

SENATE BILL 569

By Gresham

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
relative to state-approved Montessori schools.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 1, Part 2, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

(a) As used in this section, "Montessori program" means a child-centered, research-based curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for the student that is taught by educators licensed by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) in an accredited Montessori Teacher Preparation Program.

(b) The department of education shall approve a Montessori program as a Category I school pursuant to the rules and regulations of the state board of education if the program meets all state requirements for approval, except that the licensure requirements for teachers in Montessori programs shall comply with the requirements of SECTION 2.

(b) A Montessori program may apply to the commissioner of education for a waiver of any state board rule or statute that inhibits or hinders the program's ability to meet its goals or comply with its mission statement. Neither the Montessori program nor the commissioner shall waive regulatory or statutory requirements related to:

- (1) Federal and state civil rights;
- (2) Federal, state, and local health and safety;
- (3) Federal and state public records;
- (4) Immunizations;
- (5) Possession of weapons on school grounds;

- (6) Background checks and fingerprinting of personnel;
- (7) Federal and state special education services;
- (8) Student due process;
- (9) Parental rights;
- (10) Federal and state student assessment and accountability;
- (11) Open meetings; and
- (12) At least the same equivalent time of instruction as required in regular public schools.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 5, Part 1, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

(a) Notwithstanding § 49-5-101, the state board of education shall issue a license to teach to an individual who satisfies all of the following:

- (1) Possesses a bachelor's degree;
- (2) Successfully completed a teacher education program accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE);
- (3) Successfully completed an introductory course in special education for which the individual earned at least three (3) postsecondary credits; and
- (4) Earned a passing score on PRAXIS examinations or other tests used to identify teacher preparedness, as required by the director of schools for a license to teach.

(b) A license issued pursuant to this section shall authorize an individual to teach the educational levels for which the individual has successfully completed a teacher education program accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) at a school that uses the Montessori method as its primary method of instruction. The department shall treat a license to teach granted pursuant to this section in the same manner the director of schools treats a license to teach issued pursuant to this part.

(c) An individual's compliance with this section shall satisfy employment standards for teaching in schools that use the Montessori method as a primary method of instruction.

(d) An individual who receives a license to teach pursuant to this section shall be required to complete eighteen (18) hours of professional development training, annually, that is specific to the Montessori program.

SECTION 3. For the purpose of promulgating rules, this act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, this act shall take effect July 1, 2017, the public welfare requiring it.