

I am writing in support of SB 912 that expands the definition of a Qualified Staff Member in funded classrooms to include staff with a Bachelors in a related field and 12 Early childhood credits.

As a School Readiness coordinator in Western CT, our SR programs cannot find staff with a Bachelors in ECE since there are no colleges or universities in our area of the state that offer this degree. Many staff have an Associates in ECE from Naugatuck Valley Community College, and then a Bachelors in Psychology, Elementary Ed, or other social service field from Western CT State University. Others have four year degrees from WCSU. These teachers are highly qualified and are excellent teachers.

Additional points to note: Staff may need time to take the 4 required courses in ECE, so accepting the degreed staff without giving them time to take the four classes is a hardship. Can the legislation read a Bachelors plus 12 ECE credits within the first year of employment? This way staff have time to achieve the new requirement.

Also , this requirement should be for all classrooms that have state or federal funding- ie School Readiness, Head Start, Smart Start, Child Day Care Centers- not for the full program. If a program only receives funding for their preschool classrooms, it is unfair to require that program to have a Bachelors teacher in the Infant and Toddler classrooms where there isn't any state funding to support the additional salaries required of a Bachelor level teacher.