved in the education of students with autism and facilitating coordination and collaboration of relevant IEP Team members, including parents or caregivers, related service providers and medical professionals, to meet the unique needs of students with autism in a culturally sensitive manner in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71B, §3, ¶6.

(e) Candidates with at least three years of previous employment primarily serving students with autism who can demonstrate that they meet the subject matter knowledge and skills requirements set forth in 603 CMR 7.14(5) (d) and possess a prerequisite license as outlined in 603 CMR 7.14 (5) (a) (1) will be exempt from the requirements set forth in 603 CMR 7.14(5) (b) and (c) if they apply for the endorsement no later than December 31, 2016.

(f) The requirements for the Autism Specialist Endorsement may also be used to satisfy course requirements necessary to obtain a Professional license listed in 603 CMR 7.04(2)(c).

(g) Renewal. The Autism Specialist Endorsement shall be valid for five years and may be renewed for successive five-year terms to individuals who meet the following requirements:

1. Valid license as listed in 603 CMR 7.14(5) (a), and
2. Successful completion of 30 professional development points (PDPs) in the content area related to 603 CMR 7.14 (5) (d). The 30 PDPs may be included in the total number of PDPs necessary for license renewal pursuant to 603 CMR 44.00: *Educator License Renewal*.