



MINNESOTA BOARD OF TEACHING

March 8, 2013

Dear Colleagues;

I had the opportunity to meet with Jan Ormasa and several of your MASE colleagues after the January 11 memo was sent out and want to begin by sharing my regret that for not engaging your professional community prior to the memo going out. Our well-intentioned hope was to provide clarification around the ASD transition process so that teachers could make appropriate professional decisions about the options available to them.

The concern we sought to address in the January memo was specific to individuals who did not have experience and professional development specific to ASD prior to the opening of the ASD transition process. We created this transition opportunity for teachers who have been serving students with ASD prior to having a state-sanctioned license; our intent all along has been to provide a reasonable pathway for those teachers to demonstrate that they have met the new ASD standards in an alternative manner. As the regulatory body that also approves licensure programs, the Board of Teaching has also worked over the last year with higher education institutions that will deliver the new ASD standards in licensure programs and we now have seven approved programs, with more anticipated. A list of State Approved Special Education Teacher Licensure Programs is available on the MDE website.

(<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/Licen/SpecEdLicen/index.html>)

As a result of our recent conversations with MASE members, Special Education teachers, and others, we are offering the following clarifications:

WHO is eligible for the transition process?

Special Education teachers who were already invested in working with students with ASD, as evidenced by experience serving students with ASD **and** ASD-specific professional development prior to 2012 when the transition process became available in July 2012.

WHO is NOT eligible for the transition process?

Teachers who did not have experience working with students with ASD and ASD-specific professional development prior to July 1, 2012. We now have several licensure programs operational and available for individuals who are fully new to the field of ASD.

** The eligibility application packet includes other eligibility criteria, including holding a valid Minnesota Special Education license. This memo is specific to the timeframes for eligibility.*

What is the required threshold of ASD professional development prior to July 2012 to be eligible for the transition process?

Our goal here is to ensure that the teachers who use this process are those who were already invested in working with ASD students; this process is not for teachers brand new to the ASD field. As such, the documentation must include evidence of professional investment in the field of ASD through ASD-specific professional development prior to July 1, 2012. The Board of Teaching has not established a specific threshold of professional development necessary to meet the new standards; rather, the professional development must demonstrate that the teacher was already invested in the ASD field prior to the transition process opening. This provides a clear, consistent, and legally defensible basis for the Board of Teaching to allow teachers an alternative process for issuing a license.

What can a teacher who is eligible do to meet any remaining ASD standards?

These teachers can continue using coursework or professional development opportunities to supplement what they had already begun. This process is for teachers who were already invested in the work as a way to honor their prior experience and professional training in ASD.

What if a teacher no longer has documentation of participation in ASD-specific professional development?

We understand that some teachers are having difficulty finding documentation of all of their ASD professional training opportunities. In these situations, we will accept verification by a Special Education Director or professional development provider of a teacher's participation in the training; the verification should be noted on the "Demonstration of Professional Development" (page 11 in the Eligibility packet).

I have appreciated the opportunity to consult with colleagues from MASE in preparing this follow up information and I look forward to continued communication with all of you as we make our way through this transition process.

Best wishes,
Karen Balmer