

**Second Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

REVISED

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

LLS NO. 24-0660.01 Chelsea Princell x4335

SENATE BILL 24-164

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A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR INSTITUTIONS OF**
102 **HIGHER EDUCATION.**

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 adds the following rights to the rights of higher education students:

- Cost transparency regarding a postsecondary education program;
- A timely response on whether transfer credit will be accepted by a public institution of higher education

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.

HOUSE
Amended 2nd Reading
April 25, 2024

SENATE
3rd Reading Unamended
April 10, 2024

SENATE
Amended 2nd Reading
April 9, 2024

- (institution); and
● The right to appeal an institution's decision not to accept a student's request to transfer credits.

The bill makes changes to the statewide common course numbering system to guarantee certain course transfer credits between community colleges, local district colleges, and area technical colleges.

The bill requires the department of higher education to establish an appeal process if an institution wrongfully denies a student's transfer credit.

The bill requires an institution to issue a decision to a student regarding the acceptance or denial of transfer credits within 30 days after the date the student submits a request for transfer credit.

Beginning January 1, 2025, the bill requires an institution to provide a financial aid and cost disclosure form to a student prior to the student decision deadline to accept admission to the institution.

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

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-125, **amend** (1)
3 **introductory portion; and add (1)(h), (1)(i), (1)(j), (1)(k), (1.5), and (6) as**
4 **follows:**

5 **23-1-125. Commission directive - student bill of rights - degree**
6 **requirements - implementation of core courses - competency test -**
7 **prior learning - prior work-related experience - policies - definitions**
8 **- repeal. (1) Student bill of rights.** The general assembly hereby finds
9 **that students enrolled in public institutions of higher education shall AND**
10 **STUDENTS WHO ARE ACCEPTED TO AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION**
11 **have the following rights:**

12 **(h) STUDENTS HAVE A RIGHT TO TRANSPARENCY OF THE COST OF**
13 **POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON**
14 **FEEES, ASSOCIATED EXPENSES, AND FINANCIAL AID IN THE FORM OF**
15 **SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, AND LOANS;**

16 **(i) STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO SEAMLESS TRANSFER OF**
17 **COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX,**

1 TRANSPARENCY IN THE PROCESS FOR TRANSFERRING CREDITS, A TIMELY
2 RESPONSE ON APPLICATIONS FOR TRANSFERRING CREDITS, AND
3 TRANSPARENCY IN HOW AND WHY A CREDIT IS ACCEPTED OR REJECTED BY
4 AN INSTITUTION AND HOW AND WHY A CREDIT IS OR IS NOT APPLIED
5 TOWARD DEGREE REQUIREMENTS;

6 (j) STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPEAL AN INSTITUTION'S
7 FAILURE TO ACCEPT THE STUDENT'S REQUEST FOR TRANSFER CREDIT; AND

8 (k) STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW WHAT WORK-RELATED
9 EXPERIENCES OR PRIOR LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ARE AWARDED
10 POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC CREDIT AT THE INSTITUTION IN WHICH THE
11 STUDENT IS ENROLLED, PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-5-145.5.

12 (1.5) Policies. ON OR BEFORE APRIL 1, 2025, THE COMMISSION
13 SHALL ADOPT POLICIES FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
14 ON HOW TO BEST IMPLEMENT THE RIGHT DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (1)(i)
15 OF THIS SECTION.

16 (6) Definitions. AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT
17 OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

18 (a) "GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE" MEANS A LOWER-DIVISION
19 COURSE OFFERED BY AN INSTITUTION THAT ANY DEGREE-SEEKING
20 STUDENT ENROLLED AT THE INSTITUTION MUST SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE
21 IN ORDER TO OBTAIN AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE OR A BACHELOR'S DEGREE
22 FROM THE INSTITUTION.

23 (b) "GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX" MEANS A GROUP
24 OF GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES OR LOWER-DIVISION COURSES REQUIRED
25 FOR A SPECIFIC PROGRAM AT THE INSTITUTION THAT EVERY STUDENT
26 ENROLLED IN THE SPECIFIC PROGRAM AT THE INSTITUTION MUST
27 SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE IN ORDER TO TRANSFER TO OR FROM AN

1 INSTITUTION AND HAS EQUIVALENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AS THE SAME
2 LEVEL OF COURSES OFFERED BY ANOTHER INSTITUTION.

3 (c) "LOWER-DIVISION COURSE" MEANS A COURSE NUMBERED FROM
4 ONE HUNDRED TO TWO HUNDRED NINETY-NINE OR ONE THOUSAND TO TWO
5 THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED NINETY-NINE.

6 (d) "PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION" OR
7 "INSTITUTION" HAS THE SAME MEANING SET FORTH IN SECTION 23-4.5-102.

8 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-108.5, **amend**
9 **(1), (2)(c), (3)(a), (3)(b), (3)(c), (4), and (5); repeal (2)(b) and (2)(d); and**
10 **add (2)(e), (2)(f), (2)(g), (3)(d.5), (3)(d.7), (6.5), and (8) as follows:**

11 **23-1-108.5. Duties and powers of the commission with regard**
12 **to common course numbering system - council of higher education**
13 **representatives - rules - legislative declaration - definitions - repeal.**

14 (1) The general assembly hereby finds that, for many students, the ability
15 to transfer among all state-supported institutions of higher education
16 INSTITUTIONS is critical to their success in achieving a degree. The
17 general assembly further finds that it is necessary for the state to have
18 sound transfer policies that provide the broadest and simplest mechanisms
19 feasible while protecting the academic quality of the institutions of higher
20 education and their undergraduate degree programs. The general
21 assembly finds, therefore, that it is in the best interests of the state for the
22 commission to oversee the adoption of a statewide articulation matrix
23 system of course numbering for general education courses THE
24 GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX, that WHICH includes all
25 state-supported institutions of higher education INSTITUTIONS and that
26 will ensure that the quality of and requirements that pertain to general
27 education courses THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX

1 COURSES are comparable and transferable systemwide.

2 (2) As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires:

3 (b) "Course numbering system" means the statewide articulation
4 matrix system of common course numbering for general education
5 courses adopted by the commission pursuant to paragraph (c) of
6 subsection (3) of this section.

7 (c) "General education courses COURSE" means the group of
8 courses offered by an institution of higher education that every student
9 enrolled in the institution must successfully complete to attain an
10 associate's or bachelor's degree A LOWER-DIVISION COURSE OFFERED BY
11 AN INSTITUTION THAT ANY DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENT ENROLLED AT THE
12 INSTITUTION MUST SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN AN
13 ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE OR A BACHELOR'S DEGREE FROM THE INSTITUTION.

14 (d) "Higher education institution" means a state-supported
15 institution of higher education.

16 (e) "GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX" MEANS A GROUP
17 OF GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES OR LOWER-DIVISION COURSES REQUIRED
18 FOR A SPECIFIC PROGRAM AT THE INSTITUTION THAT EVERY STUDENT
19 ENROLLED IN THE SPECIFIC PROGRAM AT THE INSTITUTION MUST
20 SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE IN ORDER TO TRANSFER TO OR FROM AN
21 INSTITUTION AND THAT HAS EQUIVALENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AS THE
22 SAME LEVEL OF COURSES OFFERED BY ANOTHER INSTITUTION.

23 (f) "HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION" OR "INSTITUTION" MEANS
24 A PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS DEFINED IN SECTION
25 23-4.5-102.

26 (g) "LOWER-DIVISION COURSE" MEANS A COURSE NUMBERED FROM
27 ONE HUNDRED TO TWO HUNDRED NINETY-NINE OR ONE THOUSAND TO

1 TWO THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED NINETY-NINE.

2

3 (3) (a) On or before July 1, 2001, the commission shall convene
4 a council consisting of representatives from each of the higher education
5 governing boards and each of the four-year higher education institutions,
6 a representative sample of the two-year higher education institutions, and
7 a representative of the commission. The commission shall consult with
8 the governing boards when convening representatives from the higher
9 education institutions. By July 1, 2011, the council shall create a process
10 through which it shall seek input from and consult with various higher
11 education student organizations for each articulation agreement and for
12 the review of general education courses and the course numbering system
13 as required in paragraph (c) of this subsection (3) COURSES IN THE
14 GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX AS REQUIRED IN SUBSECTION
15 (3)(c) OF THIS SECTION.

16 (b) The council shall recommend to the commission a statewide
17 articulation matrix system of common course numbering GUARANTEED
18 TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX to which the general education courses for
19 each higher education institution may be mapped.

20 (c) (I) On or before October 1, 2002, the council shall recommend
21 to the commission a list of general education courses to be included in the
22 course numbering system GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX. In
23 identifying said general education THE courses, the council shall review
24 the course descriptions and may request summaries of course syllabi for
25 review, focusing first on lower-division general education courses. The
26 commission shall review the council's recommendations and adopt a
27 statewide articulation matrix system of common course numbering

1 GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX for general education courses,
2 including criteria for ~~such~~ THE courses, on or before January 1, 2003.

3 (II) The council shall annually review the list of general education
4 courses and the ~~course numbering system~~ GUARANTEED TRANSFER
5 PATHWAY MATRIX, including the criteria, adopted by the commission and
6 recommend ~~such~~ changes as may be necessary to maintain the accuracy
7 and integrity of the ~~course numbering system~~ GUARANTEED TRANSFER
8 PATHWAY MATRIX. The council's annual review ~~shall~~ MUST include
9 consideration of the course descriptions, and the council may request
10 summaries of course syllabi for further review.

11 (d.5) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2024, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL
12 ADD ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIVES AS NECESSARY TO THE COUNCIL TO
13 ENSURE EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF INSTITUTIONS ON THE COUNCIL.

14 (d.7) ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2025, AND EVERY OCTOBER 1
15 THEREAFTER, THE COUNCIL SHALL REVIEW THE LIST OF COURSES IN THE
16 GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX AND MAKE
17 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION AS NECESSARY TO MAKE
18 CHANGES AND MAINTAIN ACCURACY. AS PART OF THE REVIEW, THE
19 COUNCIL SHALL IDENTIFY:

20 (I) THE HIGHEST ENROLLMENT AND TRANSFER ACTIVITY FOR
21 COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX;

22 (II) COURSES THAT STUDENTS ARE LESS LIKELY TO RECEIVE FULL
23 CREDIT FOR THAT APPLY TOWARD THE STUDENT'S CHOSEN ACADEMIC
24 PROGRAM UPON TRANSFER; AND

25 (III) HOW THE NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS DIFFERS AMONG
26 INSTITUTIONS AND WHERE MISALIGNMENT OCCURS BETWEEN COURSES IN
27 THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX.

1 (4) (a) Following adoption of the course numbering system, each
2 higher education institution shall review its course offerings and identify
3 those general education courses offered by the institution that correspond
4 with the courses included in the course numbering system. The EACH
5 higher education institution shall submit its list of identified courses IN
6 THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX, including course
7 descriptions and, upon request of the commission, summaries of course
8 syllabi, for review and approval by the commission on or before March
9 1, 2003, AND ON MARCH 1 OF EACH ODD-NUMBERED YEAR THEREAFTER.

10 (b) Beginning with the fall semester of 2003, each higher
11 education institution shall publish, and update as necessary, a list of
12 course offerings that identifies those general education courses offered by
13 the institution that correspond with the courses included in the course
14 numbering system GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX.

15 (5) (a) All credits earned by a student in any general education
16 course identified as corresponding with a course included in the course
17 numbering system shall be THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY
18 MATRIX ARE automatically transferable among AND APPLICABLE TO THE
19 STUDENT'S DECLARED MAJOR OR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS. IF THE
20 CREDITS EARNED BY A STUDENT CANNOT BE APPLIED TO THE STUDENT'S
21 DECLARED MAJOR OR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS, THE CREDITS MUST BE
22 USED TO FULFILL ANY REMAINING GENERAL ELECTIVE COURSE
23 REQUIREMENTS NEEDED FOR THE STUDENT'S MAJOR OR PROGRAM. IF A
24 STUDENT CHANGES THE STUDENT'S MAJOR OR DECLARED PROGRAM OF
25 STUDY, THE APPLICATION OF TRANSFER CREDITS TO THE STUDENT'S NEW
26 MAJOR OR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS MUST BE RE-EVALUATED. THIS
27 REQUIREMENT APPLIES TO all higher education institutions upon transfer

1 and enrollment ACCEPTANCE of the student. All higher education
2 institutions in Colorado shall participate in the course numbering system
3 GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX. The commission shall adopt
4 such policies and guidelines as may be necessary for the implementation
5 of this section. Each INSTITUTION'S governing board shall modify its
6 existing policies as may be necessary to accept the transfer of these
7 credits.

8 (b) ALL COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY
9 MATRIX SYSTEM MUST QUALIFY AS THE SAME COURSE AT THE RECEIVING
10 INSTITUTION, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE TOTAL CREDITS ASSIGNED TO THE
11 COURSE.

12 (c) A RECEIVING INSTITUTION SHALL NOT REQUIRE A TRANSFER
13 STUDENT TO TAKE THE SAME OR SIMILAR COURSES WHO HAS COMPLETED
14 THE REQUIRED COURSE IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX,
15 REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE STUDENT EARNED AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE
16 PRIOR TO TRANSFER.

17 (6.5) (a) NOTWITHSTANDING SECTION 24-1-136 (11)(a)(I),
18 BEGINNING JANUARY 2026, AND EVERY JANUARY THEREAFTER, THE
19 DEPARTMENT SHALL INCLUDE AS PART OF ITS "SMART ACT" HEARING,
20 REQUIRED BY SECTION 2-7-203, A COMPILED REPORT OF INFORMATION
21 RECEIVED FROM EACH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION REGARDING
22 COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX THAT
23 INCLUDES:

24 (I) THE NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS TRANSFERRING
25 TO THE INSTITUTION AND EACH INSTITUTION THAT A STUDENT IS
26 TRANSFERRING FROM;

27 (II) THE AVERAGE TIME NEEDED TO COMPLETE A BACHELOR'S

1 DEGREE FOR A TRANSFER STUDENT COMPARED TO A NON-TRANSFER
2 STUDENT;

3 (III) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CREDITS ACCEPTED AND APPLIED
4 RELATED TO GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY COURSES, GENERAL
5 EDUCATION COURSES, AND OTHER COURSE EQUIVALENTS; AND

6 (IV) THE NUMBER OF CREDITS THAT WERE ACCEPTED AND NOT
7 ACCEPTED, AND THE NUMBER OF CREDITS THAT WERE APPLIED AND WERE
8 NOT APPLIED TO EACH STUDENT'S DEGREE PROGRAM COURSE
9 REQUIREMENTS, AT THE TIME THE STUDENT INITIALLY TRANSFERRED TO
10 AND ENROLLED IN THE INSTITUTION, DISAGGREGATED BY DEGREE
11 PROGRAM.

12 (b) USING EXISTING STATEWIDE DATA, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL
13 ALSO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FOR EACH INSTITUTION
14 REGARDING THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TRANSFER CREDITS EARNED AND THE
15 TOTAL AMOUNT OF CREDITS APPLIED TOWARD DEGREE REQUIREMENTS IN
16 THE REPORT REQUIRED IN SUBSECTION (6.5)(a) OF THIS SECTION:

17 (I) THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF CREDITS ATTEMPTED AND THE
18 NUMBER OF CREDITS EARNED TO OBTAIN A BACHELOR'S DEGREE FOR A
19 TRANSFER STUDENT COMPARED TO A STUDENT WHO DID NOT TRANSFER TO
20 ANOTHER INSTITUTION BEFORE EARNING THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE; AND

21 (II) THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF ACADEMIC TERMS NEEDED TO
22 COMPLETE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE FOR A TRANSFER STUDENT COMPARED
23 TO A STUDENT WHO DID NOT TRANSFER TO ANOTHER INSTITUTION BEFORE
24 EARNING THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE.

25 (8)(a) THE DEPARTMENT HAS EXCLUSIVE AUTHORITY TO BRING AN
26 ENFORCEMENT ACTION ON BEHALF OF THE STATE AGAINST AN INSTITUTION
27 FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION.

1 (b) PRIOR TO AN ENFORCEMENT ACTION PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION
2 (8)(a) OF THIS SECTION, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ISSUE A NOTICE OF
3 VIOLATION TO THE INSTITUTION AND EXPLAIN HOW THE INSTITUTION MAY
4 REMEDY THE VIOLATION, IF POSSIBLE. IF THE INSTITUTION FAILS TO
5 REMEDY THE VIOLATION WITHIN THREE MONTHS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE
6 NOTICE OF VIOLATION, THE DEPARTMENT MAY BRING AN ENFORCEMENT
7 ACTION AGAINST THE INSTITUTION.

8 (c) THE DEPARTMENT HAS THE AUTHORITY TO OVERTURN A
9 COURSE TRANSFER DECISION MADE BY AN INSTITUTION REGARDING A
10 COURSE IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX THAT IS IN
11 VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION.

12 (d) A STUDENT ENROLLED AT AN INSTITUTION MAY APPEAL AN
13 INSTITUTION'S DECISION REGARDING THE DENIAL OF CREDIT FOR COURSES
14 IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX THAT THE STUDENT
15 SEEKS TO TRANSFER THROUGH AN APPEALS PROCESS ESTABLISHED BY THE
16 DEPARTMENT.

17 (e) THE DEPARTMENT MAY PROMULGATE RULES, PURSUANT TO
18 SECTION 24-4-103, AS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THIS SUBSECTION (8).

19 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add 23-5-150** as
20 follows:

21 **23-5-150. Transfer credit review process and nontransferable**
22 **credit - notice - definition.** (1) AN INSTITUTION SHALL PROVIDE A
23 STUDENT WITH A DETERMINATION REGARDING THE ACCEPTANCE OR
24 DENIAL OF THE STUDENT'S REQUEST AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR
25 TRANSFER CREDIT WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER THE STUDENT IS ADMITTED
26 TO THE INSTITUTION.

27 (2) AN INSTITUTION SHALL PUBLISH THE INSTITUTION'S PROCESS

1 AND TIMELINE FOR REVIEWING AND MAKING A DECISION REGARDING
2 TRANSFER CREDIT REQUESTS ON THE INSTITUTION'S WEBSITE. THE
3 INSTITUTION SHALL UPDATE ITS WEBSITE WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER
4 MAKING A CHANGE TO ITS PROCESS AND TIMELINE FOR REVIEWING AND
5 ISSUING DECISIONS REGARDING TRANSFER CREDIT REQUESTS.

6 (3) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE
7 REQUIRES, "INSTITUTION" MEANS A "PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER
8 EDUCATION" AS DEFINED IN SECTION 23-4.5-102.

9 **SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-70-103, amend
10 (3) as follows:

11 **23-70-103. Responsibility of governing boards of constituent**
12 **institutions.** (3) ~~The respective governing boards of the constituent~~
13 ~~institutions shall provide~~ ENSURE that credits earned at each of the
14 ~~constituent institutions shall be~~ ARE transferable between institutions
15 ~~insofar as they meet the degree and grade requirements of the student's~~
16 ~~chosen program of studies at one of the constituent institutions as~~
17 ~~determined by the degree-granting institution~~ AS REQUIRED BY SECTION
18 23-1-108.5.

19 **SECTION 5. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds,
20 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
21 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for
22 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state
23 institutions.