



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
DATE: January 22, 2019
SUBJECT: Code of Maryland Regulation 13A.12.02.23
Blind/Visually Impaired
AMENDMENT -PERMISSION TO PUBLISH

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to request permission to publish amendments to Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 13A.12.02.23 *Blind Visually Impaired* (Attached), to remove the current language requiring that a teacher certified in Blind/Visually Impaired present a qualifying score on an approved test of braille competency at the time of the first certificate renewal to align the test submission with all other teaching areas by requiring it at the time of application.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

On December 4, 2018, the Maryland State Board of Education (SBOE) approved the adoption of the National Certification in Unified English Braille (NCUEB) as a requirement for initial certification in the area of Blind/Visually Impaired. At that meeting, the SBOE charged the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) with amending the Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 13A.12.02.23 *Blind/Visually Impaired* to remove the current language requiring that a teacher certified in Blind/Visually Impaired present a qualifying score on an approved test of braille competency at the time of the first certificate renewal to align the test submission with all other teaching areas by requiring it at the time of application.

Additionally, the SBOE charged the MSDE with procuring a plan from the Maryland State Steering Committee for the Blind and Visually Impaired that ensures Maryland teacher candidates seeking certification in the area of Blind/Visually Impaired will have access to the NCUEB, as there are currently no test sites in Maryland. On December 12, 2018, by way of memorandum, the MSDE requested that the Maryland State Steering Committee for the Blind and Visually Impaired provide a plan for the administration of the NCUEB to include the number and location of test sites, the number of annual administrations, and availability of proctors. In that memorandum, the MSDE recommended a minimum of four (4) administrations per year be available in multiple regions of the State and asked that a plan be submitted by December 31, 2018. On December 21, 2018, the Steering Committee requested and received additional time to determine the infrastructure of management, implementation, and timelines. The MSDE requested that a plan be made available by January 31, 2019.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The SBOE tasked the MSDE with amending the language of COMAR 13A.12.02.23 *Blind Visually Impaired* to align the certification assessment requirement with that of all other teaching areas in Maryland, by requiring the test at the time of application.

ACTION:

Request permission to publish the proposed amendments to COMAR 13A.12.02.23 *Blind/Visually Impaired*.

Attachment

.23 Blind/Visually Impaired.

A. The requirements for initial certification to teach blind/visually impaired students and renewal of certification to teach blind/visually impaired students are those set forth in §§B—D of this regulation.

B. Special Education Background. For initial certification to teach blind/visually impaired students, an applicant shall complete the following coursework.

(1) Special Education Course Work:

- (a) Introduction to exceptional children; and
- (b) Education of students with multiple disabilities.

(2) Specialized Content Course Work. An applicant shall submit a minimum of 21 semester hours of credit of Department-approved Continuing Professional Development credits including the following areas:

- (a) Knowledge of literary Braille, including methods of teaching Braille reading and writing;
- (b) Knowledge of Nemeth Code for Mathematics and Science and other Braille codes (foreign language, Braille formats, computer, Unified English Braille Code);
- (c) Medical aspects and disorders of the eye including their current and future impact on the development of the student and current and future literacy needs;
- (d) Curriculum, instructional methods, and adaptations to meet the individualized needs of blind/visually impaired students (including the Expanded Core Curriculum and access to the general education curriculum);
- (e) Assessment, diagnosis, and prescriptive techniques to meet the individualized needs of blind/visually impaired students (including the Expanded Core Curriculum and access to the general education curriculum);
- (f) Introduction to orientation and mobility training emphasizing the development of concepts and skills required for independent travel; and
- (g) A supervised practicum or 1 year of satisfactory teaching experience with blind/visually impaired students.

(3) Professional Education Course Work. An applicant shall have a minimum of 12 semester hours in course work or its equivalent including the following areas:

- (a) Human Growth and Development (birth through adult);
- (b) Methods of Reading Instruction;
- (c) Assessment of Reading Instruction; and
- (d) Methods of Teaching Mathematics.

C. Special Provision. A teacher professionally certified in early childhood, elementary, middle school, secondary, generic special education, or PreK—grade 12 education who seeks an endorsement to teach students with visual impairments shall meet the requirements of §§B(1)—(3) of this regulation.

D. Renewal.

[(1) A teacher certified for teaching blind/visually impaired students shall present a qualifying score on a Department approved test of Braille competency before the expiration of the initial professional certificate and 6 semester hours of course work from an IHE or in Department-approved Continuing Professional Development credits or Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

(2) For continued renewal, a] A teacher certified or teaching blind/visually impaired students shall submit 6 semester hours of course work from an IHE or Department-approved Continuing Professional Development credits or Continuing Education Units (CEUs) which must include maintenance of knowledge of Braille code.