

By: Representative McCarty

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1669

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-21-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
2 REVISE THE QUALIFICATION FOR AN ASSISTANT TEACHER TO INCLUDE A  
3 HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA/GED AND A CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE  
4 CREDENTIAL, A MONTESSORI CERTIFICATION OR AN EQUIVALENT  
5 CERTIFICATION; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

7 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-21-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
8 amended as follows:

9 37-21-3. (1) No person shall act in the capacity of master  
10 teacher, teacher or assistant teacher in any federal or  
11 state-funded program of early childhood education or "Head Start,"  
12 or perform any of the functions, duties or powers of the same,  
13 unless that person shall be qualified in the following manner:

14 (a) A master teacher or any other employee or  
15 consultant receiving a salary or fee equivalent to that of a  
16 master teacher shall meet the qualifications of a teacher in this  
17 section, including the requirement that a teacher may be required  
18 to hold a state teaching license by the State Department of  
19 Education, and have demonstrated effectiveness as an early



20 childhood educator. Effectiveness as an early childhood educator  
21 may be demonstrated by a rating of highly effective on a state  
22 evaluation of teaching, if available, or with evidence that the  
23 teacher has a record of raising the achievement outcomes of  
24 prekindergarten students.

25 (b) A teacher shall possess a bachelor's degree in  
26 early childhood education, child development \* \* \* or an  
27 equivalent field. A teacher may also possess a bachelor's degree  
28 in any field as well as have at least twelve (12) credit hours of  
29 coursework in early childhood education, child development, or an  
30 equivalent field approved by an institution granting a bachelor's  
31 degree in the early childhood education, child development \* \* \*  
32 or an equivalent field; or have a bachelor's degree in any field  
33 as well as have completed a specialized early childhood training  
34 program deemed equivalent by the State Department of Education to  
35 twelve (12) hours of approved coursework.

36 (c) An assistant teacher shall possess an associate's  
37 degree in early childhood education, child development \* \* \* or an  
38 equivalent field; or an associate's degree in any field and a  
39 Child Development Associate credential, a Montessori  
40 certification \* \* \* or an equivalent certification; or a high  
41 school diploma/GED and a Child Development Associate credential, a  
42 Montessori certification or an equivalent certification. Public  
43 school assistant teachers in the voluntary prekindergarten program  
44 established by the Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013 may be



45 required by the State Department of Education to meet the  
46 definition of a highly qualified paraprofessional in addition to  
47 these requirements.

48 The State Department of Education shall adopt any necessary  
49 rules, policies or procedures to implement this section.

50 (2) Persons employed as a teacher, assistant teacher or in  
51 any other capacity in a prekindergarten or early childhood  
52 education program in a charter school authorized by the  
53 Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board are exempt from the  
54 requirements of this section.

55 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
56 and after July 1, 2024.

