



# Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Superintendents, Principals, Charter School Leaders, RETELL Liaisons and Other Interested Parties  
**From:** The RETELL Team  
**Date:** April 8, 2016  
**Subject:** An Important Notice Regarding SEI Endorsement Requirements as of July 1, 2016

This memorandum supersedes all others to date related to SEI Endorsement requirements beginning on July 1, 2016.

As we complete the final year of no-cost SEI Endorsement training funded via legislative appropriation, districts have continued to seek information regarding their post-2016 obligations and options that incumbent educators will have for earning the Endorsement after the 2015-2016 school year.

School leaders have an overarching responsibility to strengthen teaching and learning for English language learners (ELLs). This responsibility encompasses the hiring and assignment of SEI-endorsed core academic teachers<sup>1</sup> (CATs) to provide SEI to ELLs. In addition, districts must provide professional development opportunities that address the SEI training necessary for educator license renewal. The primary purpose of this memorandum is to address these requirements and to provide clarification regarding when CATs are obligated to obtain an SEI Endorsement.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following teachers are "core academic teachers" for SEI Endorsement purposes under Department regulations: teachers of students with moderate disabilities; teachers of students with severe disabilities; teachers in English, reading or language arts; mathematics, science; civics and government, economics, history, and geography; and early childhood and elementary teachers who teach such subjects. The classification applies to teachers in all MA public schools, including charter schools and collaboratives.

<sup>2</sup> While the primary focus of this memorandum is core academic teachers, it is also important for districts to plan for July 1, 2016 implementation of SEI Endorsement requirements applicable to principals/assistant principals and supervisor/directors (hereafter "building administrators"). Only those building administrators who supervise or evaluate a CAT with an ELL during their district cohort years are required to earn the SEI Endorsement prior to July 1, 2016, or else will not be able to renew, advance or extend their educator license. As of July 1, 2016, a building administrator may supervise or evaluate a CAT with an ELL **only** if he or she holds the SEI Endorsement or obtains one within one year of initiating supervision or evaluation of the CAT with an ELL. 603 CMR 14.07(4); 603 CMR 7.15(9)(b)2.

## **Educator Requirements prior to July 1, 2016**

**Only** CATs who were assigned an ELL during their districts' cohort years are required to obtain the SEI Endorsement prior to July 1, 2016. Under 603 CMR 7.15 and 603 CMR 14.07, those CATs who were assigned an ELL at any point during their districts' cohort years and failed to earn an SEI Endorsement by the time designated for their cohort, will not be eligible to renew, advance, or extend their educator license until they earn an SEI Endorsement (hereafter referred to as "license restrictions").

**Prior to July 1, 2016, a CAT who was never assigned an ELL during his or her district's cohort years is NOT required to earn the Endorsement.**

**License restrictions do not affect an educator's license status until such time as the educator seeks to renew, advance, or extend the license.**

## **Educator and District Responsibilities as of July 1, 2016**

Districts have a basic responsibility to assign ELLs only to those core academic teachers who hold the SEI Endorsement. The DESE recognizes that there may be cases in which it is not possible for a school administrator to assign an ELL to an SEI-endorsed CAT because an endorsed CAT is not available. For example, some districts may experience, for the first time, enrollment of students who are ELLs, or schools experience a significant and unexpected increase in enrollment of ELLs. Section 14.07 (3) of the Education of English Learner Regulations addresses the unavailability of SEI-endorsed CATS by allowing a one-year assignment of an ELL to an unendorsed CAT:

Starting on July 1, 2016, any core academic teacher who is assigned an English learner must either have an SEI Endorsement, *or must earn one within one year<sup>3</sup> of the date of the assignment.*  
*603 CMR 14.07 (3).*

If necessary, a school administrator may assign an ELL to an unendorsed CAT if the educator is advised that he or she must obtain an SEI Endorsement within a year.

There are additional steps that the district must take under these circumstances. The district must, in all cases, take all reasonable steps to ensure that the ELL(s) is assigned to SEI-endorsed CATs in subsequent school years.<sup>4</sup> This could include activities such as the following: providing the SEI Endorsement course to CATs in the district so as to deepen the pool of SEI-endorsed CATs across the district;<sup>5</sup> planning teacher schedules appropriately to make assignment of ELLs to SEI-endorsed teachers in subsequent

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<sup>3</sup> "One year" means a calendar year from the date of the assignment.

<sup>4</sup> 603 CMR 14.07(3) reads in relevant part: *any school district that assigns an English learner to a core academic teacher who has a year to obtain an SEI endorsement, shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that such English learner is assigned to core academic teachers with an SEI endorsement in subsequent years.* See also 603 CMR 7.15(9)(b)1.

<sup>5</sup> See page 5, *District Based Courses*.

years possible; incentivizing teachers in subsequent grades to gain the Endorsement before ELLs from the current grade transition to the next; ensuring that newly hired teachers for positions in which ELLs will be enrolled are SEI-endorsed at the time of hire.

The following scenarios illustrate the application of these requirements:

- A 9<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher was not assigned an ELL for any of the years between 2012 and 2016. In fall 2017, an ELL is assigned to that teacher's science class. That science teacher now has one year from the date of the assignment to obtain the SEI Endorsement.
- A 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher was assigned an ELL in 2011, but has not been assigned an ELL at all during the district's cohort window, which ran from fall 2013 through August 2016. That teacher is NOT required to earn the SEI Endorsement until she is assigned an ELL again after July 1, 2016. Once assigned an ELL, she will need to obtain the SEI Endorsement within one year of assignment of the student to her class.
- A 7<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies teacher is assigned an ELL in 2014-2015, during her Cohort 2 district's cohort window. That teacher did not enroll in an SEI Endorsement course in 2014-15, so will be assigned to the 2015-16 cohort year and will be required to obtain the SEI Endorsement prior to August 31, 2016. If she does not obtain the SEI Endorsement by the August 2016 deadline, she will not be able to renew, advance, or extend her license until she obtains the endorsement. If she is assigned an ELL after July 1, 2016, she will need to obtain the SEI Endorsement within one year of the assignment.

### **District Monitoring**

Starting July 1, 2016, districts will be responsible for monitoring their compliance with then effective provisions of 603 CMR 14.07 and 603 CMR 7.15(9)(b). Districts have an obligation to be vigilant in planning, training, and educator assignment so that there are a sufficient number of SEI-endorsed teachers to provide SEI to ELLs and that ELLs are assigned to such educators to the maximum extent possible. In particular, they will need to take all reasonable steps so that:

1. ELLs assigned to unendorsed CATs on one occasion are thereafter assigned only to CATs who have obtained the SEI Endorsement;
2. CATs who are assigned ELLs are informed that, upon assignment, they must obtain the SEI Endorsement within one year;
3. No principal, assistant principal, director, department head, or curriculum specialist will supervise or evaluate a CAT of an ELL unless that administrator holds an SEI Endorsement, or will obtain one within one year of the commencement of such supervision or evaluation.

To assist districts with their compliance responsibilities, the DESE is developing new reports that will detail:

- Which unendorsed CATs have had an ELL within the last 12 months and which unendorsed administrators have been assigned to supervise/evaluate CATs who have had an ELL within the last 12 months;
- Which ELLs have had an unendorsed CAT; and,

- Which ELLs have had an unendorsed CAT in the past and now have unendorsed CATs again, and the names of those unendorsed CATs.

DESE plans to make these reports available to districts prior to July 1, 2016, and will provide training in advance of fall 2016 to support districts' use of the new tools in their compliance-monitoring efforts. DESE will monitor district compliance with these requirements on an ongoing basis and via the Coordinated Program Review (CPR) process.

DESE is aware that there may be many factors affecting compliance with these requirements and will be collecting information from districts during 2016-2017 in an effort to understand the full range of challenges districts face. One of these challenges involves in-service educators who are enrolled in approved initial licensure preparation programs but may not receive the endorsement within one year of being assigned an ELL. DESE will not count these educators as unendorsed for the purpose of compliance monitoring as long as the district can document that they are enrolled in an approved preparation program, will complete the program within two years of initially being assigned an ELL, and will have earned the SEI Endorsement.

### **Requirement for PDPs**

In addition, sections 38G and 38Q of M.G.L. c. 71 require each district to develop a professional development plan for all staff and establish a budget for professional development that does not exceed the district's foundation budget. Section 38Q provides that any district with ELLs "shall provide training for teachers in second language acquisition techniques for the re-certification of teachers and administrators." In accordance with 603 CMR 44.06(1)(a), as of July 1, 2016, educators with professional licenses must earn at least 15 Professional Development Points related to SEI or English as a Second Language in order to be eligible to renew their licenses. Thus, districts should be providing professional development opportunities that enable educators to meet this requirement. Districts are free to provide whatever opportunities best meet local needs. To assist districts in identifying high quality professional development options that go beyond what was introduced via SEI Endorsement courses, the DESE has identified a number of well-designed mini courses that districts can purchase for local implementation. See <http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/courses.html>

### **Pathways to earning the endorsement as of July 1, 2016**

#### **No-cost, state-offered courses (restricted)**

As of January, 2016, approximately 2,000 educators were required to earn the endorsement but, through no fault of their own, were unable to do so. DESE plans to offer a limited number of SEI endorsement courses during the 2016-2017 school year for these educators. Educators who will be eligible for no-cost, state-offered courses in 2016-2017 are those who were required to earn the endorsement during their districts' cohort windows and who, during the 2015-2016 school year:

1. enrolled in a course that was subsequently cancelled by DESE;
2. placed themselves on a waitlist, but were not offered an open seat in a course;
3. applied for and were granted a hardship extension; or

4. were assigned an ELL for the first time during the 2015-2016 school year but did not have adequate time to enroll in a course.

DESE estimates that approximately 100 courses will need to be offered in 2016-2017 to satisfy the number of educators who will be eligible. Enrollment in these courses will be restricted to only those educators who are eligible. DESE is compiling a list of these educators and will notify them individually of their eligibility and course registration procedures.

#### **For-cost courses through approved vendors**

DESE is aware that the number of courses offered by vendors at a cost has been limited in some cases throughout the 2015-2016 school year. DESE anticipates that the number of courses offered by vendors at a cost will increase due to the increased availability of certified instructors after July 1, 2016.

DESE has also published an open, rolling RFR to approve additional providers of the SEI Endorsement Course in order to better meet the demand by educators who were not eligible to enroll in a state-sponsored, no-cost course but who may desire or be required to earn the endorsement after July 1, 2016.

A list of currently-approved for-cost vendors can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/For-Cost.html>.

#### **District-based courses**

Districts that are able to meet the requirements outlined in the aforementioned RFR may apply to become approved providers of SEI Endorsement courses. The RFR can be found [here](https://www.commbuys.com/bso/external/bidDetail.sdo?docId=BD-16-1026-DOE02-DOE01-00000007802&external=true&parentUrl=bid) (<https://www.commbuys.com/bso/external/bidDetail.sdo?docId=BD-16-1026-DOE02-DOE01-00000007802&external=true&parentUrl=bid>). Only districts that are able to meet all requirements of the RFR will be approved. Some of the requirements include access to systems that can be used for the following:

- online forums
- house readings and other materials
- assign work and submit assignments
- grade assignments using approved course rubrics
- create/maintain course schedules
- track attendance and participation
- maintain electronic records of all of the above for a period of seven years

#### **SEI MTEL**

Educators who take and pass the SEI MTEL are eligible for the SEI Endorsement but must apply to receive it. Information about the test, including registration procedures and preparation materials, can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/sei-mtel/>.

#### **Possession of an ESL license**

Educators who possess an ESL license are automatically eligible for the SEI Endorsement but must apply to receive it. Information about licensing can be found on the webpage for the Office of Educator

Licensure at <http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ease/programs/educator-effectiveness/licensure/>.

### **Transcript review**

Educators who have previously completed graduate-level coursework that they believe may qualify them for the SEI Endorsement may request a transcript review from the Licensure Office.

To request a transcript review, an educator must apply for the endorsement and select path 2, which is a transcript review based on a related degree or graduate level training. Instructions for applying for the SEI Endorsement can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ease/educator-effectiveness/licensing/sei-endorsement-how-to-apply.pdf>.

For questions about transcript reviews or other license-related topics, please contact the Office of Educator Licensure at 781-338-6600

Further information regarding the RETELL initiative can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/>.