



An Act ensuring diversity in public education

MTA Legislative Agenda, 2021-2022

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield) | Rep. Nika Elugardo (D-Boston)

Allowing for alternative measures of proficiency for educator licensure candidates rather than relying exclusively on the MTEL test.

The Commonwealth's current educator licensure process is excluding talented and otherwise qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds by requiring that they pass the multi-part Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) in order to demonstrate communications and literacy skills and subject matter knowledge. Candidates for licensure are required to achieve passing scores on the MTEL in addition to meeting degree requirements and completing an approved preparation program.

In addition to concerns around biased content in the MTEL, as well as its high costs and limited test center locations, research clearly shows that non-white candidates consistently have far lower passing rates on the test than white candidates. It therefore serves as a significant barrier to creating a more diverse educator workforce. Since current law does not allow for alternatives to a standardized assessment, candidates for licensure have no other way to demonstrate the proficiencies established for a license if they cannot reach a passing score.

An Act ensuring diversity in public education will address these issues by allowing the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to approve alternative measures of proficiency for candidates for educator licensure. Under this legislation, the new flexibility will also extend to licensure for vocational technical educators.

Passing *An Act ensuring diversity in public education* means:

- No longer relying exclusively on the standardized MTEL to measure whether a candidate for licensure has the skills and knowledge to effectively teach.
- Taking a meaningful step toward diversifying the educator workforce, which is a key goal of the landmark *Student Opportunity Act* that will benefit students across the Commonwealth.
- Allowing for more affordable and accessible pathways to educator licensure. Currently, candidates for licensure could have to pay as much as \$705 in MTEL test and application fees, with those costs recurring each time a candidate must retake the MTEL.

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