



MINNESOTA BOARD OF TEACHING

April 24, 2012

Dear Colleagues;

The Minnesota Board of Teaching recently adopted revised Special Education licensure rules in all fields, including the Core Skills for Teachers of Special Education. In addition, the Board has established two new licensure fields: **Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)** and **Academic and Behavioral Strategist (ABS)**. The table below provides a summary of the Board's action.

<i>Summary of Special Education Licenses</i>				
8710.5000	Core Skills	Core Skills	All	Revised
8710.5050	ABS	Academic and Behavioral Strategist	Kindergarten - 21	NEW
8710.5850	ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorders	Birth - 21	NEW
8710.5100	B/VI	Blind or Visually Impaired	Birth - 21	Revised
8710.5200	D/HH	Deaf or Hard of Hearing	Birth - 21	Revised
8710.5250	O/A	Oral / Aural Deaf Education	Birth - 21	Revised
8710.5300	DAPE	Developmental Adapted Physical Education	Prekindergarten - 21	Revised
8710.5400	DD	Developmental Disabilities	Kindergarten - 21	Revised
8710.5500	ECSE	Early Childhood Special Education	Birth - Age 6	Revised
8710.5600	EBD	Emotional or Behavioral Disorders	Kindergarten - 21	Revised
8710.5700	LD	Learning Disabilities	Kindergarten - 21	Revised
8710.5800	PHD	Physical and Health Disabilities	Birth - 21	Revised

We have established a working group with representatives from the Board of Teaching and several divisions within MDE, including Special Education, Finance, Compliance and Monitoring, Licensing, and Career and Technical Education. Our purpose is to provide clear and consistent guidance around the implementation of these rules. We invite your questions so that we can respond and provide the necessary support for a smooth transition to the new rules. In this first letter we will provide important information and considerations specific to the new ASD license. Subsequent communications will address other questions and issues that are raised.

Consideration #1: When will we start to see teachers with the new ASD license?

There are several ways that teachers may be issued an ASD license:

1. Successfully complete the eligibility review process, which will allow licensed Minnesota special education teachers to demonstrate that they have met the ASD standards through coursework, experience, and professional development opportunities.
2. Complete an approved Minnesota ASD licensure program. We have a number of colleges and universities that are developing ASD programs and believe that several will launch within this next school year.
3. Beginning January 1, 2013, out-of-state teachers who have ASD coursework and certification essentially equivalent to our Minnesota programs may be issued the ASD license.

Additionally, the ABS license will allow teachers to serve ASD students with mild to moderate needs. Similar to the ASD license, we have a number of colleges and universities already actively developing ABS programs. We believe that these programs will be very appealing to both existing licensed teachers and to new teacher candidates entering a special education program. Beginning January 1, 2013, once we have approved ABS programs in Minnesota, we will also be able to issue ABS licenses to out-of-state teacher applicants who hold similar cross-categorical or multi-categorical licenses from other states.

In addition to the new ASD license, MN Rule 8710.5850, which gives the authority to provide evaluation and specially designed instruction to students with ASD, there are two current special education rules that address providing special education services to students with ASD:

1. MN Rule 3525.1325: Autism Spectrum Disorders <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/?id=3525.1325>
2. MN Rule 3525.2350: Multidisability Team Teaching Models <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/?id=3525.2350>

These rules were not changed in the rulemaking process; as such, there is no change to current practices between now and June 30, 2015.

Consideration #2: What will change beginning July 1, 2015?

On February 10 the Board of Teaching took action to extend the effective date to July 1, 2015, for holding districts to the new ASD licensure requirements. As such, the current practices and requirements will be in place until June 30, 2015, and beginning on July 1, 2015, the new requirements will take effect.

Initial Evaluations and Eligibility Determinations.

MN Rule 3525.1325 contains the following language in Subpart 4:

The team determining eligibility and educational programming must include at least one professional with experience and expertise in the area of ASD due to the complexity of this disability and the specialized intervention methods. The team must include a school professional knowledgeable of the range of possible special education eligibility criteria.

As such, the following individuals will be able to serve in this capacity:

- Licensed ASD teacher, licensed at the age/grade level of the student; **OR**
- Licensed ABS teacher for students in K-12; **OR**
- Licensed ECSE teacher for students through age 6; **OR**
- Professionals with experience and expertise in ASD, including (not intended to be an exhaustive list):
 - School psychologist
 - Speech and Language Pathologist
 - Occupational Therapist
 - Other licensed special education teachers
 - Other related service personnel

Please note that the new **ASD and ABS licenses will create two additional options** for schools as they determine who should participate in the evaluation and eligibility determination processes.

IEP Team Membership

Beginning July 1, 2015, IEP teams for students with ASD **must** include one of the following types of teachers:

- Licensed ASD teacher, licensed at the age/grade level of the student; **OR**
- Licensed ABS teacher for students in K-12; **OR**
- Licensed ECSE teacher for students through age 6

The IEP team **may** also include professionals with experience and expertise in ASD, including (not intended to be an exhaustive list):

- School psychologist
- Speech and Language Pathologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Other licensed special education teachers
- Other related service personnel

Between now and June 30, 2015, we will continue to work through implementation issues and questions and closely monitor the pool and pipeline of licensed ASD teachers.

Next Steps

1. Continued discussions within the working group of the requisite changes and programming needs to ensure that all systems are ready for these changes. Specifically, we are talking about establishing and assigning codes, updating manuals and communications, and walking through reporting scenarios for STAR, EDRS, and MARSS.
2. Providing information and materials at the May 18 Special Education Directors' Forum and be available to talk about implementation plans, respond to your questions, and listen to your suggestions.
3. We have established an email box for questions relating to the Special Education rules: MDE.ASD-License@state.mn.us. Please submit any questions or comments about the new rules (ASD, ABS, or others) to this address; this email box will be monitored closely so that the working group can respond.

We recognize that there are many questions regarding the implementation of these new licensure rules; please know that we are committed to staying this course with you as we navigate these transitions together.

Sincerely,

Karen Balmer
Board of Teaching