

RB 5450 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STAFF QUALIFICATIONS REQUIREMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

Dear Representative Fleischman, Senator Slossberg, Senator Boucher, Representative Lavielle and distinguished members of the Education Committee, thank you for reviewing this written testimony on the staff qualifications requirement for early childhood education.

My name is Deborah Adams and my comments reflect my experience as a former preschool teacher, former program director of a School Readiness funded program, and former higher education faculty member.

I am concerned that the basis of the proposed legislation is market driven and does not reflect what is in the best interest of children and families nor the well-being of the early childhood workforce. Replacing the bachelor level requirement with an associate level degree is a step backward when Connecticut has come so far in recognizing that a greater depth and breadth of knowledge and skills are needed to meet the diverse needs of all children and families.

I recommend a balanced approach to revisions of this legislation that holds the goal of the bachelor's degree while holding accountable the systems that created state funding programming and to provide the supports necessary for the teaching staff and programs to reach the high-level of quality expected.

- Continue to phase in the bachelor's degree specific to early childhood with perhaps different percentages than 50%/50% as outlined in the original legislation.
- Extend the dates if necessary, but cautiously, as continually extending the dates sends a poor message to the field. Many teachers have met the 2021 bachelor's level and deserve recognition for this accomplishment.
- Engage stakeholders to examine a compensation strategy that is phased in for programs that comply with all program standards. This could be accomplished by examining the possibilities of integrating funding streams and creating one set of standards; one program, not 5.
- Require the Board of Regents and the Office of Higher Education to examine their early childhood programs from a marketing perspective. Conduct a needs assessment and deliver courses to meet the needs in locations and at the time of day when working students can be successful.
- Examine the national context for this work. Much can be learned from other states and the Institute of Medicine's Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce report and recent release of a Financing the Early Childhood Workforce report.

Again, an examination of the issues to produce a balanced approach will benefit children, families, the workforce and programs overall. Thank you for your time and commitment toward providing high quality early care and education and to the well-being of the workforce that serves children and families.

Sincerely,

Deborah Adams

dsadams@snet.net

Former preschool teacher

Former School Readiness funded program Director

Former Higher Education Faculty Member