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TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick 

DATE: September 21, 2009

SUBJECT: COMAR 13A.12.02.24 (NEW)
American Sign Language (Prekindergarten-Grade 12)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to present proposed publication of a new regulation, COMAR 13A.12.02.24, American Sign Language (Prekindergarten- Grade 12). Since the adoption of the regulation that includes two credits of ASL or two credits of foreign language as one element of Maryland's graduation requirements, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that students in Maryland schools have teachers who are qualified to teach ASL.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

According to the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA), American Sign Language (ASL) is one of the most widely used languages in the United States. More than forty states including Maryland recognize ASL as a language. ASL is used primarily by Deaf and Hard of Hearing Americans and Canadians but is also used by hearing relatives of the Deaf. ASL is a visual language with its own grammatical rules and semantics.

Information about this potential certification area has been presented at numerous meetings of the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) over the past two years. At the February 5, 2009 PSTEB meeting, staff presented a synthesis of the discussion from the American Sign Language Work Group regarding potential elements to be considered when developing requirements for certification in ASL, one of the original recommendations from this work group. Two pathways were suggested:

Pathway 1

- Minimum degree requirements with a major in ASL, or
- Completing a minimum of thirty credits of content course work in ASL;
- Presenting qualifying scores on the appropriate teacher certification tests (both basic skills and content assessment);
- Completing the requisite professional education course work; and
- Presenting the requisite satisfactory teaching experience in ASL.

Pathway 2

- Minimum degree requirements;
- Presenting a current certificate at an appropriate level issued by a Department-recognized ASL provider; and
- Completing the requisite professional education course work.

The topic of a potential certification in ASL was presented to the Directors of Human Resources at their January 22, 2009 and May 13, 2009 meetings. The group was in general agreement with the proposed certification.

At the June 4, 2009 meeting of the PSTEB, staff presented information on the availability of programs: McDaniel College offers a Master's for Deaf Studies; Towson University offers a Bachelor's in Deaf Studies; and there are a few out-of-state programs offered at Columbia University, Boston University, Northeastern University, the University of Rochester, and Gallaudet University. Staff also presented information on testing options.

At the August 6, 2009 meeting of the PSTEB, staff presented the proposed regulation which incorporated suggestions from previous meetings. At its September 3, 2009 meeting, the PSTEB voted to publish the proposed regulation.

SUMMARY:

American Sign Language (ASL), one of the most widely used languages in the United States, is primarily used by Deaf and Hard of Hearing Americans but is also used by hearing relatives of the Deaf. More than forty states, including Maryland, officially recognize ASL as a language. This proposed regulation will ensure that teachers possess the requisite skills and knowledge to teach American Sign Language and the culture of the American Deaf community.

ACTION:

This item is presented for information and to provide the option to request a Joint Conference Committee meeting prior to the publication should you so desire.

NSG: jhe

Attachment

COMAR 13A.12.02.24

.24 American Sign Language (Prekindergarten- Grade 12)

A. To receive certification in American sign language (pre-kindergarten-grade 12), the applicant shall meet one of the following options:

(1) Option I:

- (a) Earn a bachelor's or higher degree from an Institution of Higher Education (IHE) with a major in American sign language;
or
- (b) Complete a minimum of thirty semester hours of content course work in American sign language taken at an IHE; and
- (c) Meet the professional education course work required in §.06A(2) of this chapter; and
- (d) Meet the experience requirement in §.06A(3) of this chapter.

(2) Option II:

- (a) Earn a bachelor's degree or higher from an IHE;
- (b) Present a valid professional certificate issued by the American Sign Language Teachers Association or another Department-approved national or regional organization; and
- (c) Meet the professional education course work required in §.06A (2) of this chapter.

B. For the content course work required in §A (1)(b) of this regulation:

- (1) A minimum of 50 percent shall be taken at the same institution; and
- (2) A minimum of 12 semester hours shall be upper division course work.

IMPACT STATEMENTS

Part A

(check one option)

Estimate of Economic Impact

The proposed action has no economic impact.

or

The proposed action has an economic impact. Complete the following form in its entirety.

I. Summary of Economic Impact. None

II. Types of Economic Impacts.

Revenue (R+/R-)
Expenditure (E+/E-) Magnitude

A. On issuing agency:

Not applicable

B. On other State agencies:

Not applicable

C. On local governments:

Not applicable

Benefit (+)
Cost (-) Magnitude

D. On regulated industries or trade groups:

Not applicable

E. On other industries or trade groups:

Not applicable

F. Direct and indirect effects on public:

Not applicable

III. Assumptions. (Identified by Impact Letter and Number from Section II.)

Not applicable

Part B
(check one option)

Economic Impact on Small Businesses

The proposed action has minimal or no economic impact on small businesses.

or

The proposed action has a meaningful economic impact on small businesses. An analysis of this economic impact follows.

Impact on Individuals with Disabilities
(Check one option)

The proposed action has no impact on individuals with disabilities.

or

The proposed action has an impact on individuals with disabilities as follows:

Part C

(For legislative use only; not for publication.)

- A. Fiscal Year in which regulations will become effective: **FY10**
- B. Does the budget for fiscal year in which regulations become effective contain funds to implement the regulations?

Yes No

- C. If yes, state whether general, special (exact name), or federal funds will be used:

- D. If no, identify the source(s) of funds necessary for implementation of these regulations:
Not applicable

- E. If these regulations have no economic impact under Part A, indicate reason briefly:
The proposed regulation establishes a new certification area and delineates the requirements for the certification of teachers of American Sign Language.

- F. If these regulations have minimal or no economic impact on small businesses under Part B, indicate the reason and attach small business worksheet.

The proposed regulation establishes a new certification area and delineates the requirements for the certification of teachers of American Sign Language. The proposed regulation has no impact on small businesses.

Comparison to Federal Standards
(Check one option)

There is no corresponding federal standard to this proposed regulation.

or

- There is a corresponding federal standard to this proposed regulation. Please give corresponding federal standard and if the regulation is not more restrictive or stringent give justification.

or

- In compliance with Executive Order 01.01.1996.03, this proposed regulation is more restrictive or stringent than corresponding federal standards as follows:
- (1) Regulation citation and manner in which it is more restrictive than the applicable federal standard:
 - (2) Benefit to the public health, safety or welfare, or the environment:
 - (3) Analysis of additional burden or cost on the regulated person:
 - (4) Justification for the need for more restrictive standards: