

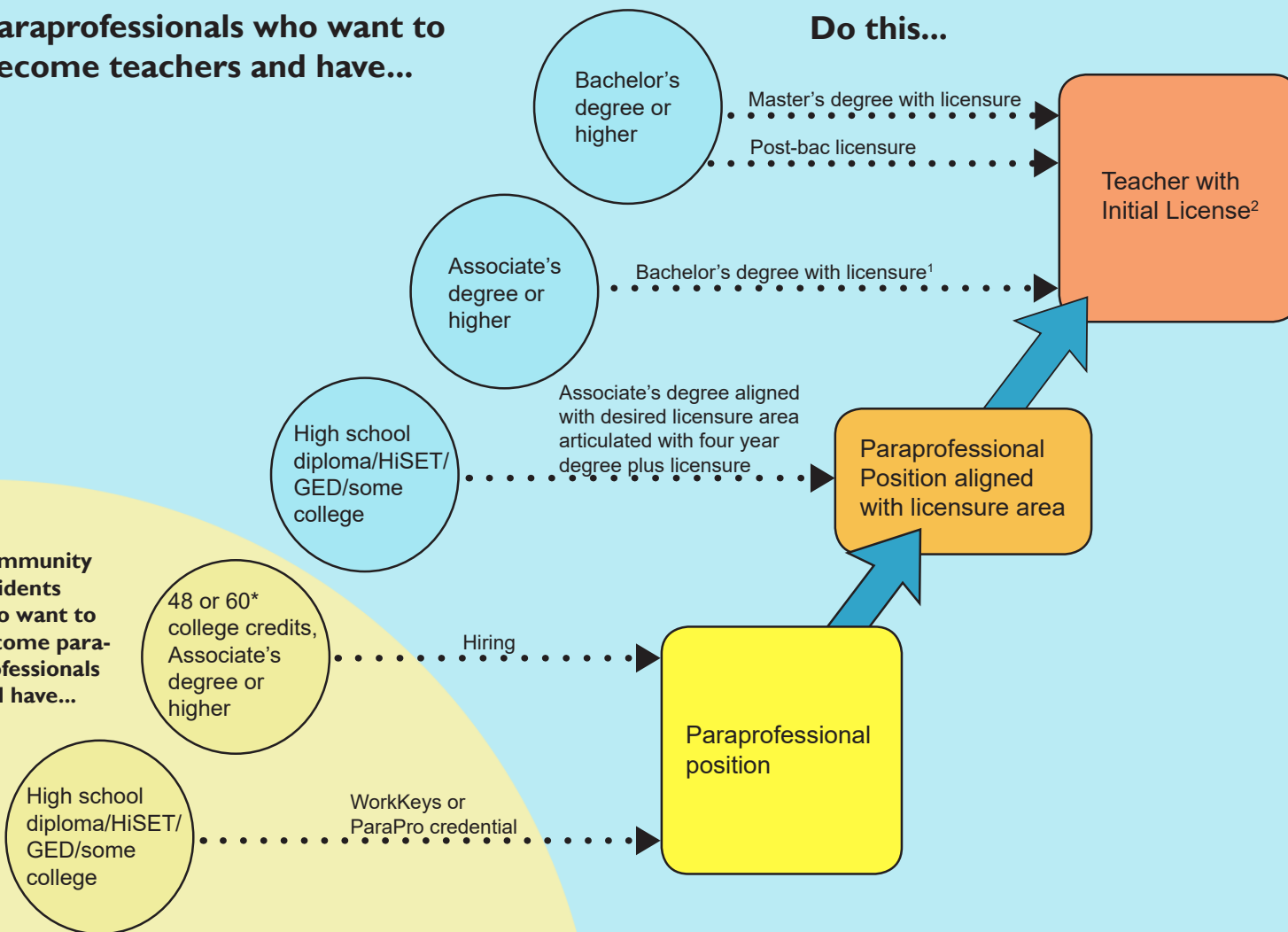
The Diverse Teacher Workforce Coalition of Western Massachusetts

Recommended Career Pathways to Initial License

Paraprofessionals who want to become teachers and have...

Community residents who want to become paraprofessionals and have...

Do this...



*Required number of credits varies by district

Core Strategic Supports

Comprehensive advising:

- Create effective communication with paraprofessionals
- Assess needs and skills
- Determine appropriate degree program and needed academic supports
- Assemble funding plan
- Identify needed social supports and services

Mentoring:

- Identify promising paraprofessionals
- Encourage through the pathway
- Continues through year 3 of teaching

MTEL support:

Intensive MTEL preparation program, including:

- Testing
- Feedback
- Tutoring
- Targeted skills development

Fund test preparation and testing fees until tests passed

Academic supports:

- ESL courses
- College-level literacy and math skills development
- Study skills

7 design features for support and success:

- Cohort of paraprofessionals works together toward license
- Paraprofessionals assigned to positions aligned with license area
- Practicum integrated with paraprofessional's position and schedule
- Courses accessible in location and time
- Academic skills development embedded into school or district-based professional development opportunities
- Pre-practice observation exchange among partner schools/districts
- Release time to study during work hours and to do pre-practice observation

Systems change:

- Training for mentors in undoing racism and supporting people of color
- Competency development in undoing racism and cultural awareness for all district personnel
- Visible administrator support for equity and diversity

Notes

Footnote 1: For the quickest path to teaching, we recommend that associate's degree-holders enroll in bachelor's programs that include licensure. They may, alternatively, pursue a bachelor's degree that does not have a teacher licensure option embedded within it, which may be appropriate if they need to obtain a particular four-year degree or attend an institution that does not offer licensure. In that case, once they have received a bachelor's degree, they would move next to a post-bac licensure program or obtain a master's degree with licensure to obtain the initial license and enter a teaching position.

Footnote 2: The Initial License is valid for five years of employment, with possible renewal for an additional five years. After three years of employment, in most districts teachers attain "professional status," a designation in Massachusetts law signifying that a school employee has served a certain probationary period and has thereby obtained some measure of job security. For long term service, a teacher must obtain a Professional License.

Glossary of Terms

Associate degree (or associate's degree): An undergraduate academic degree awarded by colleges and universities upon completion of a course of study intended to usually last two years. It is considered to be a higher level of education than a high school diploma or GED.

Bachelor's degree: A Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts is a degree from an accredited college or university resulting from the completion of an undergraduate program in which the student has satisfactorily met the requirements for a major in one or more academic subjects in the arts or sciences or for a major appropriate to the instructional field of a teaching license sought

Board: The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

ESL: English as a second language

GED: General Educational Development (GED) tests are a group of four subject tests which, when passed, provide certification that the test taker has United States high school-level academic skills.

HiSET: The HiSET® exam is one of three tests U.S. states and territories use to measure

high school equivalency skills. The General Educational Development (GED®) and the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC™) are the other options. Some states offer only one of these tests. Other states offer all three tests and let you decide which one you wish to take.

Initial License: An educator license issued to a person who has completed a bachelor's degree, passed the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure, completed an educator preparation program approved by the Commissioner, and met other eligibility requirements established by the MA Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board). The Initial license is valid for five years of employment and may be extended at the discretion of the Commissioner for an additional five years.

License/Licensure: Any credential issued to an educator to be professionally qualified to teach.

Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL): Examinations required of all candidates for Provisional or Initial license. The MTEL examines communication and literacy skills and subject matter knowledge appropriate to the license sought.

Master's degree with licensure: Master's degree programs containing courses necessary for licensure within them and award a master's degree upon completion, available to bachelor's degree holders, usually requiring 36-40 credits for a single license area. Some programs offer dual license or add-on license opportunities for additional credits.

Mentor teacher: Describes a variety of roles an experienced teacher may play in the process of pre-service or new teacher training, supervision, and/or induction. In our recommendations, we use the term to mean a master teacher specially trained and rewarded to identify promising black and Latino paraprofessionals and to formally support them through the licensure process and first three years of teaching. The Board additionally requires a mentor to have at least three full years of experience under an Initial or Professional license and training to assist a beginning educator in the same professional role with his or her professional responsibilities and general school/district procedures.

Paraprofessional: Paraprofessional educators or paraprofessionals, sometimes known as instructional aides, teaching aides, or educational support personnel, perform teaching-related roles within a school, usually responsible for

specialized or concentrated assistance to students. The term, para, refers to any person who assists in a profession but is not fully professionally licensed, e.g., para-legal.

"Paraprofessionals who provide instructional support," includes those who (1) provide one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher, (2) assist with classroom management, such as by organizing instructional materials, (3) provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory, (4) conduct parental involvement activities, (5) provide instructional support in a library or media center, (6) act as a translator, or (7) provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher.

ParaPro: The ParaPro Assessment is a general aptitude test that is required in many states for paraprofessional certification. This test is administered in participating school districts, institutions and education service centers.

Post-bac licensure: Program leading to licensure without obtaining a master's degree, available to bachelor's degree holders, usually requiring fewer credits to complete than a master's; number of credits, sequence and time to completion vary by program.

Practicum: A field-based (school teaching) experience for pre-service teachers within an approved educator preparation program in the role and at the level of the license sought, during which a candidate's performance is supervised jointly by the educator preparation program and the supervising practitioner and evaluated in a Performance Assessment for Initial License. An equivalent to a practicum may include an apprenticeship, the initial five-month period of service as teacher or administrator of record under a Provisional license, or others approved by the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Pre-practicum: Early field-based (school) experiences for pre-service teachers, integrated into courses or seminars that address the Professional Standards for Teachers established by the Board, in accordance with the Pre-practicum Guidelines. For candidates serving an apprenticeship or employed as educator of record, these experiences may occur simultaneously with the practicum or practicum equivalent.

Professional development (PD): Training and education experiences offered to employed educational staff, usually as part of a required or optional program of job support and enhancement. May carry college credit or award professional development points needed for re-licensure or professional grade advancement.

Professional License: An educator's license issued to a person who has met the requirements for an Initial license in that field and met the additional requirements established by the Board. The Professional license is valid for five years and renewable for additional five-year terms as set forth.

Professional teacher status within a district: A teacher who has served in the public schools of a school district for the three previous consecutive school years is considered a teacher, and shall be entitled to professional teacher status.

Program completer: An individual who has completed all the requirements of a state-approved preparation program (i.e., instruction/coursework and practicum), regardless of whether that person has taken and passed state tests or assessments for licensure or has been endorsed for licensure by the program or its sponsoring organization.

Supervising teacher or supervising practitioner: An experienced teacher assigned by a school district and accepted by an educator preparation program to supervising pre-service teachers completing a practicum in their classroom. The role of the supervising teacher generally involves observing, providing feedback, demonstrating teaching strategies, advising, providing opportunities for varied teaching experiences, and supervising and evaluating the progress of the pre-service teacher.

WorkKeys: The WorkKeys is a skills assessment test for those who are interested in or are currently working for employers that place an emphasis on the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), which is the credential achieved by those who successfully complete the the three components of the exam: applied mathematics, locating information, and reading for information. This test is one of two tests accepted by many school districts as a qualification for a paraprofessional position. The other is the ParaPro Assessment.