



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education

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David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Superintendents of Schools, Charter School Leaders, Educator Preparation Program Providers, and Other Interested Parties

**FROM:** David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

**DATE:** June 15, 2004

**RE:** Updated Guidance on Qualifications for Teachers in Sheltered English Immersion Classrooms

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Beginning with the 2003-2004 school year, districts have been required to implement G.L. c. 71A as amended in 2002, governing the education of limited English proficient (LEP) students. Chapter 71A requires such students, with certain exceptions, to receive sheltered English immersion (SEI) instruction until they are proficient in English. This is a complete change from the previous law, which had been in effect for over 30 years.

Under the former Chapter 71A, districts were required to implement Transitional Bilingual Education programs (TBE) once they had 20 or more LEP students enrolled from the same language group. In Massachusetts, this meant that only about 50 of the state's over 350 districts were required to establish such programs. Districts with low-incidence populations of LEP students were not required to establish a TBE program and were allowed considerable flexibility in the type of English language programs and support services they provided for students.

Since virtually every school district in the state has or will have LEP students, under the new state law all districts must now provide or be prepared to provide sheltered English immersion instruction to LEP students. Such instruction is required even if a district has only one LEP student. A key element to providing effective services is having well trained and qualified staff in SEI classrooms. In the document that follows, we:

- Describe which educator licenses, supplemented by professional development, may be used to teach in a particular SEI classroom.
- Describe what the Department has done and plans to do to assist districts in ensuring that qualified teachers teach LEP students. This includes the development of a new English Language Learner "endorsement" for teachers in SEI classrooms.

Beginning with school year 2004-2005, the foundation budget formula has been adjusted to include the number of all LEP students as a factor in the calculation of Chapter 70 aid to cities and towns. In the past, only those LEP students enrolled in TBE programs were included in the calculation. The additional Chapter 70 funding that some districts will receive may be a resource to address training needs of staff working with LEP students.

Districts should use the information in this guidance document to review the licenses, skills and knowledge of each teacher who will be assigned to a classroom in which LEP students will be enrolled in 2004-2005 and to adjust teaching assignments planned for next year as needed. We recommend that districts also use this review as a needs assessment for the purposes of planning professional development, and developing a multi-year, comprehensive district professional development plan for teachers of LEP students.

We hope that this guidance will assist you in educating limited English proficient students. Should you have questions or require further assistance, please contact Kathryn Riley, Administrator for the Office of Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement, at [kriley@doe.mass.edu](mailto:kriley@doe.mass.edu).

# English Language Learners

## Guidance on Qualifications for Teachers of Limited English Proficient Students in Sheltered English Immersion Classrooms

June 15, 2004

### Introduction

This document is an update to the guidance the Department provided in its August 2003 *Questions and Answers* document regarding the skills and knowledge needed to provide effective instruction to LEP students in sheltered English immersion classrooms and programs. Specifically, we have updated Question #27, which addresses Teacher Qualifications, with the information that follows in Section I and Attachment 1. We also provide information on professional development initiatives the Department has underway for teachers in sheltered English immersion classrooms.

This guidance has the following sections:

**Section I: Update to Question #27 in August 2003 *Questions and Answers* Document regarding Implementation of G.L. c. 71A**

**Section II: Department Initiatives for Addressing Teacher Qualifications for Sheltered English Immersion Classrooms**

**Attachment 1: Skills and Knowledge for Teachers of Limited English Proficient Students in Sheltered English Immersion Classrooms**

To ensure that all teachers of limited English proficient students have the skills and knowledge described in Section I and Attachment 1, it is recommended that districts do the following:

1. Use the information contained in Section I and Attachment I to review the licenses, and the current skills and knowledge of all teachers in classrooms in which LEP students are or will be enrolled in 2004-2005, including teachers with Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) licenses.
2. Use the results of this review to adjust teaching assignments planned for next year, as needed.
3. Use the information collected through the review of teacher skills and knowledge to develop a multi-year, comprehensive professional development plan so that all LEP students are taught by teachers who have or are in the process of attaining the skills and knowledge described in Section I and Attachment 1.
4. Consider how best to use any additional Chapter 70 funding received to support the education of LEP students and to provide needed professional development for staff. As a new resource for addressing the educational needs of limited English proficient students, beginning with school year 2004-2005 the foundation budget formula will include the number of all LEP students as a factor in the calculation of Chapter 70 aid to cities and towns. In the past, only those LEP students enrolled in TBE programs were included in the calculation.
5. Participate, as appropriate, in the Department's training and other initiatives (Section II).

## English Language Learners

### Guidance on Qualifications for Teachers of Limited English Proficient Students in Sheltered English Immersion Classrooms

June 15, 2004

#### Section I: Update to Question #27 in August 2003 Questions and Answers Document

The following is an update of Question #27 in the Department's August 28, 2003 document entitled: *Questions and Answers* regarding Chapter 71A: English Language Education in Public Schools.

#### Teacher Qualifications

##### *27. a. Does G.L. c. 71A establish English language proficiency requirements for educators?*

Section 2 of G.L. c. 71A requires those who teach in English language classrooms to be "fluent and literate in English." Under G.L. c. 71A, English language classrooms encompass both sheltered English immersion classrooms and English language general education classrooms. Teachers in classrooms other than English language classrooms (e.g., two-way and other bilingual education classrooms and foreign language classrooms) must meet the licensing standards required by their position, but do not need to meet the additional literacy and fluency requirements of G.L.

c. 71A.

District superintendents and charter school leaders are required annually to sign an assurance that **all teachers in English language classrooms** are literate and fluent in English.

1. **Literacy in English.** A teacher is literate in English for purposes of G.L. c. 71A if the teacher:
  - a. possesses a teaching license issued pursuant to G.L. c. 71, § 38G; or
  - b. possesses a vocational teacher approval or a vocational technical educator license; or
  - c. earns a passing score on the Communication and Literacy Skills portion of the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL); or
  - d. possesses a bachelor's degree from a college or university where the language of instruction was English.
  
2. **Fluency in English.** Fluency is defined as having oral proficiency in English that consists of comprehension and production. Production is defined as accurate and efficient oral communication using appropriate pronunciation, intonation, grammar, and vocabulary in an interactive professional context.

Teaching staff's fluency in English should be determined through one or more of the following methods: classroom observation and assessment by the teacher's supervisor, principal, and/or superintendent or charter school leader; or

- an interview and assessment by the teacher's supervisor, principal, and/or superintendent or charter school leader; or
- the teacher's demonstration of fluency in English through a test accepted by the Commissioner of Education; or
- another method determined by the superintendent or charter school leader and accepted by the Commissioner.

**27. b. Does G.L. c. 71A establish licensure requirements for educators?**

G.L. c. 71A does not address specifically the licensing requirements for teachers of sheltered English immersion (SEI) classrooms. However, Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act requires teachers and other educational staff who implement a sheltered English immersion or other language support program to be qualified to do so. To assist districts in assigning qualified teachers to SEI classrooms, the Department has developed a list of skills and knowledge needed to deliver effective instruction in SEI classrooms. These skills and knowledge are summarized in the four categories listed in question #27.c below and enumerated in Attachment 1.

We explain below which current licenses may be used to teach in a particular SEI classroom, supplemented by professional development that is based on the skills and knowledge categories. The Department will update this guidance as new educator licenses become available.

Please note: Under Section 25 of Chapter 218 of the Acts of 2002, in districts with 200 or more LEP students, any person appointed as director of an English language learners program must be licensed in English as a second language, Bilingual Education, or another English language learners program.

**Early Childhood and Elementary SEI Classrooms:**

1. ESL license at the preK-8 or preK-9 level for sheltered English immersion classrooms, where the instructional focus for the year is primarily on learning English rather than on subject matter content. For instruction in a particular content area, a teacher licensed in that content area, (e.g., mathematics) should be used in conjunction with the ESL teacher, or the ESL teacher may take the appropriate MTEL test(s) and attain the needed educator license for the content area to be taught; or
2. TBE license in any language and an Early Childhood or Elementary license, as appropriate for grade served, and documentation maintained at the local level that the individual has or is attaining the skills and knowledge listed in 27.c. The language of the TBE license need not be the primary language of students; or
3. Early Childhood or Elementary license, as appropriate for the grade served, and documentation maintained at the local level that the individual has or is attaining the skills and knowledge listed in 27.c.

**Middle and Secondary SEI Classrooms:**

1. ESL license at the preK-8, preK-9, or 5-12 level, for sheltered English immersion classrooms where the instructional focus for the year is primarily on learning English rather than on subject matter content. For instruction in a particular content area, a teacher licensed in that content area, (e.g., mathematics), should be used in conjunction with the ESL teacher; or the ESL teacher may take the appropriate MTEL test(s) and attain the needed educator license for the content area to be taught; or
2. TBE license in any language and subject matter license, and documentation maintained at the local level that the individual has or is attaining the skills and knowledge listed in 27.c. The language of the TBE license need not be the primary language of students; or
3. Subject matter license and documentation maintained at the local level that the individual has or is attaining the skills and knowledge listed in 27.c.

**27. c. Does G.L. c. 71A establish professional development requirements for educators?**

G.L. c. 71A does not address specifically the training or professional development requirements for teachers of sheltered English immersion classrooms. However, as previously noted, under Title VI districts are required to ensure that teachers assigned to SEI classrooms are qualified to provide SEI instruction. To assist districts in making such assignments, the Department has developed a list of skills and knowledge needed to deliver effective instruction in SEI classrooms. Individuals assigned to teach in sheltered English immersion classrooms should have or be attaining the skills and knowledge summarized in the four categories below and enumerated in Attachment 1.

**Skills and Knowledge**

The skills and knowledge are organized under the following four categories:

Category 1: Second Language Learning and Teaching

Category 2: Sheltering Content Instruction

Category 3: Assessment of Speaking and Listening

Category 4: Teaching Reading and Writing to Limited English Proficient Students

Categories 1, 2, and 3 apply to all teachers of LEP students in SEI classrooms. Teachers who teach English language arts at any grade level to LEP students in SEI classrooms should also develop the skills listed in Category 4.

## English Language Learners

### Guidance on Qualifications for Teachers of Limited English Proficient Students in Sheltered English Immersion Classrooms

June 15, 2004

#### Section II:

#### Department Initiatives Addressing Teacher Qualifications for Sheltered English Immersion Classrooms

In this section, we highlight how the Department is assisting districts to ensure that LEP students are taught by qualified teachers.

#### Initiatives Currently Underway:

**English Language Learners (ELL) license:** In June 2003, the Massachusetts Board of Education approved a new English Language Learners license. It will become available in the Fall of 2004.

**Professional Standards for Teachers:** In June 2003, the Massachusetts Board of Education approved changes to the Professional Standards for Teachers contained in the licensing regulations (603 CMR 7.00). These changes, which become effective in September 2004 and address the teaching of LEP students, will require all teacher preparation programs for initial licenses to include sheltering content instruction and teaching students who are at different English proficiency levels in their curricula.

**Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Initiative:** The Department is engaged in a two-year initiative with 35 districts that enroll high numbers of LEP students. Each district has completed a needs assessment of factors affecting LEP student academic performance and, based on this needs assessment, has developed an SEI local plan to improve LEP student performance. Teacher quality was a major variable addressed in the needs assessment, and improving teacher quality is a priority in SEI local plans. Participating districts have received implementation grants to be used during Summer 2004 for professional development designed to improve teacher quality for LEP students.

**ELL Institutes:** The Department will offer five ELL Institutes during 2004 for teams from districts participating in the SEI Initiative. These Institutes will offer professional development in sheltering content instruction, curriculum development and implementation, and teaching reading and writing to LEP students. The Institutes will begin with four days of training during the summer and include ongoing support for participating teachers during the 2004-05 school year. The Department plans to offer these or similar Institutes in 2005 and beyond, if funds permit.

**Workshop on Professional Development:** On May 24, 2004, the Department offered a workshop for district personnel on "Designing, Implementing and Monitoring Professional Development to Support English Language Learners." Two nationally recognized experts led the workshop.

#### New Initiatives Scheduled for the 2004-2005 School Year:

The Department plans to develop an English Language Learner (ELL) "endorsement" for educator licenses, which will reflect the skills and knowledge described in Attachment 1. An ELL endorsement would not constitute a stand-alone license but would enable a license holder to teach the subject matter of the license in an SEI classroom (e.g., biology subject matter license plus ELL endorsement). Before taking effect, the regulations on the ELL endorsement will require a formal public comment period and Board of Education approval.

# English Language Learners

## Guidance on Qualifications for Teachers of Limited English Proficient Students in Sheltered English Immersion Classrooms

June 15, 2004

### Attachment 1: Skills and Knowledge for Teachers of Limited English Proficient Students in Sheltered English Immersion Classrooms

*Part A: For all teachers of limited English proficient students in Sheltered English Immersion classrooms.*

#### Category 1: Second Language Learning and Teaching

##### Knowledge

- a. Key factors affecting second language acquisition.
- b. Implications of these factors on classroom organization and instruction.
- c. The implications of cultural difference for classroom organization and instruction.
- d. Organization, content, and performance levels in the *Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes*.\*

##### Skills/Observable Outcomes

- Teacher can analyze his/her own classroom as a site for second language acquisition and make appropriate adjustments.
- Teacher can use knowledge of factors affecting second language acquisition to modify instruction for students who are having difficulty in learning English and/or subject matter content.

*Note: Suggested number of professional development hours for Category 1 is 10-15.*

#### Category 2: Sheltering Content Instruction

##### Knowledge

- a. **Curriculum and Lesson Planning.** Teachers will be able to:
  1. plan lessons appropriate for LEP students at the four levels of proficiency described in the Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes.
  2. plan lessons that are guided by both language and content objectives appropriate for LEP students who are at different grade levels and different English proficiency levels, and that are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes.
  3. plan lessons that are characterized by student interaction, students' questions, and appropriate group work.
- b. **Instructional Strategies.** While teaching, teachers will be able to:
  1. make language objectives, content objectives, and academic tasks explicit.
  2. use supplementary materials, including graphic organizers, visuals, and manipulatives to make content more comprehensible.
  3. group students so that all LEP students can participate.
  4. integrate language instruction and content instruction.

- c. **Student Tasks.** Teachers will be able to:
  1. plan learning tasks that have a product and that enable all students, including LEP students, to work and ask questions in small groups.
  2. provide opportunities for students to display their knowledge in various ways.
- d. **Lesson Delivery.** While teaching, teachers will be able to:
  1. assess student comprehension and learning throughout the lesson.
  2. pace and organize learning activities so that students are engaged 90-100% of the time.

### **Skills/Observable Outcomes**

- Teacher can plan and conduct content classes that are based on standards contained in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and that engage LEP students who are at different levels of English proficiency in learning throughout the duration of the class.
- Teacher can assess content learning of students who are at different levels of English proficiency.

*Note: Suggested number of professional development hours for Category 2 is 30-40.*

*Teachers with ESL and TBE licenses may possess these skills, but this cannot be assumed solely from the possession of either license.*

### **Category 3: Assessment of Speaking and Listening**

#### **Knowledge**

- a. Multiple dimensions of oral proficiency: comprehension, production, fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary.
- b. Concept of communicative competence and its role in assessment.
- c. The six levels of oral proficiency assessed by the MELA-O and their relation to the four levels of English language proficiency as described in the *Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes*.

### **Skills/Observable Outcomes**

- Teacher can place students in the six-level continuum of oral proficiency as assessed by the MELA-O.
- Teacher is a Qualified MELA-O Administrator (QMA).

*Note: Teachers who have participated in 8-10 hours of MELA-O training and passed the calibration test have met all Category 3 components.*

### **Part B: For teachers who teach English language arts to LEP students at any grade level in Sheltered English Instruction classrooms.**

### **Category 4: Teaching Reading and Writing to Limited English Proficient Students**

#### **Knowledge**

- a. Basic concepts of linguistics, including phonology and syntax of English.
- b. Significant theories and practices for developing reading skills and reading comprehension in English for limited English proficient students who are at different English proficiency levels.
- c. A variety of strategies for teaching vocabulary.
- d. Approaches and practices for developing writing skills in limited English proficient students.

- e. Initial reading instruction, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. The differences in initial reading instruction in English designed for those students who have no or limited oral proficiency in English compared to those who do have oral proficiency in English.
- f. The performance criteria and scoring system used in the MEPA (Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment) and based on the *Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes*.\*

**Skills/Observable Outcomes**

- Teacher can plan and deliver reading instruction appropriate for limited English proficient students who are at different levels of English language proficiency.
- Teacher can plan and deliver writing instruction and activities appropriate for limited English proficient students who are at different levels of English language proficiency.
- Teacher can use the scoring rubric and test results of the MEPA to plan reading and writing instruction for limited English proficient students who are at different proficiency levels.
- Teacher can plan and deliver early literacy instruction for students who have no or limited oral proficiency or literacy in English.

*Note: Suggested number of professional development hours for Category 4 is 30-40.*