



## 103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2023 and 2024

HB3328

Introduced 2/17/2023, by Rep. Jackie Haas

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

110 ILCS 805/3-80 new

Amends the Public Community College Act. Allows the board of trustees of a community college district to establish and offer a baccalaureate-level early childhood education program and confer a bachelor of applied science degree in early childhood education and a Professional Educator License with endorsements in early childhood education and early childhood special education under certain conditions. Provides for an application for approval from the Illinois Community College Board. Sets forth college requirements and prohibitions. Provides that a candidate for educator licensure must successfully complete applicable testing requirements prior to the issuance of an educator license and any endorsements. Provides for a statewide evaluation of such programs. To prevent the duplication of services and programs, requires the board of trustees to describe how the proposed program fills a gap in the early childhood education degree programs offered by other institutions of higher education. Allows other institutions of higher education to comment on the proposed program, and offers the community college the opportunity to respond to the comments. Prohibits the Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board from authorizing a community college baccalaureate-level degree program in any additional field of study prior to the publication of the statewide evaluation of community college baccalaureate programs in early childhood education. Makes other changes.

LRB103 05266 RJT 50284 b

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Public Community College Act is amended by  
5 adding Section 3-80 as follows:

6 (110 ILCS 805/3-80 new)

7 Sec. 3-80. Early childhood education bachelor of applied  
8 science degree.

9 (a) Illinois faces a shortage of qualified early childhood  
10 educators, with high vacancy rates in child care centers,  
11 community-based early childhood programs, and school-based  
12 classrooms across the State. Beyond addressing the current  
13 need, growing federal and State commitments to expanding early  
14 childhood services, including the recommendations put forth in  
15 the Governor's Illinois Commission on Equitable Early  
16 Childhood Education and Care Funding report in March 2021,  
17 suggests that Illinois must be prepared to meet the growing  
18 demand for a qualified workforce to deliver these services in  
19 the coming years.

20 To meet this growing demand, the Illinois higher education  
21 system must support our incumbent early childhood workforce  
22 through credential and degree attainment. The workforce is  
23 overwhelmingly made up of women and women of color, and many

1 are balancing full-time employment, family needs, and other  
2 responsibilities. Often, traditional bachelor degree programs  
3 are not accessible to place-bound, full-time working parents.

4 In Illinois, there is a history of partnership among early  
5 childhood providers, stakeholders, and higher education to  
6 identify workforce needs and strategies to help promote access  
7 to higher education and degree completion among the workforce.  
8 Illinois institutions of higher education have taken steps to  
9 demonstrate a commitment to the early childhood field, as well  
10 as underserved student populations. Hybrid program models,  
11 cohort program models, and scholarships and financial  
12 incentives for students help to promote access to many early  
13 childhood degree programs in Illinois.

14 Over the past 2 decades, Illinois has attempted numerous  
15 strategies to develop and support partnerships among  
16 institutions of higher education that are focused on the  
17 State's early childhood workforce. Through these broader  
18 initiatives, as well as many individual local partnerships,  
19 community colleges and public and private universities have  
20 worked to implement articulation agreements, credit transfer  
21 agreements, and program delivery models, although not all  
22 partnerships have been maintained. Such initiatives include  
23 all of the following:

24 (1) In 2004, Illinois developed the Associate of Arts  
25 in Teaching (AAT) degree model to promote articulation  
26 among 2-year and 4-year institutions of higher education.

1 However, with the challenges in credit transfer  
2 contributing to the limited viability and success of the  
3 degree model, the State Board stopped approving the AAT  
4 degree model and has worked across the higher education  
5 system to discontinue these programs.

6 (2) In 2013, Illinois dedicated federal Race to the  
7 Top funds to create the Early Childhood Educator  
8 Preparation Program Innovation (EPPI) Grant program. Among  
9 other goals, the EPPI Grant program aimed to foster the  
10 creation or further development of partnerships between  
11 2-year and 4-year preparation programs between  
12 institutions of higher education, promote articulation and  
13 alignment of curriculum between 2-year and 4-year  
14 programs, and support early childhood educator preparation  
15 programs in designing curriculum to incorporate new State  
16 standards and program requirements. While the EPPI Grant  
17 program led to some effective partnerships that still  
18 remain intact today, program evaluations found varying  
19 levels of partnership and that, in many cases, successful  
20 agreements were contingent upon individual relationships  
21 or individual leaders within institutions.

22 (3) Through the Illinois Articulation Initiative  
23 (IAI), there are 3 early childhood courses approved for  
24 articulation among participating institutions. More than  
25 100 Illinois colleges and universities participate in the  
26 IAI, though challenges with inconsistent participation and

1 recognition do exist.

2 (4) Most recently, the creation of competency-based  
3 education components for early childhood education will  
4 help ensure that higher education and credential programs  
5 are designed to prepare early childhood educators to  
6 demonstrate the same critical core competencies. The  
7 emphasis on core competencies could improve educator  
8 preparedness and could ease credit transfer and  
9 articulation processes moving forward.

10 These programs and partnerships continue to benefit many  
11 early childhood education students across the State, but  
12 overall, these efforts have not produced adequate early  
13 childhood degrees to meet the demands in the field. These  
14 types of initiatives are highly contingent upon relationships  
15 and partnerships between specific institutions and are often  
16 impacted if an institution experiences turnover or program  
17 changes. Furthermore, these partnerships often do not address  
18 the geographic, structural, and economic barriers the  
19 incumbent workforce often faces in accessing bachelor's degree  
20 programs while working full-time in the field. These ongoing  
21 challenges are not new and have been noted in the development  
22 of these previous efforts.

23 As noted in the provisions of Public Act 101-654, the  
24 General Assembly recognizes the critical role of the early  
25 childhood workforce and, in response to challenges, including  
26 staffing shortages and barriers to higher education, calls

1 upon the Board of Higher Education to better meet the needs of  
2 the early childhood workforce.

3 Illinois must seek evidence-based, systemic solutions to  
4 expand access to and completion of early childhood bachelor  
5 degrees, including the community college baccalaureate degree  
6 pathway pursuant to this Section. This pathway would  
7 complement existing and future innovations in higher  
8 education, including potential statewide consortium efforts,  
9 all aimed at expanding access to degree pathways and  
10 completion.

11 (b) A board of trustees may establish and offer a  
12 baccalaureate-level early childhood education program and  
13 confer a bachelor of applied science degree in early childhood  
14 education and a Professional Educator License with  
15 endorsements in early childhood education and early childhood  
16 special education if all of the following conditions are met:

17 (1) The board meets all of the requirements as set  
18 forth in subsection (c) of this Section and has been  
19 approved by the State Board to offer a bachelor of applied  
20 science degree in early childhood education.

21 (2) After the program has been approved by the State  
22 Board, the Board of Higher Education shall consider the  
23 program for approval in a manner consistent with new  
24 bachelor's degree programs at public and private  
25 universities in this State.

26 (3) The program has been approved by the State Board

1 of Education, pursuant to Section 21B-105 of the School  
2 Code and 23 Ill. Adm. Code 25.Subpart C.

3 (4) The board has identified and documented, in  
4 writing, unmet early childhood workforce needs. The State  
5 Board may develop guidance on documentation, which may  
6 include traditional labor market data, employer surveys,  
7 community needs assessments, or additional available data  
8 sources. The board shall publish on its Internet website  
9 and make publicly available the documentation and shall  
10 present the documentation to the State Board.

11 (5) The board meets all applicable accreditation  
12 requirements of the Higher Learning Commission.

13 (6) The State Board has declared a shortage pursuant  
14 to subsection (k).

15 (c) The board shall demonstrate that the community college  
16 district has the expertise, resources, and student interest to  
17 establish and offer a baccalaureate-level early childhood  
18 education program. An application for approval from the State  
19 Board shall include, but is not limited to, all of the  
20 following:

21 (1) The board shall describe the labor market need as  
22 specified in paragraph (4) of subsection (b) of this  
23 Section.

24 (2) The board shall describe the program's purpose,  
25 its target population, related occupations, and career  
26 paths. The board shall describe how the program aligns

1 with any relevant State or local strategic plans and  
2 initiatives.

3 (3) To prevent the duplication of services and  
4 programs, the board shall describe how the proposed  
5 program fills a gap in the early childhood education  
6 degree programs offered by other institutions of higher  
7 education by addressing all of the following:

8 (A) If there are any existing early childhood  
9 education bachelor degree programs offered in the  
10 surrounding region.

11 (B) If a similar bachelor's degree program is  
12 offered in the surrounding region, how the proposed  
13 program would complement rather than duplicate any  
14 existing programs in order to meet additional, unmet  
15 needs.

16 (C) If there are any current partnerships with  
17 other institutions of higher education created to  
18 promote access and transfer for early childhood  
19 education students. If there are current partnerships  
20 with other institutions of higher education, the board  
21 shall describe the partnership and how the proposed  
22 program will complement the efforts of its existing  
23 partnerships and transfer agreements.

24 (D) How the proposed program will fill a gap in  
25 services for the target population. This may include  
26 program design, student support, affordability, or



1           other relevant information.

2           (4) The board shall demonstrate student interest in  
3 the proposed program.

4           (5) The board shall demonstrate that the community  
5 college has developed quality curricula that align with  
6 federal, State, and local requirements and will prepare  
7 graduates with the appropriate level of skill to meet  
8 their educational goals.

9           (6) The board shall verify the community college has  
10 the fiscal resources in place or has budgeted for  
11 financial support for the program in a cost-effective  
12 manner.

13           (7) The board shall (i) identify and document the  
14 faculty available at the community college for teaching  
15 the degree program and, if applicable, (ii) provide proof  
16 of an agreement that the board has entered into with an  
17 institution of higher education to share faculty to  
18 support the degree program at the community college. The  
19 board shall include the number of full-time faculty  
20 anticipated to teach in the program and a description of  
21 their qualifications (including highest degree earned),  
22 teaching experience, professional experience, and licenses  
23 held. The board must also indicate how faculty are to be  
24 evaluated.

25           (d) All institutions of higher education that offer  
26 associate degrees or bachelor's degrees shall be informed of

1 the proposed community college baccalaureate-level degree  
2 program and shall be given the opportunity to comment on the  
3 proposed program. The State Board shall develop the process  
4 for notification and comment regarding the proposed program.  
5 This process shall allow for the community college proposing  
6 the program to be provided with the comments received. The  
7 community college shall be given the opportunity to respond to  
8 comments by providing clarification or proposed changes to the  
9 State Board and the Board of Higher Education.

10 (e) A community college district is prohibited from using  
11 semester credit hours generated in a baccalaureate degree  
12 program for grants received pursuant to Section 2-16.02 of  
13 this Act.

14 (f) A community college offering educator licensure must  
15 establish standards and procedures for the denial of  
16 recommendation for licensure, in compliance with Section  
17 21B-95 of the School Code.

18 (g) A candidate for educator licensure must successfully  
19 complete the applicable testing requirements under Section  
20 21B-30 of the School Code and any corresponding administrative  
21 rules prior to the issuance of an educator license and any  
22 endorsements.

23 (h) The community college district shall offer and  
24 maintain an associate degree in early childhood education or a  
25 related field.

26 (i) The State Board shall conduct a statewide evaluation

1 of all programs established under this Section. The results of  
2 the evaluation shall be reported, in writing, on or before  
3 July 1, 2030 to all of the following:

4 (1) The Board of Higher Education.

5 (2) The Speaker of the House of Representatives.

6 (3) The Minority Leader of the House of  
7 Representatives.

8 (4) The President of the Senate.

9 (5) The Minority Leader of the Senate.

10 (6) The Governor's Office of Management and Budget.

11 The evaluation shall include, but is not limited to, all  
12 of the following:

13 (A) The number of new programs established under this  
14 Section, including information identifying applicants,  
15 admissions, enrollments, demographic characteristics of  
16 students, and degree recipients.

17 (B) The extent to which the programs established under  
18 this Section fulfill identified workforce needs.

19 (C) Which community college districts applied for a  
20 program but were denied and why were they denied.

21 (D) The cost of each program, the funding sources that  
22 were used to finance the program, and the average cost to  
23 attain a bachelor's degree under the program.

24 (E) Time-to-degree rates and completion rates for each  
25 new program established under this Section.

26 (F) The extent to which the programs established under

1       this Section are in compliance with the requirements of  
2       this Section.

3       Boards of trustees shall submit the information necessary  
4       to conduct the evaluation required under this subsection (i),  
5       as determined by the evaluators, to the State Board.

6       (j) Prior to the publication of the statewide evaluation  
7       of community college baccalaureate programs in early childhood  
8       education as described in subsection (i) of this Section, the  
9       Board of Higher Education and the State Board may not  
10       authorize a community college baccalaureate-level degree  
11       program in any additional field of study.

12       (k) The State Board shall annually investigate and  
13       determine whether there is a shortage in qualified early  
14       childhood educators.

15       (l) If the State Board determines that there is not a  
16       shortage in qualified early childhood educators, then a  
17       community college offering a baccalaureate-level degree  
18       program under this Section shall continue to operate the  
19       degree program until all previously enrolled students have  
20       either graduated or withdrawn from the degree program and may  
21       not accept new students into the degree program.