

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 19-34—sSB 932
Education Committee

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE STAFF QUALIFICATIONS
REQUIREMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS**

SUMMARY: Under prior law, state-funded early childhood education program staff members were required to meet increasingly advanced levels of educational attainment, which were phased in over several years. This act gives them more time to comply with the requirements by (1) extending the existing requirements and delaying implementation of each phase by two years and (2) adding an additional phase.

By law, each phase has a range of acceptable qualifications, including minimum qualification for each. The act broadens acceptable requirements under certain conditions.

Finally, the act applies the existing staffing requirements, which prior law limited to school readiness classrooms, to all programs accepting state funds. This conforms the existing requirements' applicability to those of the other phases.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

DELAY IN INCREASED STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

The act extends the existing requirements for two years, and it correspondingly delays the phase one starting date by two years. It also (1) creates an additional phase after phase one for a total of three phases and (2) correspondingly delays the final phase. The dates for the phases are shown in the table below.

Changes to Qualification Requirements Schedule

	<i>Existing Requirements</i>	<i>Phase 1</i>	<i>Phase 2</i>	<i>Phase 3</i>
<i>Prior Law</i>	Through June 30, 2020	July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2023	N/A	On and after July 1, 2023
<i>The Act</i>	Through June 30, 2022	July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2025	July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2029	On and after July 1, 2029

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS FOR EACH PHASE

Existing Requirements

Under prior law, the existing requirements apply only to school readiness

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

classrooms; the requirements for the remaining phases apply more broadly to all early childhood education programs accepting state funds. The act applies to all programs accepting state funds, thus making the existing requirements conform to the other phases.

By law, each classroom must have at least one staff member who meets one of the following qualifications:

1. (a) an early childhood development associate credential or equivalent issued by an organization approved by the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) commissioner and (b) at least 12 credits in early childhood education or child development from a regionally accredited higher education institution that is also accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) or the Office of Higher Education (OHE),
2. an associate or bachelor's degree with at least 12 credits in early childhood education or child development from such a higher education institution,
3. a State Board of Education (SBE)-issued teaching certificate with an endorsement in early childhood education or special education, or
4. an associate or bachelor's degree with an early childhood education concentration from a regionally accredited higher education institution.

Either the OEC commissioner or the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) president, in consultation with the commissioner, determines whether a classroom teacher has fulfilled the 12-credit minimum for the above requirements.

First Phase

Under prior law, for the first phase at least 50% of state-funded early childhood education primary classroom teachers must meet one of the following six standards:

1. hold an SBE-issued teaching certificate with an endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special education;
2. have been issued an early childhood teacher credential;
3. hold at least a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education from a regionally accredited higher education institution;
4. have been employed by a state-funded early childhood program on or before June 30, 2015, and hold either (a) a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development or (b) a bachelor's degree in another subject area and at least 12 credits in early childhood education or child development;
5. hold an associate or bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development, or an associate or bachelor's degree that is not in early childhood education and at least 12 credits in early childhood education or child development from a regionally accredited higher education institution, subject to OEC review and assessment; or
6. have been employed by the same state-funded early childhood program since 1995 and hold an associate degree with at least 12 credits in early childhood education or child development, as determined by the OEC

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

commissioner or CSCU president, from a higher education institution that is accredited by BOR or OHE and regionally accredited (these individuals are grandfathered into the staff qualification requirements only until June 30, 2025).

The act eliminates the bachelor's degree standard (number 3 above) and instead establishes an associate degree as an acceptable standard.

Under prior law, the remaining classroom teachers must hold an associate degree with an early childhood concentration from a regionally accredited higher education institution. The act instead allows an early childhood development associate credential or equivalent issued by an organization approved by the OEC commissioner and at least 12 credits in early childhood education or child development from a higher education institution that is accredited by BOR or OHE and regionally accredited.

Second Phase

Under the act, the second phase qualifications are similar to the first phase under prior law. Half of the primary teachers must meet one of the six standards listed above (including a bachelor's degree for number 3). The remaining teachers must hold an associate degree (as was required under the first phase in the prior law) or have been issued an early childhood teacher credential.

Third Phase

By law, the final phase requires that 100% of primary classroom teachers, instead of 50%, meet one of the six standards listed above under the first phase. (The act delays this phase's implementation until July 1, 2029.)