

By: Senator(s) DeBar, Norwood, Brumfield,  
Jordan

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2407

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-21-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
2 REVISE THE EDUCATIONAL AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS OF ASSISTANT  
3 TEACHERS; TO PROVIDE THAT ASSISTANT TEACHERS MAY POSSESS A HIGH  
4 SCHOOL DIPLOMA/GED AND A CHILD DEVELOPMENT CREDENTIAL, A  
5 MONTESSORI CERTIFICATION OR AN EQUIVALENT CERTIFICATION; AND FOR  
6 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

