



MASSACHUSETTS ADVOCATES *for* CHILDREN

***An Act to Improve Augmentative and Alternative Communications and
Opportunities for Children with Disabilities HD 547***

Lead sponsor: Rep. Barber

This legislation amends teacher license regulations to require that all teachers who apply for an initial Massachusetts educator license receive instruction on the appropriate use of augmentative and alternative communication devices for children with disabilities who are nonverbal or who have limited speech. This bill will enhance the lives of thousands of children who are nonverbal or have limited speech, including children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, cerebral palsy, and acquired brain injury who rely on augmentative and alternative communication methods to interact with others. This legislation builds upon Chapter 299 of the Acts of 2010, which required only certain special education teachers to have training on the appropriate use of augmentative and alternative communication. This bill will help improve outcomes for students as well as reduce costs for school districts by facilitating inclusion and supporting placement of children with disabilities who are nonverbal or who have limited speech in the least restrictive environment.