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## OLR Bill Analysis

### sSB 932

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

#### **SUMMARY**

Under current law, state-funded early childhood education program staff must meet an increasingly advanced level of educational attainment over the next several years in three phases. This bill gives staff more time to comply with the requirements by (1) adding an additional phase and (2) extending the first phase and delaying implementation of the remaining phases by two years. Each phase of increased qualifications has a range of acceptable qualifications and within each range there is always a minimum level. The bill broadens acceptable requirements under certain conditions.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

#### **DELAY IN INCREASED STAFF QUALIFICATIONS**

The bill extends the ending date of phase one, and delays the starting dates of phases two and three, by two years. It also creates an additional phase for a new total of four phases. The dates for the phases are shown in table 1. The specifics of each phase of qualifications follow below that.

**Table 1: Changes to Qualification Requirements Schedule**

<b><i>Phase</i></b>	<b><i>Current Law</i></b>	<b><i>The Bill</i></b>
One	Through June 30, 2020	Through June 30, 2022
Two	July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2023	July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2025
Three	On and after July 1, 2023	July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2029
Four	There is none	On and after July 1, 2029

## **STAFF QUALIFICATIONS SPECIFICS**

### ***First Phase***

The current requirements for the first phase apply only to school readiness classrooms; the requirements for the remaining phases apply to all early childhood education programs accepting state funds. The bill applies to all programs accepting state funds, thus making the first phase conform to the other phases.

By law, under the first phase, 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 OEC commissioner and (b) at least 12 credits in early childhood education or child development from a higher education institution that is accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) or the Office of Higher Education (OHE) and regionally accredited,
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.

### ***Second Phase***

Under current law, for the second 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 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 bill eliminates the bachelor's degree standard (number 3 above) and instead establishes an associate degree as an acceptable standard.

Under current law, the remaining classroom teachers must hold an associate degree with an early childhood concentration from a regionally accredited higher education institution. The bill 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.

***Third Phase***

Under the bill, the third phase qualifications are similar to the second phase under current law. Under the bill, 50% 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 required under the second phase in the current law) or have been issued an early childhood teacher credential.

***Fourth Phase***

The final phase requires that 100% of primary classroom teachers, not 50%, meet one of the six standards listed above under the second phase. This is the same level of qualifications as under current law for the third phase.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 34 Nay 0 (03/15/2019)