

Educator Licensure Grade-Band Changes and Kindergarten Microcredential

June 12, 2026

Agenda

- Introduction
- Grade Band: Principles & Purposes
- Implementation Timeline
- Kindergarten-Only Microcredential
- Suggestions
- Next Steps: Grade Band & Microcredential

Grade Band: Principles

- Child-centered focus
- Honoring teacher-child-family-community relationships
- Inclusive of developmentally appropriate pedagogies, including play-based learning and guided learning

Grade Band: Purposes

- Support staffing flexibility across early learning and elementary settings
- Preserve strong, developmentally grounded preparation for educators who teach young children
- Provide clearer pathways as licensure and credentialing updates are implemented

Grade Bands: Current and New

Current Grade Bands:

- Early Childhood: Birth – Grade 2
- Elementary Education: Grade 1 – Grade 6

New Grade Bands:

- Early Childhood: Birth – Grade 3
- Elementary Education: Kindergarten – Grade 6

Implementation Timeline

Summer–Fall 2026

Alignment work including higher education faculty and district personnel.

Focus on identifying early childhood/elementary preparation overlap, play-based learning, family engagement, health/safety/nutrition, and field experiences.

July 1, 2027

Anticipated effective date for new grade-band rules.

1

2

3

4

Fall–Winter 2026

Proposed modifications go through the rulemaking process.

2–3 Years Post-Rule

Programs must submit evidence of alignment to new grade bands.

Please note:

Until rules are finalized, districts may use the Early Childhood or Kindergarten Short-Term Approval.

Once finalized, Kindergarten Short-Term Approval will no longer be offered.

New Kindergarten-Only Microcredential FY 2027

Developed collaboratively with faculty from approved early childhood preparation programs, district personnel, and others.

Once finalized, ISBE will offer webinars for institutions of higher education on:

- Requirements for the kindergarten-only microcredential
- The process to apply for ISBE approval to offer the microcredential

Suggestions:



<https://www.menti.com/altnr1gjib27>

Next Steps: Grade Band & Microcredential

- Share information/ongoing work with EPPs and districts via webinars
- Contact organizations for identification of members to participate in the alignment work and subsequent recommendations
- Create webpage for status and updates on the work