

HOUSE No. 4012

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Fourteen

An Act to increase capacity to address the complex needs of students with autism.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 38G ½ of Chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in chapter
2 51 of the Acts of 2012 is hereby amended by inserting the following at the end of the first
3 paragraph:-

4 “Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorders” shall have the same meaning as the most recent
5 edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

6 SECTION 2. Section 38G ½ of Chapter 71 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is
7 further amended by inserting the following paragraph at the end of the section:-

8 The board shall provide an endorsement in autism which shall include both coursework
9 and field experience for licensed special education teachers to acquire the competencies
10 necessary to conduct assessments, develop appropriate individualized education programs,
11 provide specially designed instruction and related services, and consult and collaborate with
12 other educators, including general education teachers, in order to meet the unique and complex
13 educational needs of students with autism in the least restrictive environment. Competencies
14 shall also include, but not be limited to, the impact of autism on verbal and nonverbal
15 communication, social interaction, sensory experiences, behaviors, literacy and academic
16 achievement. The requirements for the endorsement in autism, as promulgated by the board, can
17 also be used to satisfy course requirements necessary to obtain a professional license. The board
18 shall promulgate regulations specifying the subject matter knowledge, skills, and competencies
19 required for such endorsement, including requirements to incorporate renewal of the
20 endorsement as part of the individual professional development plan required pursuant to section
21 38G. Said regulations shall also specify components necessary for preparation programs
22 offering an endorsement in autism, which shall be included in the department’s process for
23 approving preparation programs.

24 SECTION 3. For one year after the board has promulgated regulations as required
25 under section two, teachers who have previously been employed serving primarily students with
26 autism shall be eligible to receive an autism endorsement, provided that they demonstrate the
27 knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to receive such endorsement, subject to
28 regulations promulgated by the board of elementary and secondary education.

29 SECTION 4. Section 38G of Chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2010
30 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting, in line 266, after the word “disabilities”, the
31 following words:- “, including children with autism”.

32 SECTION 5. The board of elementary and secondary education shall promulgate the
33 regulations required pursuant to section two on or before September 1, 2014.