Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

MEMORANDUM

TO: Educators, colleges, professional development providers, and all other concerned parties

FROM: Office of Educator Licensure

DATE: 12/17/2012

RE: Special Education Competency Review

This memorandum is intended to provide assistance with satisfying the Competency Review requirements for special education licenses in accordance with the current Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval 603 CMR 7.00. Typically, a Competency Review is required for applicants seeking a Preliminary or additional Initial or Professional license in special education. The Competency Review is a process for determining whether the subject matter knowledge requirements for a license have been met in a field for which there is no subject matter knowledge test, and elsewhere as required within licensure regulations. The contents of this document are as follows.

➢ Meeting Competency Review Requirements
➢ Documenting Compliance with Competency Review Requirements
➢ Competency Review Subject Matter Knowledge Competencies
➢ Sample Competency Review Outline
➢ Sample Competency Review Verification Letter

Meeting Competency Review Requirements

Competency Review subject matter knowledge competencies may be satisfied through completion of coursework, seminars, workshops, or experience. When completing these activities toward satisfying coverage of subject matter knowledge competencies, at least 10 hours of professional development specific to and completely covering each subject matter knowledge competency are required. Allowing educators to satisfy "coverage of" a requirement with 10 hours of professional development is consistent with the Department's policy for special education teachers in their HOUSSE plan to become Highly Qualified through No Child Left Behind. Information regarding HOUSSE can be found by visiting http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/title-iia/hq/ .

Competency Review Guidelines permits equating:

- ➢ One semester hour of undergraduate college credit = 15 hours of professional development
- ➢ One semester hour of graduate college credit = 22.5 hours of professional development
- ➢ One PDP = 1 hour of professional development
- ➢ One hour of instruction = 1 hour of professional development
- ➢ One CEU = 10 hours of professional development

Documenting Compliance with Competency Review Requirements

Coursework for college/university credit

- ➢ In order for completed coursework to be considered for determining if it may be applicable toward satisfying coverage of a competency(ies) identified within a Competency Review, an official transcript verifying successful completion of that coursework must be submitted to the Licensure Office for review and consideration.

- ➢ Clarity in determining if coursework may be applicable toward satisfying coverage of a competency(ies) identified within a Competency Review may be aided by submitting an official catalog course description. Further clarity may be gained by submitting a letter verifying the number of hours of instruction delivered in a specific course addressing a particular competency. A course may be used to satisfy more than one competency. The letter should be on official college/university letterhead and be signed by the registrar, dean, appropriate department chair, or approved program licensure officer.

Seminar or workshop

- ➢ In order for a completed seminar or workshop to be considered for determining if it may be applicable toward satisfying coverage of a competency(ies) identified within a Competency Review, a copy of the certificate(s) of completion should be submitted to the Licensure Office for review and consideration. Certificates of completion should verify the sponsoring agency, seminar/workshop title, and the number of PDPs, CEUs, earned or hours of instruction delivered.

- ➢ Clarity in determining if a seminar or workshop may be applicable toward satisfying coverage of a competency(ies) identified within a Competency Review may be aided by submitting a copy of the official seminar or workshop description. Further clarity may be gained by submitting a letter verifying the number of PDPs, CEUs, earned or hours of instruction delivered in a specific seminar or work shop toward addressing a particular competency. These letters should be on official letterhead and be signed by the professional development provider.

Other professional learning experience

- ➢ In order for some other professional learning experience (e.g., mentored employment or peer coaching) to be considered for determining if it may be applicable toward satisfying coverage of a competency(ies) identified within a Competency Review, please provide a letter explaining in detail how you both gained and demonstrated competency in each area. The letter should be written on official letterhead and state the total number of hours delivered specific to addressing a particular competency. If the professional learning experience occurred in a school district or school then this letter must be signed by the superintendent/head administrator and the appropriate department supervisor/director. If the experience occurred in another setting then this letter must be signed by the appropriate head administrator.

Competency Review Subject Matter Knowledge Competencies

Moderate Disabilities

Coverage of:

- Educational terminology for students with mild to moderate disabilities

- Preparation, implementation, and evaluation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

- Design or modification of curriculum, instructional materials, and general education classroom environments for students with moderate disabilities

- Federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to special education

- Coverage of Knowledge of services provided by other agencies

- Ways to prepare and maintain students with disabilities for general education classrooms

- Instruction on the appropriate use of augmentative and alternative communication and other assistive technologies

Visually Impaired

Coverage of:

- Similarities and differences between visually impaired and non-visually impaired children in emotional, social, physical, and intellectual development
- Anatomy and physiology of the eye and visual abnormalities
- Historical and current developments in education of the visually impaired in the United States and other countries
- How to use state-of-the-art diagnostic information
- Medical and educational research related to the visually impaired
- Use of Grade II Braille and the Nemeth Code
- Use of assistive technology such as low-vision devices
- Design or modification of the curriculum and instructional materials for the visually impaired
- Ways to prepare visually impaired students for classrooms ranging from general education classrooms to schools for the visually impaired
- Features of family support and services
- Preparation, implementation, and evaluation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- Federal and state laws pertaining to special education

Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing

Coverage of:

- Theories of language acquisition for American Sign Language (ASL) and English in hearing and deaf and hard-of-hearing children
- Theories on the relationship between ASL and the English language
- Similarities and differences in the linguistic structure of ASL and English
- Benefits and limitations of ASL, spoken English, and printed English for learning, and the instructional strategies for using them
- Knowledge of how deaf people live their daily lives
- Historical and current developments in deaf education in the United States and other countries
- Features of family support and services
- Similarities and differences between hearing and deaf and hard-of-hearing students in emotional, social, and intellectual development
- Ways to prepare deaf and hard-of-hearing students for classrooms ranging from general education classrooms to schools for the deaf and hard of hearing
- Design or modification of the curriculum and instructional materials for the deaf and hard-of-hearing
- Modifications of theories of reading for hearing children necessary for the learning of reading by deaf and hard-of-hearing children
- General and specific effects of hearing loss upon the production of speech and the reception of speech and other sounds
- General and specific effects of visual processing and reception of a visual language and its acquisition
- Anatomy and physiology of human speech, hearing, and language mechanisms
- Knowledge of state-of-the-art diagnostic instruments; procedures for testing and interpreting results
- Characteristics of types of amplification equipment and their uses by teachers and students
- Medical, social, ethical, and educational research relating to the deaf and hard-of-hearing, including the effects of cochlear implants on language learning
- Preparation, implementation, and evaluation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- Federal and state laws pertaining to special education.

Severe Disabilities

Coverage of:

- Definitions, etiologies, and characteristics of severely disabling conditions

- Theories, concepts, and methods of assessing physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development in children and adolescents

- Theories of language development and the effects of disabilities on learning

- Knowledge of the significant theories, practices, and programs for developing reading skills and reading comprehension

- Phonemic awareness and phonics: principles, knowledge, and instructional practices

- Diagnosis and assessment of reading skills using standardized, criterion-referenced, and informal assessment instruments

- Development of a listening, speaking, and reading vocabulary

- Theories on the relationships between beginning writing and reading

- Theories of first and second language acquisition and development

- Preparation, implementation, and evaluation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

- How to design or modify curriculum, instructional materials, and classroom environments for students with severe disabilities

- Ways to prepare and maintain students with severe disabilities for general education classrooms; for example, use of behavioral management principles

- Knowledge of services provided by other agencies

- Knowledge of appropriate vocational or alternative school programs, or work-study and community-based opportunities and alternative high school programs and how to refer students to them

- Federal and state laws pertaining to special education

- Techniques for developing skills designed to facilitate placement in least restrictive environments

- Instruction on the appropriate use of augmentative and alternative communication and other assistive technologies

- Source and operation of orthotic devices, medical technologies, and computer-moderated prosthetic devices

Licensure requirements for each of the licenses referenced in this document may be found by visiting http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html .

Sample Competency Review Outline

(Please note that this template may be helpful in outlining how each competency review requirement has been satisfied. All required supporting documentation must be submitted.)

Applicant's name: _____

MA educator license number _____ *Or* MEPID _____

Or Social Security Number _____

License field/grade level: Moderate Disabilities (5-12)

Coverage of each Moderate Disabilities competency review requirement noted below has been satisfied as indicated.

Educational terminology for students with mild to moderate disabilities:

coursework_____

seminar/workshop_____

other professional learning experience_____

Preparation, implementation, and evaluation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs):

coursework _____

seminar/workshop _____

other professional learning experience_____

Design or modification of curriculum, instructional materials, and general education classroom environments for students with moderate disabilities:

coursework _____

seminar/workshop _____

other professional learning experience _____

Federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to special education:

coursework _____

seminar/workshop _____

other professional learning experience _____

Knowledge of services provided by other agencies:

coursework _____

seminar/workshop _____

other professional learning experience _____

Ways to prepare and maintain students with disabilities for general education classrooms:

coursework _____

seminar/workshop _____

other professional learning experience _____

Instruction on the appropriate use of augmentative and alternative communication and other assistive technologies:

coursework _____

seminar/workshop _____

other professional learning experience _____

Sample Verification Letter on Official College/University Letterhead for Courses Completed Toward Satisfying the Competency Review

Applicant's name _____

MA educator license number _____ *Or* MEPID _____

Or Social Security Number _____

Completion of the courses below:

_____

_____

_____

combined provide at least ten hours of instruction specific to and completely covering each of the Moderate Disabilities competency review requirements noted below. In total, at least seventy hours have been provided.

- Educational terminology for students with mild to moderate disabilities

- Preparation, implementation, and evaluation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

- Design or modification of curriculum, instructional materials, and general education classroom environments for students with moderate disabilities

- Federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to special education

- Coverage of Knowledge of services provided by other agencies

- Ways to prepare and maintain students with disabilities for general education classrooms

- Instruction on the appropriate use of augmentative and alternative communication and other assistive technologies

The applicant also completed the course _____, which is a 150 hour

internship in the role of a Moderate Disabilities teacher at the _____ grade level.

Signature _____

Printed name _____

Title _____ *(registrar, dean, department chair, or approved program licensure officer)*