



HOUSE BILL 344: QRIS/Star Rating System Reform.

2023-2024 General Assembly

Committee:	House Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	April 4, 2023
Introduced by:	Reps. Willis, Clemmons, Lambeth, Jeffers	Prepared by:	Debbie Griffiths Staff Attorney
Analysis of:	First Edition		

OVERVIEW: Section 1.(a) of the act would extend the expiration date of Section 2 of S.L. 2021-127 from June 30, 2023, until June 30, 2026.

Section 1.(b) of the act would extend the expiration date of Section 1 of S.L. 2021-127 from six months after the expiration of E.O. 116 (February 15, 2023) until June 30, 2024.

Section 2 of the act would require the North Carolina Child Care Commission (Commission) to complete recommendations for QRIS/Star Rating reform by March 31, 2024, and submit those recommendations to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services before the 2024 legislative session begins. Those recommendations shall include accreditation from a national early childhood education (ECE) accreditation organization as an alternative path to earning a Star Rating equivalent to the accreditation requirements.

CURRENT LAW:

Section 1 of S.L. 2021-127 directs the DCDEE to not require a licensed childcare facility to undergo an ERS assessment if the assessment would result in the facility losing a star rating because of the facility's loss of educators and inability to replace those educators with comparably educated individuals. This section expired on February 15, 2023, which was six months after the date Executive Order No. 116 was rescinded.

Section 2 of S.L. 2021-127 requires the DCDEE to lower from 75% to 50% the threshold for the percentage of lead teachers in the program required to meet the "rated licensed education requirements" criteria to earn QRIS/Star Rating "education points" when the ERS assessments resume. This section expires June 30, 2023.

BILL ANALYSIS: Sections 1. (a) and (b) of the bill would require that ERS assessments continue to not be required if the assessment would result in the licensed childcare facility losing a star rating because the facility lost educators and was unable to replace those educators with comparably educated individuals until June 30, 2024. When ERS assessments resume, the DCDEE would be required to maintain the reduced threshold percentage of lead teachers in the program required to meet the "rated licensed education requirements" criteria to earn QRIS/Star Rating education points at 50%. This reduction would expire on June 30, 2026, and beginning July 1, 2026, the threshold percentage rate for lead teachers would return to 75%.

Section 2 of the bill would require the North Carolina Child Care Commission (Commission) to complete recommendations for QRIS/Star Rating reform by March 31, 2024, and submit those recommendations to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services before the 2024 legislative session begins. Those recommendations shall include accreditation from a national early childhood

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education (ECE) accreditation organization as an alternative path to earning a Star Rating equivalent to the accreditation requirements. Acceptable ECE accreditation organizations include:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation.
- National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC).
- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA).
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC).
- American Montessori Society (AMS).
- International Montessori Council (IMC).
- Cognia (formerly AdvanceED).

EFFECTIVE DATE: This act is effective when it becomes law.

*Jessica Boney, Staff Attorney in the Legislative Analysis Division, substantially contributed to this summary.