An Act Relative to Teacher Preparation and Student Literacy: Background and Proposed New Regulations and Amendments to Current Regulations

Presentation to Board of Elementary & Secondary Education

October 27, 2026

dese
MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education

Presenters

- **Lauren Woo**, Deputy Commissioner
- **Erin Hashimoto-Martell**, Senior Associate Commissioner of Teaching & Learning
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Agenda

- An Act Relative To Teacher Preparation and Student Literacy (The Student Literacy Act)
- Revisions on Draft Regulations
- DESE Actions (Guidance and Resources)
- Board Discussion – Comments and Questions

Background: Student Literacy Act

Prepared & Supported Educators

- Educator Preparation
- Educator Professional Development
- Registered Teacher Apprenticeships

High-Quality Curricular Materials

- DESE Free, Complete Curriculum for K-3 by Fall 27
- High-Quality Curriculum Adoption for K-3 by Fall 27

Timely, Targeted Supports

- Early Literacy Screening

Proposed Regulations

1. Proposed New Regulations for Early Literacy, 603 CMR 58.00
    - Early literacy screening
    - High-quality curriculum requirement and waiver provision
    - Professional development requirements
    - RTAP early literacy pilot
2. Proposed Amendments to Educator License and Program Approval, 603 CMR 7.00
    - Ed prep program reviews for evidence-based literacy instruction
3. Proposed Amendments to Special Education Regulations, 603 CMR 28.00
    - Moves early literacy screening provisions to 603 CMR 58.00
4. Proposed Technical Amendment to Student Opportunity Act Plans Regulations, 603 CMR 55.00
    - Updates a reference to the statute to account for the addition of a new evidence-based intervention for the SOA plans

Revisions to proposed regulations since October 13 Special Meeting

Proposed New Regulations for Early Literacy, 603 CMR 58.00

- **High-Quality Curriculum 58.04(3):** change “may” to “shall”
  - *These tools and resources ~~may~~* ***shall*** *include:*

- **Waivers 58.05(1):** add “and issue guidance regarding the waiver process.”
  - *The Department shall determine the form and manner of waiver requests* ***and issue guidance regarding the waiver process.***

DESE Actions (Guidance and Resources)

- DESE to update screening guidance and resources
  - Communication to families (recommended best practices; sample letters in our highest-incidence languages)

- DESE to provide guidance around application and use of waivers

Waiver Provisions

- Department may grant waivers for use of a curriculum that:
  - does not appear on the department's list of high-quality curricula;
  - has not already been reviewed by the department;
  - uses evidence-based practices;
  - meets quality standards determined by the department.
- Waiver review criteria must include, but is not limited to:
  - "the degree to which the curriculum's instructional approach is supported by some degree of scientific research;
  - the demographic results of the curriculum;
  - the duration of any such instruction using the curriculum"
- Department may audit and rescind at any time.

Anticipated waiver applications

Group 1

- District is using a curriculum that has been reviewed and did not meet expectations
- These applications will not be eligible and a waiver will not be granted

Group 2

- District is using locally developed curriculum
- These applications will be reviewed for use of evidence-based practices and student results

Group 3

- District is using a curriculum the Department has never reviewed
- These applications will be reviewed for use of evidence-based practices and student results if applicable

Anticipated Next Steps

- Board discussion and vote to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments, **October 27, 2025**.
- Public comment may be submitted: via an online form, or sent via email to instructionalsupport@mass.gov, or sent via mail to Regulations Public Comment, c/o Commissioner's Office, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149.
- Period of Public Comment: Open for 60 days (through **December 28, 2026**, at 5:00PM.
- Anticipated Board vote on final adoption of the regulations at regular monthly meeting **January 19, 2027**.

Comments and Questions