



Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

200 West Baltimore Street • Baltimore, MD 21201 • 410-767-0100 • 410-333-6442 TTY/TDD

TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D. *Lillian M. Lowery*
DATE: May 20, 2014
SUBJECT: COMAR 13A.12.02.23, Blind/Visually Impaired
AMEND
APPROVAL

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to request your approval of proposed changes to regulation, COMAR 13A.12.02.23, Blind/Visually Impaired and to present an analysis of the comments received regarding the proposed regulation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Legislation enacted during the 2010 legislative session, specifically HB 413 and SB 230, required you and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) to review and modify, as appropriate, certification and recertification requirements for teachers of the blind/visually impaired.

At your direction, the Division of Educator Effectiveness convened a Work Group comprised of a representative constituency to review the existing regulation and propose amendments. The Work Group recommended the following changes:

- Name change to Blind/ Visually Impaired to increase inclusivity;
- Acceptability of out-of-state programs for the blind/visually impaired;
- Reduction in the number of special education course work requirements for individuals being evaluated under transcript analysis;
- Expansion of the general education course work requirements for individuals being evaluated under transcript analysis;
- Updates to the vision course work; and
- Requirement of a test to demonstrate including maintenance of Braille proficiency at the first renewal period and continued maintenance of Braille proficiency as part of the subsequent renewal process.

The PSTEB granted permission to publish the proposed regulation at its October, 2013 meeting. Subsequently, you reviewed the proposed regulation at your December 16, 2013 meeting and determined that a Joint Conference Committee was not needed.

Members of the State Board of Education
May 20, 2014
Page 2

A copy of the proposed regulation as in appeared in the *Maryland Register* on April 4, 2014 is attached; the public comment period ended May 5, 2014. Also attached is an analysis if those comments. The proposed regulation does not have any economic impact nor does it have any impact on individuals with disabilities. There is no corresponding federal standard for this proposed action.

SUMMARY:

The current regulation, COMAR13A.12.02.23, Visually Impaired, requires changes as mandated by legislation enacted by the 2010 General Assembly.

ACTION:

I am requesting approval of the proposed changes to COMAR13A.12.02.23, Visually Impaired.

LML\jes

Attachments

ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN TESTIMONY PROVIDED TO THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION CONCERNING PROPOSED CHANGES TO COMAR 13A.12.02.23, VISUALLY IMPAIRED

- TOPIC:** Adopting the new regulation
- Writer:** Sharon Maneki, Chairman, Advocacy Committee, national Federation of the Blind of Maryland
- Comments:** The National Federation of the Blind of Maryland (NFBMD) is pleased with the revised certification requirements...the NFBMD strongly supports the certification requirements in sections B (special education). The requirements in section C allow a professionally certified teacher to add Blind/Visually Impaired to the existing certificate.
- Writer:** Jean A. Mantegna, SPHR, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Harford County Public Schools
- Comments:** We are pleased the proposed regulation eliminates the need for genre special education certification or a concentration of generic special education course work. This will encourage more people to seek this certification.
- Writers:** Vanetta Banks, Colleen Bell, Beverly Betz ,Krista Bulger, Tonya Carter, Irina Chemyak, Melissa Demissary, Rebecca Ellis, Donna Francis, Lydia Grier, Leah Miller, Lori Wald, Leta Woodburn, Lisa Wright, Prince George's County Vision Program, Prince George's County Public Schools
- Comments:** We support the elimination of the need for generic special education in order to be certified as a teacher of the visually impaired. The undergraduate vision certification programs do not require all of the special education course work previously required. We also support the specified general education course work and the updated language to the specific vision course work.
- TOPIC:** Acceptability of course work
- Writer:** Jean A. Mantegna, SPHR, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Harford County Public Schools
- Comments:** As proposed, only Department –approved Continuing Professional Development credits will be accepted for the specialized course content. Since there is an already limited opportunity for Braille course work, please consider accepting college/university credit.
- Staff response:** Staff concurs with this comment. There appears to be an error in the regulation as published: in §B (2) Specialized Content Course Work. The text should read:

21 credits **or** (not of) Department-Approved Continuing Professional Development credits...

- TOPIC:** Requiring a test as a renewal requirement
- Writers:** Vanetta Banks, Colleen Bell, Beverly Betz , Krista Bulger, Tonya Carter, Irina Chemyak, Melissa Demissary, Rebecca Ellis, Donna Francis, Lydia Grier, Leah Miller, Lori Wald, Leta Woodburn, Lisa Wright, Prince George’s County Vision Program, Prince George’s County Public Schools
- Comment:** We are supportive of the proposed changes but need more information regarding the Department approved test.
- Staff response:** The language in the regulation is consistent with other regulations which may also require a test. At this point, there is no test yet approved; the test adoption process will be initiated once the regulation has been adopted. Members from the original Work Group, as well as Department staff, will be invited to provide input into this process.
- Writer:** Helene Tyler, Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired, Howard County Public Schools
- Comments:** The proposed testing of Braille every five years is “retesting old knowledge”. Teachers can learn Braille and Nemeth code through course work.
- Staff response:** The regulation proposes that, for the initial renewal period, qualifying scores on a Department-approved test must be met. The proposed changes do not require a test for each renewal period. Six credits are required for each renewal period; evidence of maintenance of Braille code is a part of the continuing renewal requirement.
- Writer:** Sharon Maneki, Chairman, Advocacy Committee, national Federation of the Blind of Maryland
- Comments:** Renewal is too weak; instead the document should read:’ A teacher certified for teaching blind./visually impaired students shall present a National Certificate in Literary Braille every five years.”
- Staff response:** The National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB) administers the National Certificate in Literary Braille examination as a five-year renewable certification awarded to those who successfully pass all four sections of the exam. Recertification is accomplished only by successfully completing a new version of the NCLB examination.

The Work Group acknowledged the importance of demonstrating proficiency in Braille code and incorporated a testing requirement in the renewal requirements. The Work Group also acknowledged that maintenance for Braille code can be demonstrated through completing appropriate course work either from a

college/university or through Maryland Continuing Professional Development credits. Requiring a test every five years as part of renewal credits would place an undue financial burden on teachers of the blind/visually impaired.

Writer: Susan Russell, Supervisor, Visually-Impaired, Montgomery County Public Schools

Comments: The overwhelming feeling was that although a test may be needed or is inevitable, the scope and nature of this particular test go well beyond what vision teachers need to know on a daily basis in order to meet the needs of their students who use Braille....

Staff response: Since no test has yet been determined and the writer did not identify the test to which she refers (staff believes she is referring to the National Certificate in Literary Braille examination), we believe these comments should be reviewed at a later date once the regulation has been adopted. When reviewing any potential assessment, The Department considers cost, time, and accessibility of the assessment.

PROPOSED ACTION ON REGULATIONS

**Title 13A
STATE BOARD OF
EDUCATION**

Subtitle 12 CERTIFICATION

13A.12.02 Teachers

Authority: Education Article, §§2-205, 2-303(g), 6-121, [and] 6-701—6-705, and 8-408, Annotated Code of Maryland

**Notice of Proposed Action
[14-089-P]**

The Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board proposes to amend Regulation .23 under COMAR 13A.12.02 Teachers. This action was considered at the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board meeting on October 3, 2013.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this action is to modify certification and recertification requirements for teachers of students who are blind and visually impaired.

Comparison to Federal Standards

There is no corresponding federal standard to this proposed action.

Estimate of Economic Impact

The proposed action has no economic impact.

Economic Impact on Small Businesses

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

Impact on Individuals with Disabilities

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

Teachers who wish to be certified to teach blind or visually impaired students must have completed coursework that includes knowledge of Braille and methods of teaching braille. Teachers who wish to be recertified must demonstrate continued maintenance of Braille competency.

Opportunity for Public Comment

Comments may be sent to Jean Satterfield, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Educator Effectiveness, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201, or call 410-767-0385 TTY: 410-333-6442, or email to jsatterfield@msde.state.md.us, or fax to 410-333-8963. Comments will be accepted through May 5, 2014. A public hearing has not been scheduled.

Open Meeting

Final action on the proposal will be considered by the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board during a public meeting to be held on June 5, 2014, at 200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201.

.23 Visually Impaired.

A. The requirements for initial certification to teach blind/visually impaired students [with visual impairments] and renewal of certification to teach blind/visually impaired students [with visual impairments] are those set forth in [§§B—E] §§B—D of this regulation.

B. Special Education Background. For initial certification to teach blind/visually impaired students [with visual impairments], an applicant shall [meet the requirements for special education

certification or have 21 semester hours of course work including all complete the following [areas] coursework.

- (1) Historical, philosophical, and legal foundations of special education;
- (2) Human growth and development emphasizing normal growth and development patterns;
- (3) Introduction to exceptional children;
- (4) Formal and informal assessment, diagnosis, and prescriptive techniques;
- (5) Methods of teaching reading;
- (6) Education of students with multiple disabilities; and
- (7) Human relations skills.

(1) Special Education Course Work:

- (a) Introduction to exceptional children; and
- (b) Education of students with multiple disabilities.

(2) Specialized Content Course Work. An applicant shall submit a minimum of 21 semester hours of credit of Department-approved Continuing Professional Development credits including the following areas:

- (a) Knowledge of literary Braille, including methods of teaching Braille reading and writing;
- (b) Knowledge of Nemeth Code for Mathematics and Science and other Braille codes (foreign language, Braille formats, computer, Unified English Braille Code);

(c) Medical aspects and disorders of the eye including their current and future impact on the development of the student and current and future literacy needs;

(d) Curriculum, instructional methods, and adaptations to meet the individualized needs of blind/visually impaired students (including the Expanded Core Curriculum and access to the general education curriculum);

(e) Assessment, diagnosis, and prescriptive techniques to meet the individualized needs of blind/visually impaired students (including the Expanded Core Curriculum and access to the general education curriculum);

(f) Introduction to orientation and mobility training emphasizing the development of concepts and skills required for independent travel; and

(g) A supervised practicum or 1 year of satisfactory teaching experience with blind/visually impaired students.

(3) Professional Education Course Work. An applicant shall have a minimum of 12 semester hours in course work or its equivalent including the following areas:

- (a) Human Growth and Development (birth through adult);
- (b) Methods of Reading Instruction;
- (c) Assessment of Reading Instruction; and
- (d) Methods of Teaching Mathematics.

[C. Specialized Content and Professional Education Courses.

(1) An applicant shall have a minimum of 27 semester hours in course work or its equivalent, including all the following areas and §C(2) of this regulation:

(a) Human growth and development emphasizing knowledge of the developmental characteristics of students with visual impairments;

(b) Assessment, diagnosis, and prescriptive techniques to meet the individualized reading needs of students with visual impairments;

(c) Curriculum, instructional methods, technology, and adaptations specific to the teaching of reading and to other areas of instruction of students with visual impairments, including all the following:

(i) Knowledge of Braille, including Braille code and methods of teaching Braille reading and writing, including portable techniques to advanced technologies; and

PROPOSED ACTION ON REGULATIONS

(ii) Introduction to orientation and mobility training emphasizing the development of concepts and skills required for independent travel;

(d) Medical aspects and disorders of the eye including their current and future impact on the development of the student; and

(e) A practicum of not less than 6 semester hours completed with students with visual impairments.

(2) Two years of satisfactory teaching of students with visual impairments may be substituted for the 6 semester-hour practicum in §C(1)(e) of this regulation. Satisfactory teaching experience shall be established by a series of at least four observation periods per year. If a supervisor certified in teaching students with visual impairments is not available, a mentor teacher so certified in teaching students with visual impairments shall work in cooperation with the special education administrator to provide the required evaluation.]

[D.] C. Special Provision. A teacher professionally certified in early childhood, elementary, [or] middle school, secondary, generic special education, or PreK-grade 12 education who seeks an endorsement to teach students with visual impairments [at that level] shall meet the requirements of [§C] §§B(1)-(3) of this regulation.

[E.] D. Renewal.

(1) A teacher certified for teaching blind/visually impaired students [with visual impairments] shall present [at least one course, continuing education unit, or professional development activity indicating maintenance of Braille proficiency] a qualifying score on a Department approved test of Braille competency before the expiration of the initial professional certificate and 6 semester hours of course work from an IHE or in Department approved Continuing Professional Development credits or Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

(2) For continued renewal, a teacher certified for teaching blind/visually impaired students shall submit 6 semester hours of course work from an IHE or Department approved Continuing Professional Development credits or Continuing Education Units (CEUs) which must include maintenance of knowledge of Braille code.

LILLIAN M. LOWERY, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

Subtitle 12 CERTIFICATION

13A.12.02 Teachers

Authority: Education Article, §§ 205, 2-303(g), 6-121, and 6-701-6-705, Annotated Code of Maryland

Notice of Proposed Action
[14-000-P]

The Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board proposes to adopt new Regulation 13A.12.02 under COMAR 13A.12.02 Teachers. This action was considered at the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board meeting on October 3, 2013.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this action is to add a new teaching endorsement in the area of Instructional Leader: STEM, PreK-grade 6.

Comparison to Federal Standards

There is no corresponding federal standard to this proposed action.

Estimate of Economic Impact

The proposed action has no economic impact.

Economic Impact on Small Businesses

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

Impact on Individuals with Disabilities

The proposed action has no impact on individuals with disabilities.

Opportunity for Public Comment

Comments may be sent to Jean Satterfield, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Educator Effectiveness, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201, or call 410-767-0385 (TTY 410-333-6442), or email to jsatterfield@mdoe.state.md.us, or fax to 410-333-8963. Comments will be accepted through May 5, 2014. A public hearing has not been scheduled.

Open Meeting

Final action on the proposal will be considered by the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board during a public meeting to be held on June 5, 2014, at 200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201.

.29 Instructional Leader: STEM (Grades PreK-6).

To add an endorsement as Instructional Leader: STEM, grades PreK-6, an applicant shall:

A. Hold a valid, professional certificate with certification in early childhood education or elementary education;

B. Complete a minimum of 18 semester hours of post-baccalaureate credit or Department-approved Continuing Professional Development credits, to include the following:

(1) 12 semester hours in STEM education which integrates a balance of the following content:

(a) Authentic problem-based and project-based learning;

(b) Essential skills including questioning, spatial reasoning, communication, critical thinking, and problem solving;

(c) Engineering design process;

(d) Application of scientific practices and content;

(e) Application of mathematical practices and content;

(f) Technology literacy; and

(g) Collaborative learning.

(2) 3 semester hours or the equivalent in leadership knowledge and skills in providing professional learning in a school/district setting; and

(3) At least 3 semester hours or the equivalent in a supervised practicum or school-based internship in which the applicant works with a range of students in grades PreK-6 and adult learners in a variety of professional development settings; and

C. Present verification of 27 months of satisfactory teaching experience.

LILLIAN M. LOWERY, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools