

Second Regular Session  
Seventy-fifth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO

**ENGROSSED**

*This Version Includes All Amendments Adopted  
on Second Reading in the House of Introduction*

LLS NO. 26-0004.02 Jacob Baus x2173

**SENATE BILL 26-023**

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**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

**Kolker and Kirkmeyer,**

**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**Sirota and Lukens,**

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**Senate Committees**

Education  
Appropriations

**House Committees**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101 **CONCERNING THE FINANCING OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND, IN**  
102 **CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AND REDUCING AN**  
103 **APPROPRIATION.**

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**Bill Summary**

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)*

The bill:

- Increases the statewide base per pupil funding for the 2026-27 budget year by \$217.30 to account for inflation;
- Sets a new statewide base per pupil funding amount for the 2026-27 budget year at \$8,909.10; and

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.*  
*Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.*

SENATE  
Amended 2nd Reading  
April 28, 2026

- Sets the total program funding for the 2026-27 budget year at \$10,209,589,888.

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1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-54-103.5, **add**  
3 (3)(b) and (14)(b) as follows:

4 **22-54-103.5. District total program - rules - legislative**  
5 **declaration - repeal.**

6 (3) **Statewide base per pupil funding.**

7 (b) (I) FOR THE 2026-27 BUDGET YEAR, THE STATEWIDE BASE PER  
8 PUPIL FUNDING IS EIGHT THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED DOLLARS AND FORTY  
9 CENTS (\$8,900.40), WHICH IS AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO EIGHT THOUSAND SIX  
10 HUNDRED NINETY-ONE DOLLARS AND EIGHTY CENTS (\$8,691.80),  
11 SUPPLEMENTED BY TWO HUNDRED EIGHT DOLLARS AND SIXTY CENTS  
12 (\$208.60) TO ACCOUNT FOR INFLATION.

13 (II) THIS SUBSECTION (3)(b) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2032.

14 (14) **Total program funding.**

15 (b) (I) FOR THE 2026-27 BUDGET YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT OF  
16 EDUCATION AND THE STAFF OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SHALL  
17 DETERMINE, BASED ON BUDGET PROJECTIONS, THE AMOUNT TO ENSURE  
18 THAT FOR THE 2026-27 BUDGET YEAR, THE SUM OF TOTAL PROGRAM  
19 FUNDING FOR ALL DISTRICTS, INCLUDING FUNDING FOR INSTITUTE  
20 CHARTER SCHOOLS, IS AT LEAST TEN BILLION ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-NINE  
21 MILLION NINE HUNDRED EIGHTEEN THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED FORTY-TWO  
22 DOLLARS (\$10,189,918,642); EXCEPT THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF  
23 EDUCATION AND THE STAFF OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SHALL MAKE  
24 MID-YEAR REVISIONS TO REPLACE PROJECTIONS WITH ACTUAL FIGURES,  
25 INCLUDING ACTUAL PUPIL ENROLLMENT, ASSESSED VALUATIONS, AND

1 SPECIFIC OWNERSHIP TAX REVENUE FROM THE PRIOR YEAR TO DETERMINE  
2 ANY NECESSARY CHANGES IN THE AMOUNT TO MAINTAIN TOTAL PROGRAM  
3 FUNDING FOR THE APPLICABLE BUDGET YEAR.

4 (II) THIS SUBSECTION (14)(b) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1,  
5 2032.

6 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-13-103, **amend**  
7 **(1)(c) introductory portion; and add (1)(c.5) as follows:**

8 **22-13-103. School transformation grant program - created -**  
9 **rules - repeal.**

10 (1) There is created in the department the school transformation  
11 grant program to provide funding to:

12 (c) FOR GRANTS ISSUED ON OR BEFORE JUNE 30, 2026, assist  
13 school districts, the institute, and charter schools that are implementing  
14 priority improvement or turnaround plans in planning for and  
15 implementing one or more of the following rigorous school redesign  
16 strategies:

17 (c.5) FOR GRANTS ISSUED ON OR AFTER JULY 1, 2026, ASSIST  
18 SCHOOL DISTRICTS, THE INSTITUTE, AND CHARTER SCHOOLS THAT ARE  
19 IMPLEMENTING PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT OR TURNAROUND PLANS IN  
20 PLANNING FOR AND IMPLEMENTING ONE OR MORE OF THE RIGOROUS  
21 REDESIGN STRATEGIES DESCRIBED IN SECTION 22-11-209 (2)(a) OR  
22 SECTION 22-11-210 (5)(a);

23 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-13-105, **amend**  
24 **(1) introductory portion and (6)(b); and add (1.5) as follows:**

25 **22-13-105. School transformation grants - application -**  
26 **awards - report.**

27 (1) FOR GRANTS ISSUED ON OR BEFORE JUNE 30, 2026, the state

1 board, subject to available appropriations, shall award school  
2 transformation grants to one or more school districts or charter schools or  
3 to the institute to use in:

4 (1.5) FOR GRANTS ISSUED ON OR AFTER JULY 1, 2026, THE STATE  
5 BOARD, SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE APPROPRIATIONS, SHALL AWARD SCHOOL  
6 TRANSFORMATION GRANTS TO ONE OR MORE SCHOOL DISTRICTS OR  
7 CHARTER SCHOOLS OR TO THE INSTITUTE TO USE FOR THE PURPOSES  
8 DESCRIBED IN SECTION 22-13-103 (1).

9 (6) (b) Of the money annually appropriated for school  
10 transformation grants, the department may expend an amount that is  
11 necessary to enter into one or more contracts with a public or private  
12 entity to provide the uses described in subsection (1) OR (1.5) of this  
13 section to multiple school districts or charter schools that are eligible for  
14 a school transformation grant. The entity shall use research-based  
15 strategies and have a proven record of success working with schools  
16 under similar circumstances.

17 **SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-44-105, amend  
18 (6)(d)(II) as follows:

19 **22-44-105. Budget - contents - mandatory- repeal.**

20 (6) (d) (II) ~~This subsection (6) is~~ SUBSECTIONS (6)(a), (6)(b), AND  
21 (6)(d) OF THIS SECTION ARE repealed, effective July 1, 2026.

22 **SECTION 5.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-54-103.3, amend  
23 (3)(b) as follows:

24 **22-54-103.3. District total program - 2025-26 through 2030-31**  
25 **budget years - definitions - repeal.**

26 (3) (b) (I) For the 2026-27 budget year, a district's total program  
27 is the greater of the district's total program determination for the 2024-25

1 budget year or the amount calculated pursuant to section 22-54-104 plus  
2 an amount equal to thirty percent of the difference between the district's  
3 total program calculation pursuant to section 22-54-103.5 and the  
4 district's total program calculation pursuant to section 22-54-104.

5 (II) WHEN DETERMINING A DISTRICT'S TOTAL PROGRAM PURSUANT  
6 TO SUBSECTION (3)(b)(I) OF THIS SECTION, IF THE DISTRICT'S TOTAL  
7 PROGRAM CALCULATION PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-54-103.5 IS LESS THAN  
8 THE DISTRICT'S TOTAL PROGRAM CALCULATION PURSUANT TO SECTION  
9 22-54-104, THEN NOTWITHSTANDING SUBSECTION (3)(b)(I) OF THIS  
10 SECTION, THE DISTRICT'S TOTAL PROGRAM IS THE GREATER OF THE  
11 DISTRICT'S TOTAL PROGRAM DETERMINATION FOR THE 2024-25 BUDGET  
12 YEAR OR THE AMOUNT CALCULATED PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-54-104.

13 **SECTION 6.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-54-117, amend  
14 (1)(a) introductory portion and (1)(a)(IX) as follows:

15 **22-54-117. Contingency reserve - fund - repeal.**

16 (1) (a) For the 2007-08 fiscal year and fiscal years thereafter The  
17 general assembly shall annually determine the amount to appropriate to  
18 the contingency reserve fund, which is created in the state treasury. In  
19 deciding the amount to appropriate to the contingency reserve fund, the  
20 general assembly may take into consideration any recommendations made  
21 by the department of education, but nothing in this section obligates the  
22 general assembly to provide supplemental assistance to all districts that  
23 are found to be in need or to fully fund the total amount of such need. The  
24 state board may approve and order payments from the contingency  
25 reserve fund for supplemental assistance to districts determined to be in  
26 need as the result of any or all of the following circumstances:

27 (IX) (A) For the 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 budget years

1 Unusual financial burden caused by the withholding of local property  
2 taxes pursuant to section 29-1-606 (5) for a rural or small rural school  
3 district, as defined in section 22-7-1211 (4), because of a delay in filing  
4 the audit report due to extraordinary problems that could not have been  
5 reasonably foreseen or prevented by the rural or small rural school  
6 district.

7 (B) This subsection (1)(a)(IX) is repealed, effective July 1, 2026.

8 **SECTION 7.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-54-205, amend  
9 (2)(a), (2)(b)(I), (2)(c)(I), (2)(c)(II), (4)(c), and (4)(d); as follows:

10 **22-54-205. Sustain funding - rules - repeal.**

11 (2) (a) A local education provider is eligible to receive  
12 reimbursement SUSTAIN FUNDING for students who, in the preceding  
13 budget year, successfully satisfied postsecondary credit, received an  
14 industry-recognized credential, or satisfied work-based learning  
15 requirements as specified by state board rule. A local education provider  
16 is eligible to receive multiple reimbursements SUSTAIN FUNDING  
17 DISTRIBUTIONS for one student. A local education provider is eligible for  
18 reimbursement TO RECEIVE SUSTAIN FUNDING for students who are  
19 enrolled in a p-tech school or participating in a TREP program.

20 (b) (I) For the 2026-27 budget year, the department shall divide  
21 the total amount of sustain funding for reimbursement DISTRIBUTION into  
22 the following categories:

23 (A) Twenty percent of the total amount of sustain funding for  
24 reimbursement DISTRIBUTION for postsecondary credit attainment;

25 (B) Forty percent of the total amount of sustain funding for  
26 reimbursement DISTRIBUTION for industry-recognized credentials earned;

27 (C) ~~Thirty-five~~ THIRTY-SEVEN percent of the total amount of

1 sustain funding for reimbursement DISTRIBUTION for work-based  
2 learning; and

3 (D) Five THREE percent of the total amount of sustain funding to  
4 offset the direct and indirect costs incurred in administering the sustain  
5 funding.

6 (c) (I) For the 2027-28 budget year, and each budget year  
7 thereafter, the state board shall determine the percentages of the total  
8 amount of sustain funding for reimbursement DISTRIBUTION assigned to  
9 the postsecondary credit attainment, industry-recognized credentials, and  
10 work-based learning categories; except that the five THREE percent of the  
11 total amount of sustain funding to offset the direct and indirect costs  
12 incurred in administering the sustain funding must not be changed. The  
13 percentages for each category are determined by state board rule.

14 (II) In determining the percentages of the total amount of sustain  
15 funding for reimbursement DISTRIBUTION assigned to each category  
16 pursuant to subsection (2)(c)(I) of this section, the state board shall  
17 consider the availability of postsecondary and workforce readiness  
18 opportunities offered by local education providers, student participation,  
19 and evidence of student outcomes.

20 (4) The state board shall adopt rules governing:

21 (c) Reimbursement eligibility and rates, including limits on a local  
22 education provider's annual total reimbursement and annual  
23 reimbursement from one or multiple categories, based on  
24 local-education-provider-specific features or other features; SUSTAIN  
25 FUNDING ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING LIMITS ON THE TOTAL  
26 AMOUNT OF SUSTAIN FUNDING RECEIVED BY A LOCAL EDUCATION  
27 PROVIDER FROM ONE OR MULTIPLE CATEGORIES BASED ON THE LOCAL

1 EDUCATION PROVIDER'S FEATURES.

2 (d) Requirements of a local education provider that receives  
3 SUSTAIN funding pursuant to this section; and

4 **SECTION 8.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 24-51-1101, amend  
5 (1.9)(a)(I), (1.9)(a)(II)(B), (1.9)(a)(II)(C), and (1.9)(h) as follows:

6 **24-51-1101. Employment after service retirement - report -**  
7 **definitions - repeal.**

8 (1.9) (a) (I) Subject to subsection (1.9)(h) of this section, a service  
9 retiree who is a superintendent, AN ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, a  
10 principal, A VICE PRINCIPAL OR ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, a teacher, a school  
11 bus driver, a school food services cook, a school nurse, or a  
12 paraprofessional, as defined in section 22-60.3-201, and is hired pursuant  
13 to subsection (1.9)(b) of this section by an employer in the school division  
14 of the association that satisfies the criteria specified in subsection  
15 (1.9)(a)(II) of this section may receive salary without reduction in benefits  
16 for any length of employment in a calendar year if the service retiree has  
17 not worked for an employer, as defined in section 24-51-101 (20), during  
18 the month of the effective date of retirement. A service retiree described  
19 in this subsection (1.9)(a) who works for an employer, as defined in  
20 section 24-51-101 (20), during the month of the effective date of  
21 retirement is subject to a reduction in benefits as provided in section  
22 24-51-1102 (2).

23 (II) The provisions of this subsection (1.9) apply only if:

24 (B) The school district, board of cooperative services, or charter  
25 school hires the service retiree for the purpose of providing classroom  
26 instruction or school bus transportation to students enrolled by the district,  
27 enrolled by one or more of the districts served by the board of cooperative

1 services, or enrolled by the charter school, or for the purpose of being a  
2 superintendent, AN ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, a principal, A VICE  
3 PRINCIPAL OR ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, a school food services cook, a school  
4 nurse, or a paraprofessional, as defined in section 22-60.3-201; and

5 (C) The school district, board of cooperative services, or charter  
6 school determines that there is a critical shortage of qualified  
7 superintendents, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS, principals, VICE  
8 PRINCIPALS OR ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS, teachers, school bus drivers,  
9 school food services cooks, school nurses, or paraprofessionals, as  
10 defined in section 22-60.3-201, as applicable, and that the service retiree  
11 has specific experience, skills, or qualifications that would benefit the  
12 district, board of cooperative services, or charter school.

13 (h) A teacher, school bus driver, school food services cook, school  
14 nurse, superintendent, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, principal, VICE  
15 PRINCIPAL OR ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, or qualified paraprofessional who  
16 retires before ~~he or she has~~ THEY HAVE met the age and service credit  
17 requirements for full service retirement benefits pursuant to section  
18 24-51-602 shall not be employed after retirement pursuant to this  
19 subsection (1.9) by the employer in the school division that was the  
20 teacher's, school bus driver's, school food services cook's, school nurse's,  
21 superintendent's, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S, principal's, VICE  
22 PRINCIPAL'S OR ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL'S, or qualified paraprofessional's last  
23 employer until two years after the teacher's, school bus driver's, school  
24 food services cook's, school nurse's, superintendent's, ASSISTANT  
25 SUPERINTENDENT'S, principal's, VICE PRINCIPAL'S OR ASSISTANT  
26 PRINCIPAL'S, or qualified paraprofessional's date of retirement.

27 **SECTION 9. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-20-107.5, add**

1 (1.5) as follows:

2 **22-20-107.5. District of residence of a child with a disability -**  
3 **jurisdiction - rules.**

4 (1.5) THE STATE BOARD SHALL ADOPT RULES THAT ARE  
5 NECESSARY TO DETERMINE A CHILD'S DISTRICT OF RESIDENCE FOR A  
6 CIRCUMSTANCE THAT IS NOT DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS  
7 SECTION.

8 **SECTION 10. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-20-114, amend**  
9 **(1) introductory portion, (1)(a), (1)(b), and (1.3) as follows:**

10 **22-20-114. Funding of programs - application for**  
11 **reimbursement - rules - legislative declaration - definition.**

12 (1) Subject to the provisions of subsection (3) of this section, for  
13 the 2005-06 budget year and each budget year thereafter the total amount  
14 appropriated to the department for the payment of costs incurred by  
15 administrative units for the provision, OR EXPENSES RELATED TO THE  
16 PROVISION, of special education programs must be distributed to each  
17 administrative unit that provides, OR PAYS FOR THE PROVISION OF,  
18 educational services for children with disabilities as follows:

19 (a) (I) Five hundred thousand dollars to administrative units that  
20 enroll children with disabilities FOR THE 2026-27 BUDGET YEAR AND  
21 EACH BUDGET YEAR THEREAFTER, ONE MILLION DOLLARS TO FUND  
22 REIMBURSEMENTS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS THAT PAY TUITION OR  
23 EDUCATION EXPENSES THAT ENSURE A FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC  
24 EDUCATION FOR A STUDENT IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT, AS DEFINED IN  
25 SECTION 22-32-138 (1)(h), IF:

26 (A) For whom tuition is paid by the administrative units for the  
27 children to receive educational services at approved facility schools; and

1 THE STUDENT HAS AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM;  
2 (B) For whom parental rights have been relinquished by the  
3 parents or terminated by a court, the parents of whom are incarcerated,  
4 the parents of whom cannot be located, the parents of whom reside out of  
5 the state but the department of human services has placed the children  
6 within the administrative unit, or children with disabilities who are legally  
7 emancipated. THE STUDENT DOES NOT HAVE A PARENT OR LEGAL  
8 GUARDIAN, AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 22-20-103 (19.7)(a)(I), (19.7)(a)(II),  
9 OR (19.7)(a)(III), WHO IS AVAILABLE OR AUTHORIZED TO MAKE DECISIONS  
10 CONCERNING EDUCATION FOR THE STUDENT; AND  
11 (C) THE STUDENT IS PLACED BY A PUBLIC AGENCY, AS DEFINED IN  
12 SECTION 22-20-103 (20), IN A RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE FACILITY OR  
13 RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITY THAT IS LOCATED OUT OF STATE OR IN  
14 AN APPROVED FACILITY SCHOOL, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 22-2-402.  
15 (II) The moneys appropriated pursuant to subparagraph (I) of this  
16 paragraph (a) shall be distributed in each budget year to administrative  
17 units based upon each administrative unit's share of the aggregate number  
18 of children with disabilities who are specified in subparagraph (I) of this  
19 paragraph (a); except that an administrative unit shall not receive an  
20 amount that exceeds the aggregate amount of tuition paid by that  
21 administrative unit for the specified children with disabilities to receive  
22 educational services at approved facility schools during the immediately  
23 preceding budget year. For purposes of this paragraph (a), the number of  
24 children with disabilities that are specified in subparagraph (I) of this  
25 paragraph (a) shall be based upon the count taken in December of the  
26 immediately preceding budget year. IN THE 2026-27 BUDGET YEAR AND  
27 EACH BUDGET YEAR THEREAFTER, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DISTRIBUTE

1 THE APPROPRIATION DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (1)(a)(I) OF THIS SECTION  
2 PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FOR REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS. THE STATE  
3 BOARD SHALL ADOPT RULES RELATED TO THE APPLICATION FOR  
4 REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS.

5 (b) (f) For the budget years preceding the 2022-23 budget year, an  
6 amount equal to one thousand two hundred fifty dollars for each child  
7 with disabilities receiving special education services from the  
8 administrative unit;

9 (H) Except as specified in subsection (1.3) of this section, for the  
10 2022-23 budget year and each budget year thereafter, an amount equal to  
11 one thousand seven hundred fifty dollars for each child with disabilities  
12 receiving special education services from the administrative unit; and

13 (1.3) For the 2024-25 budget year and budget years thereafter, The  
14 dollar amounts set forth in subsections (1)(b)(H) and (1)(c)(HH)  
15 SUBSECTIONS (1)(b) AND (1)(c)(III) of this section are annually increased  
16 by the rate of inflation. The amounts must be rounded to the nearest  
17 dollar. As used in this subsection (1.3), "inflation" means the annual  
18 percentage change in the United States department of labor bureau of  
19 labor statistics consumer price index for Denver-Aurora-Lakewood for  
20 all items paid by all urban consumers, or its applicable successor index.

21 SECTION 11. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-82.9-205,  
22 amend (1), (2), (3), and (4); and add (6) as follows:

23 22-82.9-205. Local food purchasing grant - amount - advisory  
24 committee - verification of invoices - definition.

25 (1) (a) Subject to subsection (5) of this section, each participating  
26 school food authority OR CHARTER SCHOOL THAT OPERATES UNDER A  
27 PARTICIPATING CHARTER SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITY that commits to

1 operating an advisory committee as described in subsection (3) of this  
2 section is eligible to receive a local food purchasing grant pursuant to this  
3 section to purchase Colorado grown, raised, or processed products. It is  
4 the general assembly's intent that these grants be used primarily to support  
5 small- and medium-sized farms and ranches.

6 (b) On or before August 1 of the first full budget year in which  
7 this section is effective as provided in subsection (5) of this section and  
8 on or before August 1 of each budget year thereafter, each participating  
9 school food authority GRANTEE shall track and report to the department  
10 for the preceding budget year:

11 (I) The total amount spent in purchasing all products used in  
12 preparing meals and how much of that total was attributable to the local  
13 food purchasing grant the participating school food authority GRANTEE  
14 received;

15 (II) The total amount spent to purchase Colorado grown, raised,  
16 or processed products and how much of that total was attributable to the  
17 local food purchasing grant the participating school food authority  
18 GRANTEE received;

19 (III) The total amount spent to purchase value-added processed  
20 products and how much of that total was attributable to the local food  
21 purchasing grant the participating school food authority GRANTEE  
22 received; and

23 (IV) The total number of eligible meals the participating school  
24 food authority GRANTEE provided to students.

25 (2)(a) Subject to subsection (2)(b) of this section, at the beginning  
26 of each budget year the department, subject to available appropriations,  
27 shall distribute to each participating school food authority GRANTEE that

1 is eligible to receive a grant pursuant to this section an amount established  
2 pursuant to section 22-82.9-211 (3). The participating school food  
3 authority GRANTEE shall use the money received pursuant to this section  
4 to purchase only Colorado grown, raised, or processed products and as  
5 provided in subsection (3)(b) of this section and shall not use more than  
6 twenty-five percent of the amount received to purchase value-added  
7 processed products. In addition, a school food authority PARTICIPATING  
8 GRANTEE may use up to ten percent of the money received pursuant to  
9 this section to pay allowable costs, as identified by rules of the state  
10 board, incurred in complying with this section.

11 (b) At the beginning of each budget year, each participating  
12 school food authority GRANTEE shall submit to the department an estimate  
13 of the amount it expects to spend to purchase Colorado grown, raised, or  
14 processed products for the budget year; a description of the items and  
15 amounts it expects to purchase; and a list of the suppliers from which it  
16 expects to purchase the items. If, based on the information provided, the  
17 department determines that a participating school food authority GRANTEE  
18 is unlikely to spend the full amount of the grant described in subsection  
19 (2)(a) of this section, the department shall reduce the amount of the grant  
20 accordingly. The department shall distribute to other participating school  
21 food authorities GRANTEES that are eligible to receive grants pursuant to  
22 this section any amount that is retained pursuant to this subsection (2)(b).  
23 The department shall distribute the additional amounts to the participating  
24 school food authorities GRANTEES for which the grant amount calculated  
25 pursuant to subsection (2)(a) of this section is less than twenty-five  
26 thousand dollars, prioritized based on the highest identified student  
27 percentages and greatest financial need.

1           (3) (a) To receive a local food purchasing grant pursuant to this  
2 section, a participating school food authority GRANTEE must have or  
3 establish an advisory committee made up of students and parents of  
4 students enrolled in the public schools served by the participating school  
5 food authority. In selecting students and parents to serve on the advisory  
6 committee, the participating school food authority GRANTEE shall ensure  
7 that the membership of the advisory committee reflects the racial, ethnic,  
8 and socioeconomic demographics of the student population enrolled by  
9 the participating school food authority GRANTEE. The advisory committee  
10 shall advise the participating school food authority GRANTEE concerning  
11 the selection of foods to ensure that meals are culturally relevant, healthy,  
12 and appealing to all ages of the student population.

13           (b) A participating school food authority GRANTEE may use up to  
14 twelve percent of the amount received pursuant to subsection (2) of this  
15 section to support implementation of the advisory committee required in  
16 subsection (3)(a) of this section.

17           (c) A school food authority GRANTEE that provided one million or  
18 fewer lunches in the 2023-24 school year may, subject to approval by the  
19 department, work with other school food authorities GRANTEES to  
20 implement an advisory committee that collaborates with multiple school  
21 food authorities.

22           (d) An advisory committee established pursuant to this subsection  
23 (3) is not limited to, but may:

24           (I) Schedule and hold meetings as necessary for the advisory  
25 committee to have ongoing collaboration with the participating school  
26 food authority GRANTEE and achieve the advisory committee's goals;

27           (II) Through student surveys or other methods as necessary, gather

- 1 student feedback on meals and meal preferences;
- 2 (III) Suggest the types of purchases of local ingredients to the  
3 school food authority GRANTEE that would support local farmers and  
4 ranchers in the school food authority's region;
- 5 (IV) Inform the school food authority of recipes that are both  
6 nutritious and reflect the cultures of the student population enrolled by the  
7 participating school food authority GRANTEE;
- 8 (V) Taste test healthy meal options;
- 9 (VI) Develop solutions to reduce food waste;
- 10 (VII) Assist the school food authority GRANTEE in developing  
11 plans to support more scratch cooking;
- 12 (VIII) Assist the school food authority PARTICIPATING GRANTEE  
13 in obtaining the necessary resources to provide meals that are culturally  
14 relevant, healthy, and appealing to all ages of the student population;
- 15 (IX) Inform the school food authority GRANTEE of, and assist in  
16 the implementation of, strategies to maximize the collection and  
17 completion of household income application forms for national school  
18 lunch programs;
- 19 (X) Evaluate the effectiveness of the advisory committee in  
20 supporting the school food authority PARTICIPATING GRANTEE in  
21 improving meal quality and student satisfaction with the meals provided  
22 by the school food authority GRANTEE; and
- 23 (XI) Learn from a school food authority GRANTEE about the  
24 logistics of local food procurement, menu requirements, and operational  
25 management to support the advisory committee in suggesting realistic and  
26 attainable changes to school meals.
- 27 (e) A school food authority GRANTEE may contract with an

1 external nonprofit organization to convene and facilitate an advisory  
2 committee pursuant to this subsection (3).

3 (4) The department shall annually require a selected group of  
4 participating school food authorities GRANTEES that received a grant  
5 pursuant to this section in the preceding budget year to submit to the  
6 department a representative sample of the invoices for the products  
7 purchased using the grant money. No later than September 1 of the  
8 second budget year in which this section is effective as provided in  
9 subsection (5) of this section, and no later than September 1 of each year  
10 thereafter, the department shall review the invoices to verify that the  
11 products purchased met the requirements specified in this section. If the  
12 department finds that a participating school food authority used a  
13 significant portion of the grant money, as determined by rule of the state  
14 board, to purchase products that did not meet the requirements of this  
15 section, the participating school food authority GRANTEE is ineligible to  
16 receive a grant pursuant to this section for the next budget year following  
17 the budget year in which the department completes the review.

18 (6) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE  
19 REQUIRES, "GRANTEE" MEANS A PARTICIPATING SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITY  
20 OR CHARTER SCHOOL THAT OPERATES UNDER A PARTICIPATING SCHOOL  
21 FOOD AUTHORITY DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS SECTION THAT IS  
22 ELIGIBLE FOR AND RECEIVES A LOCAL FOOD PURCHASING GRANT PROGRAM  
23 PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION.

24 **SECTION 12.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-82.9-206,  
25 **amend (1) as follows:**

26 **22-82.9-206. School meals food preparation and service**  
27 **employees - wage increase or stipend.**

1           (1) Subject to subsection (2) of this section, in addition to the  
2 amounts received pursuant to sections 22-82.9-204 and 22-82.9-205, a  
3 participating school food authority OR CHARTER SCHOOL THAT OPERATES  
4 UNDER A PARTICIPATING CHARTER SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITY may receive  
5 an amount described in section 22-82.9-211 (3), so long as the  
6 participating school food authority OR CHARTER SCHOOL THAT OPERATES  
7 UNDER A PARTICIPATING CHARTER SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITY uses one  
8 hundred percent of the amount received pursuant to this section to  
9 increase wages or provide stipends for individuals whom the participating  
10 school food authority employs to directly prepare and serve food for  
11 school meals. To receive the amount described in this section, a  
12 participating school food authority OR CHARTER SCHOOL THAT OPERATES  
13 UNDER A PARTICIPATING CHARTER SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITY must submit  
14 documentation to the department as required by rules of the state board  
15 to demonstrate that the increase in wages or provision of stipends using  
16 the amount received pursuant to this section is implemented for the  
17 budget year in which the amount is received.

18           **SECTION 13. Appropriation.** For the 2025-26 state fiscal year,  
19 \$3,755,558 is appropriated to the department of education. This  
20 appropriation is from the state education fund created in section 17 (4)(a)  
21 of article IX of the state constitution. To implement this act, the  
22 department may use this appropriation for state share of districts' total  
23 program funding.

24           **SECTION 14. Appropriation.** For the 2026-27 state fiscal year,  
25 \$5,375,404 is appropriated to the department of education. This  
26 appropriation is from the state education fund created in section 17 (4)(a)  
27 of article IX of the state constitution. To implement this act, the

1 department may use this appropriation for state share of districts' total  
2 program funding.

3 **SECTION 15. Appropriation - adjustments to 2026 long bill.**

4 (1) To implement this act, the appropriation from the state education  
5 fund created in section 17 (4)(a) of article IX of the state constitution for  
6 use by student pathways for postsecondary workforce readiness  
7 administration is decreased by \$267,424;

8 (2) Subsection (1) of this section does not require a reduction of  
9 an appropriation in the annual general appropriation act for the 2026-27  
10 state fiscal year if:

11 (a) The amount of the state education fund appropriation made in  
12 the annual general appropriation act for the 2026-27 state fiscal year to  
13 the department of education for use by student pathways for  
14 postsecondary workforce readiness administration is less than the amount  
15 of the adjustment required in subsection (1) of this section; or

16 (b) The annual general appropriation act for the 2026-27 state  
17 fiscal year does not include an appropriation to the department of  
18 education for use by student pathways for postsecondary workforce  
19 readiness administration.

20 **SECTION 16. Appropriation.** For the 2026-27 state fiscal year,  
21 \$267,424 is appropriated to the department of education for use by  
22 student pathways. This appropriation is from the state education fund  
23 created in section 17 (4)(a) of article IX of the state constitution. To  
24 implement this act, the division may use this appropriation for  
25 postsecondary workforce readiness sustain for LEPs.

26 **SECTION 17. Effective date.** This act takes effect upon passage;  
27 except that section 15 of this act takes effect only if the annual general

1 appropriation act for the 2026-27 state fiscal year becomes law, in which  
2 case section 15 takes effect upon the effective date of this act or of the  
3 annual general appropriation act for state fiscal year 2026-27, whichever  
4 is later.

5           **SECTION 18. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds,  
6 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate  
7 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for  
8 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state  
9 institutions.