

THE SABES HANDBOOK FOR SUPPORT IN ATTAINING THE MASSACHUSETTS ADULT BASIC EDUCATION TEACHER'S LICENSE*

EIGHTH DRAFT

January 2003

PLEASE NOTE:

DOE has now issued approved guidelines; this revision is the first to integrate this new information into SABES support documents.

Please help us: Does this Handbook help you understand the new ABE Teacher's License and how SABES might help teachers to secure it? What works for you and what doesn't? E-mail your feedback to Carey Reid at creid@worlded.org or call him at 617-482-9485.

Thanks in advance!

*The terms "license" and "licensure" were chosen by the statewide ABE Certification Advisory Committee to make regulations covering the ABE Teacher's License consistent with all other Massachusetts educator's licenses.



In a nutshell...

To earn the new ABE Teacher's License, you will have to meet certain requirements and standards. The license is competency based, so your prior education, experience, and training in the ABE field can count. In fact, you should not assume that you have to "go back to school" or take a set series of SABES courses.

You'll be setting up an application packet to send to DOE and then receiving back from them a letter stating which requirements and standards you have to meet. Then, you'll collect evidence in a portfolio to address them. Your portfolio will be assessed by a Review Panel, some members of which will be experienced ABE teachers.

Reading through sections of the official DOE Regulations and Guidelines at www.doe.mass.edu/educators/abe.html would be time well spent. SABES has developed a Web site at www.sabes.org/license and many other resources to help you obtain your license. On the Web site visitors will find this updated handbook; worksheets and templates; and links to helpful people, resources, and forms.

Important facts about the new license...

- By law, the license is voluntary, not mandatory. Some employers might require it of their teacher employees, but the state cannot force employers to make the license a requirement.
- There is only one license for all ABE teachers, regardless what they are or have been teaching (e.g. math, ESOL, GED test prep), and no license (yet) for counselors or administrators.
- The license is competency based; that is, license-seekers provide an application packet to DOE and then build a portfolio that shows how they have met requirements and teaching standards not covered by their application assessment.
- A teacher's knowledge, experience, and training "count" towards licensure. Years in the field, coursework, teaching experience, and staff development training, even personal study might be valid evidence of meeting.
- There are four "routes" to the license, ranging from one for new teachers (who will have to pass the state Communication and Literacy Skills Test, perform field-based practica, and meet all 29 professional or "teaching" standards) to one for teachers with five or more years of ABE teaching experience (no test, no practica, and only eight specified standards to meet).
- All license-seekers, no matter how many years of experience and how much knowledge they have gained, must demonstrate their teaching, normally through a direct observation by a qualified observer or a videotaping.
- There is no teacher preparation (e.g. college-based) program for ABE teachers in our state. To prepare for licenses, teachers will work directly with the Office of Academic Affairs and Educator Licensing or their local SABES Regional Support Centers or both.
- SABES is in the process of designing and setting up a peer support system for license-seeking teachers that will connect teachers to each other, train peer coaches, and make it easy for license-seeking teachers to get the resources (e.g. books, articles, trainings) they need to meet standards. This Web site contains most of the information and links that license-seeking teachers will need.

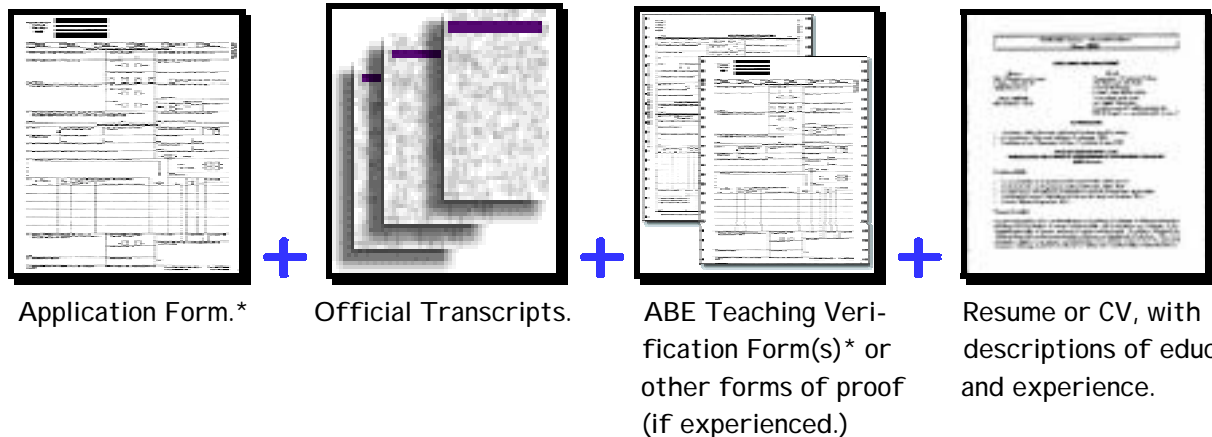
Want to give the license a try?

CONGRATULATIONS!

You are at least thinking about starting out on what we hope you will conclude is an adventure in professional development. But, what you might not know is that you have already started that journey! How is that possible? Because the Massachusetts ABE Teacher's License provides a competency-based option; much of the coursework and personal learning, professional development training, and work and life experience you have amassed over the years can count toward your license. By the same token, the licensure process allows a great deal of flexibility for you to acquire whatever knowledge and skills you will still need to obtain.

The DOE Office of Academic Affairs and Educator Licensing and SABES itself are working hard to provide you with the guidance you will need to seek the new license. Basically, your quest will be to determine what basic requirements and teaching standards (listed in Appendix A) you have already met. You will send in an Application Packet to DOE and they will write back describing what requirements and standards you still have to meet.

Figure 1. *First, you send in an Application Packet.*



*downloadable from www.doe.mass.edu/educators/abe.html

After DOE lets you know what requirements and standards you have to meet, you will then gather "evidence" in a portfolio to indicate proficiency toward standards. This process might require that you pursue further learning, to fill gaps in knowledge and experience. Finally, you will be observed actually teaching--to determine both what you already know and can do and what you might want to work on to become an even better teacher.

SABES has developed Self-Assessments to help you (a) discover which requirements and standards you might have already met through prior learning and experience, and (b) set up a plan to address any requirements and standards you will probably still need to meet. These are posted on the Web site: www.sabes.org/license

This graphic might help you understand what you might be including in your Portfolio, which you will submit following DOE's assessment of your Application Packet. Newer teachers will have more evidence based on education, training, and self-study; more experienced teachers will probably be including more evidence based on their classroom teaching.



Though teachers can get credit for their knowledge and experience, make no mistake: The ABE Teacher's License is based on serious requirements and standards. All candidates must possess a broad range of subject matter knowledge and professional skills, and each must demonstrate her teaching. When a candidate has completed the process, she will possess a license that will stand up against any other teaching license that our state issues.

Two other important "up-front facts" that bear repeating are, first, that the ABE license is voluntary, not mandatory. Some employers (such as a school district) might encourage or even require that their teachers obtain an ABE license, but the state

cannot *require* employers to make the license mandatory. Second, the ABE license was designed as a *general* license, without specializations, for teachers. For that reason, teachers seeking the license will have to know something of all the various ABE content areas--basic skills, English language acquisition, math, GED test preparation, and so forth.

This Handbook has been designed to get information to you, the license-seeker, as quickly as possible about what is required of you and how SABES and the Office of Academic Affairs and Educator Licensing can help. Chunks of important information have been included as attachments, which you can read at your discretion. If you have the time and energy at this point, please flip to Attachment B, *A Short History of the New ABE License*. From that history, you can get a sense of how the license evolved over time, integrating lots of practitioner ideas and feedback along the way, and how many decisions were influenced by a widely held view that the ABE Teacher's License should carry the same "weight" as Massachusetts's other state educator's licenses.

Requirements in summary

To get your ABE Teacher's License, you will have to meet a number of requirements: basic requirements, such as a bachelor's or master's degree; subject matter knowledge requirements, such as the knowledge a person would gain from obtaining a bachelor's degree; and knowledge and skills requirements (subject matter and teaching standards are listed in Appendix A.) New or novice ABE teachers will have to meet 21 or more teaching standards (Routes 1, 2, and 3), but teachers with five or more years of experience (a total of 2400 hours of teaching) will have to meet only eight standards (Route 4). So, an important question for you will be, "What Route am I?" Briefly, if you are a new or novice ABE teacher without a preK-12 educator's license, you are Route 1; if you have a preK-12 license, you are Route 2. If you have a license and have taught for at least 480 hours in an ABE classroom, you might qualify for Route 3. If you've taught for 2,400 hours, regardless whether you have a preK-12 license, you might qualify for Route 4. SABES has developed a *Years of Experience Worksheet* to help you determine which route you might qualify for (posted on www.sabes.org/license). Keep in mind that all candidates will have to demonstrate their teaching, regardless of Route.

Requirements in Summary

The bachelor's or master's degree requirement aligns this license with the other state educator's licenses. However, as will be explained, non-degree-holders will get help in meeting this requirement, so the intention is to include good teachers who might not have a degree. The subject matter knowledge requirements set the bar a few notches above the usual bachelor's degree by asking teachers to know something about

theories of reading, writing, and language acquisition, and math to the algebra level. The professional teaching standards (29 in all) will look familiar to some of you, because many of those standards have evolved from past Massachusetts work groups where teachers were asked for input.

For whatever standards you must meet based on your route, you will collect evidence in a portfolio that will be reviewed by a Review Panel. The panel will comprise a set of peers, mostly veteran ABE teachers.

A big question any license-seeking teacher would have is "How much evidence will I need to show that I've met a given standard?" Those measures are described in an "evaluation rubric" in the approved Guidelines. To help give you an idea of the kinds and amounts of evidence needed, let's take a look at one standard and the evidence needed to prove that a candidate has met it.

How to meet standards via a performance portfolio

By way of example, here's Standard C6: "[The effective teacher] uses a variety of instructional methods, techniques, and tools to facilitate adult learning."

And here's the evaluation rubric (taken from the *Guidelines*) that the Review Panel will be using to determine if you've met this standard:

Coursework:

a. Evidence of course content:

Copy of a course syllabus **or** a description from a college catalogue **or** course announcement showing that instructional methods, techniques, and tools for adult learners were addressed

b. Evidence of successful completion of coursework:

Copy of a transcript, **or** a certificate of completion, **or** a certificate awarding professional development points

c. Coursework statements about:

- 1) Knowledge of instructional methods, techniques, and tools to facilitate adult learning
- 2) How to use instructional methods, techniques, and tools to facilitate adult learning

Experience:

d. Evidentiary documentation:

Copy of either a curriculum, **or** a syllabus, **or** a series of lesson plans that describes instructional methods, **or** techniques, **or** tools used.

e. Explanatory statements about:

- 1) What instructional methods, **or** techniques, **or** tools were used with adult learners
- 2) Why these instructional methods, **or** techniques, **or** tools were used with adult learners
- 3) How these instructional methods, **or** techniques, **or** tools were used in the curriculum, **or** syllabus, **or** series of lesson plans for adult basic education learners.

The evaluation rubric was designed to help you choose effective, not voluminous, evidence. For each standard, you will be presenting only the amount of evidence necessary and no more than two pages of accompanying explanation. For example, if you have taken a graduate course entitled "Instructional Methods for Teaching Adults," you might need to provide only a transcript, a course description from the college catalogue, and a one-two page "coursework statement." Or, to give an example of experiential evidence, you might provide a set of lesson plans as evidence and, again, a one-two page "explanatory statement." You could also provide a combination of coursework and experiential evidence to cover the standard. Acceptable experiential evidence may take many forms: a combination of shorter staff development trainings (less than ten PDPs), some self-directed study, the result of mentoring, examples of your learners' work, and so forth.

Requirements for the provisional license

License-seeking candidates can begin with a Provisional License or go directly for a Professional License. The provisional option would allow you to be "licensed" so that if your employer requires a Massachusetts license of some kind (e.g. some Corrections facilities or certain school districts), you are covered. It also allows candidates to pursue their Professional licenses as a two-stage process.

The basic requirements for the Provisional License are as follows.

- **A bachelor's or master's degree in any discipline from an accredited college or university.** The thinking behind this requirement is that the new license should be able to stand alongside other state educators' licenses. However, because many excellent ABE teachers do not have bachelor's degrees, some room was created in the regs to include them. Specifically, by allowing a master's degree to fulfill this requirement, the door is open for license-seekers without an undergraduate degree to go directly into special master's programs that do not require a bachelor's degree for enrollment and assign credit for life and work experience (e.g. Cambridge College). For those individuals who want a bachelor's degree, DOE is looking into providing "scaffolding"--that is, extra support such as information on cost-effective degree programs, or perhaps even help with tuition costs (all conjecture at this point).
- **Passing score on the Communication and Literacy Skills Test.** This is a two-part test--reading and writing--required of all new teachers licensed by our state. However, at least until October of 2006, ABE license-seekers who have a K-12 license or five years of ABE teaching experience are exempt from this test. New or novice teachers without licenses will be required to take this test. You can see a description of the test, with sample questions and answers, online at:

www.doe.mass.edu/mtel You can also order a booklet for \$8.00 from Massachusetts Teacher Tests, P.O. Box 343, Hadley, MA 01035-0343, Telephone: (413) 256-2892, which provides the same information as the Web site.

- **Evidence of sound moral character.** This requirement is imposed by the state legal offices to allow rapid removal of teachers who have behaved criminally towards students or colleagues. It does not in any way nullify Massachusetts's anti-discrimination laws, which are in place to protect persons from discrimination based on gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and so forth.

Requirements for the professional license

The basic requirements for the Professional License are as follows. To help keep yourself oriented, refer to the chart entitled Requirements At-a-Glance by Route, a page ahead.

- **Possession of a bachelor's or a master's degree, etc.** (Same info as for Provisional level.)
- **Passing score on the Communication and Literacy Skills Test.** (Same as for Provisional.)
- **Evidence of sound moral character.** (Same as Provisional.)
- **Passing score on the ABE subject matter test.** This test has not been developed yet, so evidence of a bachelor's or master's degree is sufficient. Teachers with a preK-12 license and one year of ABE teaching experience, or teachers with five years of ABE teaching experience, are exempt from the test (once it becomes available) at least until October 2006.
- **Successful completion of a supervised 75-hour pre-practicum, and/or a 15-hour field survey, and a 150 hour practicum.** The pre-practicum is designed for new teachers without preK-12 license training, to give them actual experience working in a variety of ABE settings, such as an ESOL classroom or a GED test prep class in a Corrections facility. The 15-hour field survey is designed to expose teachers with less than five years of experience to a variety of settings; teachers with five years or more of experience are exempt. The practicum itself is designed to provide newer teachers with guidance while on the job.
- **Proficiency in the Professional Standards for ABE Teachers.** (See Appendix A). As we stated earlier, these standards are at the heart of the ABE licensure model. Many hours of work went into researching, drafting, and revising them by

several groups, including a statewide Advisory Group. Research ensured that the best standards lists of other groups--e.g., several state and foreign adult literacy agencies and organizations--were considered, as well as the work of past Massachusetts task forces and committees. We think you'll agree that the Board-approved standards reflect a learner-centered approach to teaching adults.

- **Demonstration of Teaching.** Every license-seeking teacher, regardless of route, will have to demonstrate her actual teaching. This is a bona fide method for indicating proficiency with many of the standards as well as a reasonable way to ensure that a given candidate can effectively put knowledge into practice. License-seekers have three methods for fulfilling this requirement: to be observed by a qualified person; to be videotaped; or to present a teaching demonstration before the Review Panel itself (this last option designed especially with candidates not currently teaching in mind).

The next page is an at-a-glance chart of requirements by route.

ROUTES TO THE ABE TEACHER'S LICENSE	BACHELOR'S OR MASTER'S DEGREE	COMMUNICATION & LITERACY SKILLS TEST	SUBJECT MATTER KNOWLEDGE TEST	75-HOUR PRE-PRACTICUM	15-HOUR FIELD SURVEY	150-HOUR PRACTICUM	PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS TO DEMONSTRATE	PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT & DEMONSTRATION OF TEACHING	18-HOUR ABE ORIENTATION
Route 1 Prospective or novice ABE teachers	✓	✓	✓	✓	w/in pre-practicum	✓	ALL 29	✓	✓
Route 2 Prospective or novice ABE teachers w/a preK-12 teachers' license	✓	N/A*	✓	✓	w/in pre-practicum	✓	ALL 29	✓	✓
Route 3 ABE teachers w/1 year exp. plus preK-12 teachers' license	✓	N/A*	N/A*	N/A	✓	N/A	21 (specified)	✓	N/A
Route 4 teachers w/5+ years ABE teaching experience	✓	N/A* *until October of 2006.	N/A*	N/A	N/A	N/A	8 (specified)	✓	N/A

The SABES approach to licensure support

How can SABES help you? As many readers already know, the System for Adult Basic Education Support, or SABES, is a statewide staff development and program improvement organization. It is practitioner driven in character in that the needs of teachers are assessed and addressed by five regional support centers, or RSCs, each an independent agency working in partnership with a state community college. Also, skilled teachers often develop and present the training requested by their colleagues. The RSCs are helped with common goals and concerns by a central resource center, or CRC, located at World Education in downtown Boston.

SABES has already started working with teachers from each region in a state-wide Field Test to design a licensure support system for license seekers. Not surprisingly, the consensus is that SABES should provide licensure support in much the same way it provides *all* its training; that is, with lots of flexibility, collaboration, and peer support in a non-competitive, non-judgmental atmosphere. Now, please take a look at Figure 3. "Margaret's Excellent Adventure" on the next page. Hopefully, it will give you an overview of the SABES's proposed approach to the ABE licensure process.

Margaret's Excellent Adventure...



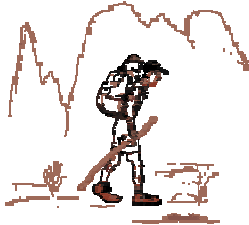
Marge decided to go for the license!



She sent an application into DOE...



...and learned that her years of experience counted--but she still had lots to do.



She started off alone.



Then SABES connected her with other teachers.



They made learning goals and plans...



...and worked together on common tasks.



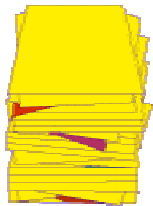
Sometimes she worked alone...



...and sometimes with her group--checking in, sharing...



...with SABES continually connecting them to resources.



Marge kept collecting evidence for her portfolio, until she was ready...



...to go to the Review Panel.



They loved her work!



Congratulations to Margaret and her fellow license-seekers!

ATTACHMENT A. SUBJECT MATTER AND TEACHING STANDARDS

The following two sets of standards--subject matter and professional or "teaching" standards--reflect the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind that teachers need to have to be able to serve adult learners well. These standards were compiled from many sources--past Massachusetts committees, task forces, and other bodies; resource centers in other U.S. states and in Canada and Great Britain; field-related organizations, such as the Pelavin Research Institute and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; and past and present versions of Massachusetts Pre-K-12 teacher standards. The standards reached their present form after several stages of revision, often integrating considerable feedback from the field.

Subject Matter Standards

The subject matter standards reflect the knowledge that someone would gain from earning a bachelor's degree, with additional breadth and depth to cover what a good GED test preparation teacher would need to know. DOE is developing a Subject Matter Test which, eventually, all license-seeking candidates will have to take. Route 3 and 4 candidates will be exempt from this test until October 2006. Route 1 and 2 candidates will have to take it as soon as it becomes available.

1. English / Reading and Writing

A. Literature

1. Literature appropriate for a range of adult reading levels
2. Genres, literary elements, and literary techniques
3. Nature, history, and structure of the English language: lexicon and grammar

B. Reading and Writing

1. Knowledge of theories, practices, and programs for developing reading skills and reading comprehension for adult learners
2. Phonemic awareness and phonics: principles, knowledge, and instructional practices
3. Vocabulary development
4. Theories on the relationships between beginning writing and reading
5. Writing process and formal elements of writing

2. English as a Second Language

A. Theories of language acquisition and development, including first and second language acquisition and development

B. Linguistics, including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics of English, other languages and language variations

C. Language assessment procedures and instruments: selection, administration, and interpretation

3. Mathematics

- A. Basic principles and concepts related to mathematics, including algebra
- B. Number sense and numeration
- C. Patterns and functions
- D. Geometry and measurement
- E. Data analysis

4. History and Social Science

- A. Major developments and figures in Massachusetts, United States, and world history
- B. Principles, ideals, institutions, and processes of American government and the Founding Documents of the United States
- C. Basic geographical principles and concepts
 - 1. Major physical features of the world
 - 2. Key concepts of geography and its effects on various peoples

5. Science

- A. Basic principles and concepts of physical and life sciences appropriate to the adult secondary curriculum
- B. Principles and procedures of scientific inquiry.

Professional ("Teaching") Standards

Which standards you will need to meet depends on your Route. For example, if you have five or more years of ABE teaching experience (Route 4), then you will have eight standards to meet. The following chart indicates which standards teachers have to meet by Route.

STANDARDS	REQUIRED FOR ROUTE:		
	1 & 2 <i>All required</i>	3	4
A. Understanding the Adult Learner:			
1. Incorporates theories of and research in adult development in designing effective instruction appropriate to the learning environment (e.g., in the classroom, workplace, homeless shelter).	X	X	X
2. Incorporates theories of and research in adult learning and in learning disabilities in designing effective instruction appropriate to the learning environment.	X	X	X

3. Uses knowledge of the factors that influence adult learners' participation and persistence in adult basic education programs to increase learner success.	X	X	
B. Diversity and Equity:			
1. Interacts equitably and responsibly with all learners.	X		
2. Provides learners with strategies and tools to collaborate with other learners, co-workers, and community members.	X		
3. Draws on the range of interests, needs, and approaches of learners in planning instruction.	X		
4. Promotes learner understanding of American civic culture, its underlying ideals, political principles, institutions, procedures, and processes in the design of curriculum.	X		
5. Uses, in appropriate contexts, instructional materials conveying a range of contributions that various immigrant and native groups have made to American society.	X		
C. Instructional Design & Teaching Approaches:			
1. Draws on the history, structure, purpose, and critical issues of adult basic education in planning instruction.	X	X	
2. Uses needs analyses in the design of instruction.	X		
3. Designs curriculum relevant to the experiences, interests, and goals of learners, the particular instructional setting, and the Department's adult basic education curriculum frameworks.	X	X	
4. Integrates appropriate use of technologies into the adult education teaching and learning process.	X	X	
5. Sets forth the learning objectives, instructional methods, and their rationale in the design of instruction and makes them available to colleagues and learners.	X	X	X
6. Uses a variety of instructional methods, techniques, and tools that facilitate adult learning.	X	X	X

7. Uses strategies that are effective for learners to develop and use critical thinking skills and to solve complex problems.	X	X	X
D. Learner Assessment and Evaluation:			
1. Creates and uses formal and informal assessments for the purpose of placing learners at the appropriate instructional level.	X	X	X
2. Creates and uses formative and summative assessments to evaluate learner progress.	X	X	X
3. Confers with colleagues, supervisors, and community resources when special assessments are required.	X	X	
4. Evaluates the effectiveness of instruction and modifies it based upon results and student feedback.	X	X	X
5. Uses data collection systems for program improvement.	X	X	
E. Facilitating the Adult Learning Environment:			
1. Communicates effectively and appropriately with learners.	X	X	
2. Creates an environment conducive to adult learning.	X	X	
3. Promotes learner involvement in community and societal issues.	X	X	
4. Refers adult learners with challenging life issues to the appropriate resources.	X	X	
5. Uses resources available to learners to develop employment readiness skills.	X	X	
6. Collaborates effectively with learners, colleagues, and relevant members of various educational settings (e.g., family literacy, corrections, or workplace education) and the community at large.	X	X	
7. Incorporates the principles of lifelong learning (e.g., modeling self-application methods) to prepare learners for continued education and training outside the classroom.	X		

F. Professionalism/Continuing Education:			
1. Reflects critically on the experiences of self and others, such as learners, colleagues, and supervisors.	X		
2. Develops goals for an individual professional development plan.	X	X	
<i>Total Number of Required Standards</i>	29	21	8

ATTACHMENT B. A SHORT HISTORY OF THE NEW ABE LICENSE

The new license is the result of three decades of nearly continuous effort by practitioners, staff developers, state department staff, and other stakeholders. Several task forces, committees, and other bodies worked hard on developing a process model; their efforts provided the foundation upon which a final effort was mounted. This final push came from the need for the Department of Education to provide a process that would allow ABE teachers with K-12 licenses to re-certify in the ABE field, thus applying their time and effort to learning that what their adult learners need for them to know and be able to do.

The new licensure process, approved by the Board of Education at their April 2001 meeting, was the responsibility of a statewide ABE Certification Advisory Committee, which reviewed issues, proposals, and products already articulated or developed in the field and more recently through work and focus groups. Discussions began with a careful review of prior work, which in sum reflected the ideas and responses of hundreds of Massachusetts practitioners ranging back for many years. Several key concerns stood out historically to guide the work undertaken by the Advisory Committee and the staff and work groups that served it. These concerns were the following.

The new ABE license must be meaningful. It must be able to stand beside other state and professional licenses with equal prestige and impact. It must not take the form of a lesser "endorsement" or be designed as an "add-on" to the state's K-12 system (as is the case in many other states). To be meaningful, the license must also require that to-be-certified teachers reach a high level of proficiency in knowledge, skills, and actual classroom practice, so that adult learners will genuinely benefit.

The licensure process must be fair. Many ABE teachers can boast of years of experience in ABE classrooms; many have devoted time and effort to serious staff development; many have earned K-12 licenses. A fair process would recognize the knowledge and skills that these individuals have already acquired. Over the years, a portfolio-based assessment approach has received the widest support.

The process must be accessible. Most ABE teachers in Massachusetts are part-time; many are underpaid for their work; many must stitch together several jobs to make ends meet. Therefore, the new process must allow teachers to use low-cost, variously scheduled, and variously designed options for teachers to acquire the knowledge and skills they will need to meet standards.

The process must be inclusive. The ABE field prides itself on valuing the knowledge and skills that adult learners have gained from life experience and by emphasizing that learning is a lifelong activity. To be consistent with these and other principles, an ABE licensure process must allow talented teachers who are non-traditionally educated and individuals for whom English is not their first language to undertake licensure. Alternatives to the usual baseline requirements and/or additional forms of support must make their ways into the process.

These key concerns have shaped the licensure process in several specific ways. First of all, standards were developed that are distinct to ABE teaching. Second, a flexible approach to indicating and acquiring required levels of proficiency was adopted, specifically portfolio based. Third, routes to licensure were developed that credit the knowledge and skills of experienced teachers. Fourth, a high degree of support has been built into the system in various forms--e.g., the development of no-cost training opportunities ("pilot courses"), and allowing non-degree-bearing teachers the option to enter accelerated Master's programs that do not require a bachelor's degree for enrollment. In addition, the Massachusetts Department of Education will continue efforts to broker the development of ABE-specific higher education courses as well as full teacher preparation programs.

Several practical considerations have also had an impact on the process. For one, many teachers work under Local Education Agencies, or LEAs, that require licensure. An ABE license that is not recognizably consistent with current K-12 licenses might be rejected by some LEAs as substandard. Realities like this one have prompted system planners to design an ABE license that remains true to the ABE field and the concerns of its members while aligning wherever possible with the state's K-12 system.

A second practical concern of high impact has been how to accommodate the shifting roles that so many ABE teachers take on. Fluctuations in funding and learners' needs, among other factors, often either force (or allow) teachers to shift from one teaching assignment to another (e.g., from math to ESOL) or from one staff role to another (e.g., teaching to counseling, or program management). A great many teachers juggle various roles and assignments at the same time. These realities have prompted system planners to design a *general* ABE license rather than several that reflect specializations (e.g., math, ESOL, or ASE/GED). The challenge has been to require meaningful levels of proficiency across all teaching areas without marking unreasonable demands.

**END OF HANDBOOK
(for now)**