

SENATE No. 2496

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)

SENATE, July 19, 2021.

The committee on Education to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 377) of Patrick M. O'Connor, Jack Patrick Lewis, Bruce E. Tarr, Thomas M. Stanley and other members of the General Court for legislation to improve augmentative and alternative communication opportunities for children with disabilities, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2496) ought to pass.

For the committee,
Jason M. Lewis

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act to improve augmentative and alternative communication opportunities for children with disabilities.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018 Official Edition, is hereby
2 amended by inserting at the end of section 38G the following paragraph:- The board shall make
3 available to all regular education teachers an optional program designed to train and prepare
4 teachers in the use of augmentative and alternative communication for students who are
5 nonverbal or who have limited speech. The program shall include coursework in augmentative
6 and alternative communication and practical experience in the classroom with children who use
7 augmentative and alternative communication, including but not limited to, children with Autism
8 Spectrum Disorder, acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy and other disabilities that result in
9 limited or no verbal abilities; provided that practical experience shall include experience in the
10 classroom with students who use augmentative and alternative communication, and if classroom
11 settings are unavailable, practical experience may include other types of interactions with and
12 observations of individuals who use augmentative and alternative communication. The board

- 13 may require that individual professional development plans required pursuant to this section
- 14 address the learning needs of students who are nonverbal or have limited speech.