

By: Representative McCarty

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1142

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-21-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 CLARIFY THE QUALIFICATIONS EXEMPTION FOR PERSONS EMPLOYED
3 PREKINDERGARTEN OR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM, NOT GRANTED
4 BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, IN A CHARTER SCHOOL
5 AUTHORIZED BY THE MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD; AND
6 FOR 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 certification
41 or an equivalent certification; or a high school diploma/GED and a
42 Child Development Associate credential, a Montessori certification
43 or an equivalent certification. Public school assistant teachers
44 in the voluntary prekindergarten program established by the Early
45 Learning Collaborative Act of 2013 may be required by the State



46 Department of Education to meet the definition of a highly
47 qualified paraprofessional in addition to 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, not granted by the State Department of
53 Education, in a charter school authorized by the Mississippi
54 Charter School Authorizer Board are exempt from the requirements
55 of this section.

56 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
57 and after July 1, 2025.

