

By: Senator(s) DeBar

To: Education

## SENATE BILL NO. 2180

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-21-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
2 LIMIT THE EXEMPTION OF CHARTER SCHOOL TEACHERS FROM THE SECTION'S  
3 EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS TO THOSE TEACHERS EMPLOYED  
4 IN PROGRAMS NOT RECEIVING GRANT FUNDING FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT  
5 OF EDUCATION; 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 equivalent  
27 field. A teacher may also possess a bachelor's degree in any  
28 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 or an  
32 equivalent field; or have a bachelor's degree in any field as well  
33 as have completed a specialized early childhood training program  
34 deemed equivalent by the State Department of Education to twelve  
35 (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 certification  
40 or an equivalent certification; or a high school diploma/GED and a  
41 Child Development Associate credential, a Montessori certification  
42 or an equivalent certification. Public school assistant teachers  
43 in the voluntary prekindergarten program established by the Early  
44 Learning Collaborative Act of 2013 may be required by the State



Department of Education to meet the definition of a highly  
qualified paraprofessional in addition to these requirements.

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

(2) Persons employed as a teacher, assistant teacher or in  
any other capacity in a prekindergarten or early childhood  
education program in a charter school authorized by the  
Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board are exempt from the  
requirements of this section, if the program does not receive  
grant funding from the State Department of Education.

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

