

CHAPTER 185

EDUCATION - POSTSECONDARY

HOUSE BILL 26-1317

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) McCluskie and Taggart, Boesenecker, Clifford, Duran, Goldstein, Hamrick, Lieder, Paschal, Phillips, Rutinel, Stewart K., Bacon, Brown, Jackson, Lindsay, Lukens, Nguyen, Rydin, Woodrow;
also SENATOR(S) Bridges and Frizell, Catlin, Kipp, Pelton R., Coleman.

AN ACT

CONCERNING CREATING A UNIFIED SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, CREATING A COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO TRANSITION OVERSIGHT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

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

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) The general assembly finds and declares that:

(a) Colorado has an economic and civic interest in ensuring that Coloradans can access high-quality postsecondary opportunities;

(b) Higher education, workforce development, adult education, and employment programs should empower every Coloradan to discover their strengths, pursue their passions, meet the demands of a changing economy, and build careers that provide economic security;

(c) Too many Coloradans get disconnected from workforce and employment opportunity, and as a result, Colorado has struggled to train and retain homegrown talent;

(d) Adult learners, trainees, and job seekers may need to enter or reenter the workforce system from diverse points in their lives based on current needs and life status;

(e) Today, Coloradans must navigate a complex postsecondary talent development system of 472 schools, more than 300 apprenticeship programs, more

Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material added to existing law; dashes through words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law and such material is not part of the act.

than 4,500 eligible training programs, 21 adult education programs, and nearly 10,000 degree options;

(f) More than 20 divisions, offices, and units across seven state entities deliver 110 programs and initiatives in the system;

(g) This fragmentation makes opportunity difficult to find for Coloradans, and it limits the reach and impact of state investments;

(h) Colorado must bring together, streamline, and create seamless connections between education and skill-building pathways for Coloradans;

(i) Colorado needs a purpose-built, unified department that can easily connect all Coloradans, including underserved populations, to opportunity through postsecondary education, skills training, and employment;

(j) Reimagining our workforce system should include consideration of the connection between health and human services programs, out-of-school time programs, and workforce programs; and

(k) We must boldly reimagine how our education, training, and employment systems are serving Colorado learners, job seekers, workers, and employers.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** part 3 to article 38 of title 24 as follows:

PART 3
POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM
TRANSITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

24-38-301. Definitions.

AS USED IN THIS PART 3, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(1) "DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION CREATED IN SECTION 24-1-114.

(2) "TRANSITION COMMITTEE" MEANS THE POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TRANSITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE CREATED IN SECTION 24-38-302.

(3) "TRANSITION PLAN" MEANS THE TRANSITION PLAN PREPARED BY THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE AND SUBMITTED TO THE JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-38-303.

24-38-302. Postsecondary talent development system transition advisory committee - creation - membership - transition plan.

(1) THE POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TRANSITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE IS CREATED IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE. THE PURPOSE OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE IS TO DEVELOP THE TRANSITION PLAN DESCRIBED IN

SECTION 24-38-303 THAT INCLUDES RECOMMENDATIONS TO INTEGRATE THE STATE'S DELIVERY OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT SUPPORT COLORADANS PURSUING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, TRAINING, OR EMPLOYMENT.

(2) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

(a) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, OR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE;

(b) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, OR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE;

(c) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE, OR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE;

(d) THE DIRECTOR OF OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION APPOINTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-60-104 (2)(a)(II), OR THE DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE;

(e) THE CHAIR OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COLORADO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL;

(f) THE CHAIR OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION;

(g) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS, APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR:

(I) A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE;

(II) AN INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTING LARGE BUSINESS WITH EXPERTISE IN HUMAN RESOURCES, A TALENT OFFICER, OR ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL WITH PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE RELATED TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TALENT STRATEGY;

(III) TWO DIRECTORS REPRESENTING LOCAL WORKFORCE AREAS;

(IV) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION;

(V) A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE;

(VI) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A PUBLIC TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION OR LOCAL DISTRICT COLLEGE;

(VII) A FACULTY MEMBER OF A PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION WHOSE PRIMARY DUTIES INCLUDE TEACHING OR DIRECT INSTRUCTION OF STUDENTS;

(VIII) A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN ADVOCACY GROUP THAT ADVOCATES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION;

(IX) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ADVOCACY GROUP OR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION;

(X) A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL CREATED IN SECTION 8-15.7-105;

(XI) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A GROUP APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING COMMITTEE;

(XII) A REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM EMPLOYER SPONSOR; AND

(XIII) AN INDIVIDUAL WITH EXPERIENCE ADMINISTERING WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMS IN K-12 EDUCATION OR ADVISING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ABOUT POSTSECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES;

(h) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS, APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

(I) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION;

(II) A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY GROUP OR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION; AND

(III) A COUNTY COMMISSIONER OF A COUNTY THAT DELIVERS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

(i) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS, APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE:

(I) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A PUBLIC TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION OR LOCAL DISTRICT COLLEGE; AND

(II) A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION CERTIFIED AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF COVERED EMPLOYEES IN A PARTNERSHIP UNIT PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-50-1106;

(j) A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN ASSOCIATION THAT REPRESENTS BUSINESS, APPOINTED BY THE MINORITY LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES; AND

(k) A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY, APPOINTED BY THE MINORITY LEADER OF THE SENATE.

(3) (a) THE APPOINTING AUTHORITIES DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION SHALL MAKE THEIR APPOINTMENTS TO THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS SECTION, BUT NO LATER THAN JUNE 23, 2026.

(b) IN APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE, THE APPOINTING AUTHORITIES SHALL MAKE REASONABLE EFFORTS TO CONSIDER APPOINTING MEMBERS THAT, ALONG WITH MEETING THE BOARD'S SPECIFIED MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS, REFLECT THE GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY OF THE ENTIRE STATE, INCLUDING MEMBERS FROM BOTH RURAL AND URBAN PARTS OF THE STATE; MEMBERS OF DIVERSE POLITICAL, RACIAL, DISABILITY, AND CULTURAL GROUPS; AND MEMBERS OF DIVERSE SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS AND GENDERS.

(c) TO INFORM THE WORK OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE, AND TO ENSURE CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON WHAT A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT MUST DELIVER FOR COLORADO, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AND THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE, AND THE DIRECTOR OF OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION MAY GATHER FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS THROUGH MEETINGS HELD SEPARATELY FROM TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETINGS, INCLUDING THROUGH MEETINGS HELD PRIOR TO THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE'S FIRST MEETING.

(d) THE GOVERNOR SHALL APPOINT THE CHAIR OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE FROM AMONG THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE'S MEMBERS. THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SHALL APPOINT THE VICE-CHAIR OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE FROM AMONG THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE'S MEMBERS.

(e) MEMBERS OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SERVE WITHOUT COMPENSATION AND WITHOUT REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES.

(4) (a) THE CHAIR OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL CONVENE THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE NO LATER THAN JULY 1, 2026.

(b) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL MEET AT LEAST ONCE EACH MONTH UNTIL THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SUBMITS THE TRANSITION PLAN TO THE JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-38-303. THE CHAIR MAY CALL ADDITIONAL MEETINGS AS NECESSARY FOR THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE TO COMPLETE ITS DUTIES. THE COMMITTEE IS NOT REQUIRED TO MEET AFTER IT SUBMITS THE TRANSITION PLAN TO THE JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE.

(c) MEMBERS OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE MAY PARTICIPATE REMOTELY IN TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

(d) THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE SHALL PROVIDE STAFF ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING ASSISTING THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE WITH PREPARING THE TRANSITION PLAN AND PROVIDING MEETING SPACE AND AUDIOVISUAL COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES TO ASSIST IN COMPLETING THE DUTIES OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE.

(5) (a) IN CARRYING OUT ITS DUTIES, THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL, TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, ENGAGE WITH INTERESTED AND AFFECTED INDIVIDUALS IN ALL AREAS OF THE STATE AND ACROSS A WIDE VARIETY OF PROGRAM TYPES, AND SHALL ACTIVELY SEEK INPUT AND GUIDANCE FROM:

(I) EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AND ANY OTHER AFFECTED STATE DEPARTMENT;

(II) EMPLOYERS; WORKFORCE CENTER EMPLOYEES AND PARTICIPANTS; COMMUNITY-BASED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS; REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS AND APPRENTICES;

(III) THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL ESTABLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AND PARTICIPANTS IN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS DESCRIBED IN PART 1 OF ARTICLE 84 OF TITLE 8;

(IV) EMPLOYEES OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, INCLUDING FACULTY, INSTRUCTORS, AND STAFF, AND LABOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT REPRESENT WORKERS IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION; AND

(V) STUDENTS ENROLLED IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, INCLUDING AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGES, COMMUNITY COLLEGES, AND UNIVERSITIES; AND FACULTY, STUDENTS, STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES FROM PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

(b) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL CONSULT WITH EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT ABOUT DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS CONSIDERATIONS.

24-38-303. Transition plan - required study by transition advisory committee.

(1) ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 30, 2026, THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL SUBMIT A TRANSITION PLAN TO THE JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BUSINESS AFFAIRS AND LABOR COMMITTEE; THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EDUCATION COMMITTEE; THE SENATE BUSINESS, LABOR, AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE; AND THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES.

(2) (a) THE TRANSITION PLAN MUST INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STRUCTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS A DEPARTMENT THAT OVERSEES A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT THAT INTEGRATES POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES FOR COLORADANS, INCLUDING:

(I) GOVERNANCE MODELS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, WITH CONSIDERATION FOR THE EXISTING ROLE AND STRUCTURE OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION ESTABLISHED IN SECTION 23-1-102 AND THE STATE WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL CREATED IN SECTION 24-46.3-101;

(II) THE TECHNOLOGY AND STAFFING NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION;

(III) DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS SYSTEMS NECESSARY OR BENEFICIAL FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION;

(IV) RENAMING THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO REFLECT ITS MISSION, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2028, TO OVERSEE A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT; AND

(V) THE TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING THE TRANSITION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO A DEPARTMENT THAT OVERSEES A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT.

(b) THE TRANSITION PLAN MUST INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT HOW THE FOLLOWING OFFICES, AGENCIES, PROGRAMS, AND FUNCTIONS TRANSITION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION:

(I) THE PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE DIVISION OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING, CREATED IN SECTION 8-83-102, WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT;

(II) THE STATE'S DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER AND FOR IMPLEMENTING TITLES I, II, AND III OF THE FEDERAL "WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT", 29 U.S.C. SEC. 3101 ET SEQ.;

(III) THE DETERMINATIONS RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATION FOR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS, AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 8-83-1002;

(IV) DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO REGIONAL TALENT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES, INCLUDING THE REGIONAL TALENT SUMMIT GRANT PROGRAM CREATED IN SECTION 24-48.5-704 AND, IF CONTINUED BEYOND JULY 1, 2028, THE REGIONAL TALENT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE GRANT PROGRAM CREATED IN SECTION 24-48.5-405, COMMONLY KNOWN AS OPPORTUNITY NOW COLORADO GRANTS, AND ANY SUBSEQUENT PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE GRANTS TO SUPPORT REGIONAL TALENT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES;

(V) ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS DESCRIBED IN ARTICLE 10 OF TITLE 22, INCLUDING THE ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY GRANT PROGRAM CREATED IN SECTION 22-10-104, AND THE DUTY TO CONVENE MEETINGS TO DISCUSS THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND THE LEVELS OF UNMET NEED FOR ADULT EDUCATION WITHIN THE STATE, AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 22-10-106;

(VI) THE COLORADO OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS CREATED IN SECTION 8-3.7-103; AND

(VII) THE COLORADO DISABILITY OPPORTUNITY OFFICE CREATED IN SECTION 8-88-102.

(c) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL CONSIDER AND INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE TRANSITION PLAN ABOUT HOW THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION WILL COORDINATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S POSTSECONDARY WORKFORCE READINESS AND STUDENT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS FOR YOUTH AND PRE-APPRENTICESHIP, WORK-BASED LEARNING, OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES, AND POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL PROGRAMS.

(3) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE MAY CONSIDER AND INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE TRANSITION PLAN ABOUT:

(a) STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ADULT LEARNERS SEEKING FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS AND CREDENTIALS, SUCH AS A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR EQUIVALENT, AND POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT.

(b) THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY CREATED IN SECTION 8-15.7-102, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS THAT MAINTAIN THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT;

(c) THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL ESTABLISHED IN SECTION 8-15.7-105;

(d) THE COLORADO STATE APPRENTICESHIP RESOURCE DIRECTORY CREATED IN SECTION 8-83-308;

(e) RELOCATING THE OFFICE OF FUTURE OF WORK, CREATED IN SECTION 8-15.8-103, TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION OR DISCONTINUING THE OFFICE OF FUTURE OF WORK;

(f) RELOCATING THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ESTABLISHED IN SECTION 24-80-201 AND COMMONLY KNOWN AS HISTORY COLORADO;

(g) RELOCATING THE OFFICE OF LABOR MARKET INFORMATION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT;

(h) THE GOVERNANCE OF AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGES, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 23-60-103; IMPROVING THE AVAILABILITY OF OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS FOR YOUTH AND WORK-BASED LEARNING PATHWAYS; AND ENABLING AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGES TO BEST DELIVER OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION AND SUPPORT SECONDARY-TO-POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION TRANSITIONS IN COLORADO; AND

(i) STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ADULT POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT, INCLUDING STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ADULT LEARNERS IN ACCESSING AND COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS AND CONNECTING WITH ADDITIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

(4) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE MAY CONSIDER HOW THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO PART 3 OF ARTICLE 2 OF TITLE 26; STATE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 26-2-703 (19); AND OTHER PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC SECURITY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES ARE ALIGNED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION'S MISSION, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2028, TO OVERSEE A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT. THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE MAY INCLUDE IN THE TRANSITION PLAN A RECOMMENDATION FOR THE PROGRAMS TO COORDINATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

(5) IN PREPARING THE TRANSITION PLAN, THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL CONSIDER STRATEGIES TO:

(a) ELIMINATE DUPLICATIVE OVERSIGHT OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS;

(b) CONTINUE EFFORTS TO ALIGN THE POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, INCLUDING STRATEGIES TO REDUCE BUREAUCRACY AND ENSURE

ALIGNMENT WITH RELATED PROGRAMS THAT ARE NOT ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE;

(c) ALIGN POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AMONG THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND EXISTING STATE AGENCIES; AND

(d) ENSURE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS, INCLUDING BY MEASURING KEY OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAMS AND MAKING THE OUTCOMES MORE TRANSPARENT AND EASY TO UNDERSTAND FOR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS.

(6) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL NOT INCLUDE IN THE TRANSITION PLAN ANY RECOMMENDATION THAT IS INCONSISTENT WITH OR, IF IMPLEMENTED, WOULD:

(a) BE INCONSISTENT WITH OR WOULD RESULT IN A VIOLATION OF FEDERAL LAW OR RULE, INCLUDING THE REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCIES IN 29 CFR 29.13;

(b) CHANGE THE APPOINTING AUTHORITY FOR, OR MEMBERSHIP OF, THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL, CREATED IN SECTION 8-15.7-105; THE COMMITTEE FOR APPRENTICESHIP IN NEW AND EMERGING INDUSTRIES, CREATED IN SECTION 8-15.7-104; OR THE COMMITTEE FOR APPRENTICESHIP IN THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES, CREATED IN SECTION 8-15.7-103;

(c) CHANGE THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY'S STATUS AS A **TYPE 1** ENTITY; OR

(d) CHANGE THE COLORADO OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS' OR COLORADO DISABILITY OPPORTUNITY OFFICE'S STATUSES AS **TYPE 1** ENTITIES OR THE OFFICES' REGULAR ACCESS TO THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR AND POWER TO CONVENE OTHER STATE AGENCIES.

24-38-304. Funding - in-kind donations.

(1) THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE MAY SEEK, ACCEPT, AND EXPEND GIFTS, GRANTS, OR DONATIONS FROM PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SOURCES FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS PART 3. THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE MAY ACCEPT DONATIONS OF IN-KIND SERVICES FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS PART 3, INCLUDING FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

(2) THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE AND THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL CARRY OUT THIS PART 3 WITHIN EXISTING APPROPRIATIONS.

24-38-305. Repeal of part.

THIS PART 3 IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JUNE 30, 2027.

SECTION 3. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 24-1-114, **amend** (1), (2), and (5)(b); and **add** (1.1) and (1.5) as follows:

24-1-114. Department of higher education - creation - mission - legislative intent - definitions.

(1) There is ~~hereby created a~~ THE department of higher education, the head of which ~~shall be~~ is the executive director of the ~~Colorado commission on higher education~~ DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, who ~~shall be~~ is appointed by the governor and whose powers and duties are as specified in this section.

(1.1) (a) BEGINNING JULY 1, 2028, THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION IS TO OVERSEE A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT THAT INTEGRATES POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES FOR COLORADANS. IT IS THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO EVALUATE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TRANSITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE CREATED IN SECTION 24-38-302, MAKE ANY NECESSARY STATUTORY CHANGES TO EFFECTUATE THE EXPANSION OF THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION TO OVERSEE A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT, AND RENAME THE DEPARTMENT ACCORDINGLY.

(b) THIS SUBSECTION (1.1) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JUNE 30, 2029.

(1.5) (a) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(I) "COMMISSION" MEANS THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION CREATED IN SECTION 23-1-102.

(II) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

(III) "EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR" MEANS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT.

(b) (I) EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2028, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION IS RENAMED THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

(II) ON AND AFTER JULY 1, 2028, AS USED IN EVERY STATUTE, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES, "EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION" MEANS THE "EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION".

(III) THE REVISOR OF STATUTES IS AUTHORIZED TO CHANGE ALL REFERENCES IN THE COLORADO REVISED STATUTES TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AS APPROPRIATE.

(2) The Colorado commission on higher education and the office of executive director of the ~~commission~~ DEPARTMENT, created in article 1 of title 23, are **type 1** entities, as defined in section 24-1-105, and exercise their powers and perform their duties and functions under the department. ~~of higher education.~~

(5) (b) With respect to the Colorado commission on higher education and the universities, colleges, and boards specified in subsection (4) of this section, the executive director has only those powers, duties, and functions prescribed in article

1 of title 23; except that the executive director ~~of the Colorado commission on higher education~~ is authorized to negotiate, implement, and monitor contracts, as described in sections 23-18-201 (2), 23-18-303.5, and 23-18-304, with universities, colleges, and boards, in consultation with the Colorado commission on higher education.

SECTION 4. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-101.1, **amend** (3) as follows:

23-1-101.1. Definitions.

As used in this article 1, unless the context otherwise requires:

(3) "Executive director" means the office of the executive director of the ~~Colorado commission on higher education created and existing pursuant to section 24-1-114, C.R.S.~~ DEPARTMENT.

SECTION 5. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-110, **repeal** (2)(a), (3), and (4); and **add** (2)(c) as follows:

23-1-110. Organization, meetings, and staff - repeal.

~~(2) (a) The governor shall appoint, with the consent of the senate, an executive director qualified by substantial training and experience in the field of higher education. The executive director shall be the executive officer of the commission and the department, shall serve at the pleasure of the governor, and shall receive compensation commensurate with the duties of the office as determined by the governor. The duties and responsibilities of the executive director shall be discharged in accordance with the policies, procedures, and directives of the commission and the department. The executive director shall employ such professional and clerical personnel as deemed necessary to carry out the duties and functions of the commission and the department. Offices held by the executive director and professional personnel are declared to be educational in nature and not under the state personnel system.~~

(c) (I) EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2028, IN HOUSE BILL 26-1317, ENACTED IN 2026, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION IS RENAMED THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

(II) THIS SUBSECTION (2)(c) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JUNE 30, 2029.

~~(3) The executive director shall conduct all studies and programs of the commission and coordinate such studies and programs with those of other state agencies having duties and functions concerned with higher education, so as to avoid duplication of programs and staff.~~

~~(4) The executive director shall review and approve or deny any proposed action or recommendation of the private occupational school board acting pursuant to article 64 of this title 23.~~

SECTION 6. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** article 1.1 to title 23 as follows:

ARTICLE 1.1
Department of Higher Education

23-1.1-101. Definitions.

AS USED IN THIS ARTICLE 1.1, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(1) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION CREATED IN SECTION 24-1-114.

(2) "EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR" MEANS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT.

23-1.1-102. Department structure - mission - duties.

(1) (a) THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS CREATED IN SECTION 24-1-114. THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION IS TO OVERSEE A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT THAT INTEGRATES POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES FOR COLORADANS.

(b) PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-1-114, THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

(2) THE DEPARTMENT CONSISTS OF THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE DIVISIONS, SECTIONS, OTHER UNITS, AND ADVISORY BOARDS AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAY ESTABLISH; AS MAY BE SPECIFIED IN THIS TITLE 23; AND AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 24-1-114.

(3) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAY ESTABLISH DIVISIONS, SECTIONS, OTHER UNITS, AND ADVISORY BOARDS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DETERMINES ARE NECESSARY FOR THE PROPER AND EFFICIENT DISCHARGE OF THE POWERS, DUTIES, AND FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT.

(4) THE DEPARTMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING THE FUNCTIONS AND PROGRAMS AS SET FORTH IN THIS TITLE 23 AND AS OTHERWISE REQUIRED BY LAW.

23-1.1-103. Executive director of the department - appointment - duties - repeal.

(1) (a) THE GOVERNOR SHALL APPOINT, WITH THE CONSENT OF THE SENATE, AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR QUALIFIED BY SUBSTANTIAL TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE COMMISSION AND THE DEPARTMENT, SERVES AT THE PLEASURE OF THE GOVERNOR, AND MUST RECEIVE COMPENSATION COMMENSURATE WITH THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHALL DISCHARGE THEIR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND DIRECTIVES OF THE COMMISSION AND THE DEPARTMENT. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHALL EMPLOY PROFESSIONAL AND CLERICAL PERSONNEL AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DEEMS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION AND THE DEPARTMENT. OFFICES HELD BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

AND PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ARE DECLARED TO BE EDUCATIONAL IN NATURE AND NOT UNDER THE STATE PERSONNEL SYSTEM.

(b) (I) NOTWITHSTANDING SUBSECTION (1)(a) OF THIS SECTION, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION ON JUNE 30, 2028, BECOMES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION ON JULY 1, 2028, UNLESS THE GOVERNOR APPOINTS A DIFFERENT PERSON TO ASSUME THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION EFFECTIVE ON JULY 1, 2028.

(II) THIS SUBSECTION (1)(b) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 31, 2035.

(2) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HAS THE POWERS, DUTIES, AND FUNCTIONS PRESCRIBED IN ARTICLE 1 OF TITLE 24 FOR HEADS OF PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENTS, AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 24-1-114, AND HAS THE POWERS, DUTIES, AND FUNCTIONS SET FORTH IN STATE LAW.

(3) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHALL CONDUCT ALL STUDIES AND PROGRAMS OF THE COMMISSION AND COORDINATE THE STUDIES AND PROGRAMS WITH THOSE OF OTHER STATE AGENCIES HAVING DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS CONCERNED WITH HIGHER EDUCATION, SO AS TO AVOID DUPLICATION OF PROGRAMS AND STAFF.

(4) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHALL REVIEW AND APPROVE OR DENY ANY PROPOSED ACTION OR RECOMMENDATION OF THE PRIVATE OCCUPATIONAL SCHOOL BOARD ACTING PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 64 OF THIS TITLE 23.

SECTION 7. Effective date. (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, this act takes effect upon passage.

(2) Sections 4 and 6 of this act take effect July 1, 2028.

(3) Section 24-1-114 (1), (1.5), (2), and (5)(b), Colorado Revised Statutes, amended in section 3 of this act, takes effect July 1, 2028.

(4) Section 23-1-110 (2)(a), (3), and (4), Colorado Revised Statutes, amended in section 5 of this act, takes effect July 1, 2028.

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

Approved: May 28, 2026