



## The Colorado Department of Higher Education supports HB 17-1003 - Strategic Plan to Address Teacher Shortage -

Bill Sponsors: Representative McLachlan and Senator Coram

HB 17-1003 would require the Department of Higher Education (DHE), in collaboration with K-12 partners and education stakeholders, to develop a strategic and comprehensive plan to address the critical issue of teacher shortages in Colorado schools. The plan will examine the numerous steps needed to bolster the recruitment and retention of teachers – as well as examining ways to make careers in education more appealing for younger Coloradans.

This plan would be developed in close partnership with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and key community and educational groups in urban, suburban and rural regions of the state.

This bill stresses accountability in deliverables as it requires stakeholder engagement, a firm deadline for report completion and mandatory reporting to both the House and Senate Education Committees. Colorado Has a Teacher Shortage Crisis.

Most Colorado school districts continue to experience extreme difficulty attracting and retaining qualified instructors in specific disciplines, particularly secondary math and science. Other high demand areas include special education, agricultural education and specialized services (e.g. speech pathology).

Colorado's 109 rural school districts have been dramatically impacted – particularly those in the eastern and southeastern regions of the state. In these regions, schools are unable to regularly fill classroom positions, leading to concerns regarding student success and academic preparation for pathways beyond high school.

### WHY IS THIS BILL NEEDED?

The Department is seeking your support because:

- We believe endorsement of this bill signals a clear concern regarding the teacher shortage and is a statement of value for our teachers.
- Passage of this bill will ensure the involvement of additional key educational institutions/organizations, and
- It establishes a final reporting date to House and Senate committees, ensuring your continued engagement as we work toward solutions for this chronic problem.
- Approval of this bill not only demonstrates a continued commitment to educational excellence in Colorado, but also highlights the need for immediate and innovative approaches to remedy this severe teacher shortage.

The Department of Higher Education urges your support for SB 17-1003.



For more information, please contact Kachina Weaver, Chief Policy Officer for the Colorado Department of Higher Education, at (303) 883-7076 or [kachina.weaver@dhe.state.co.us](mailto:kachina.weaver@dhe.state.co.us)

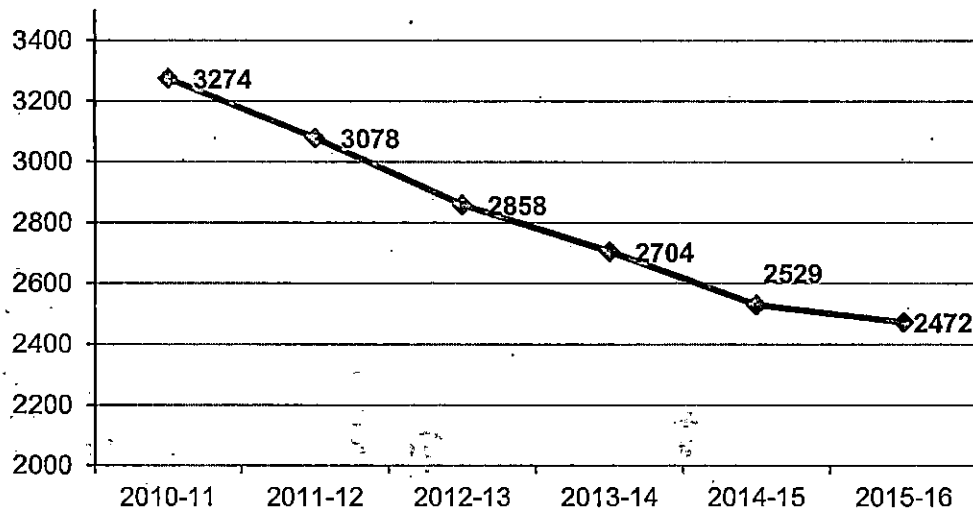




## Colorado Educator Preparation at a Glance

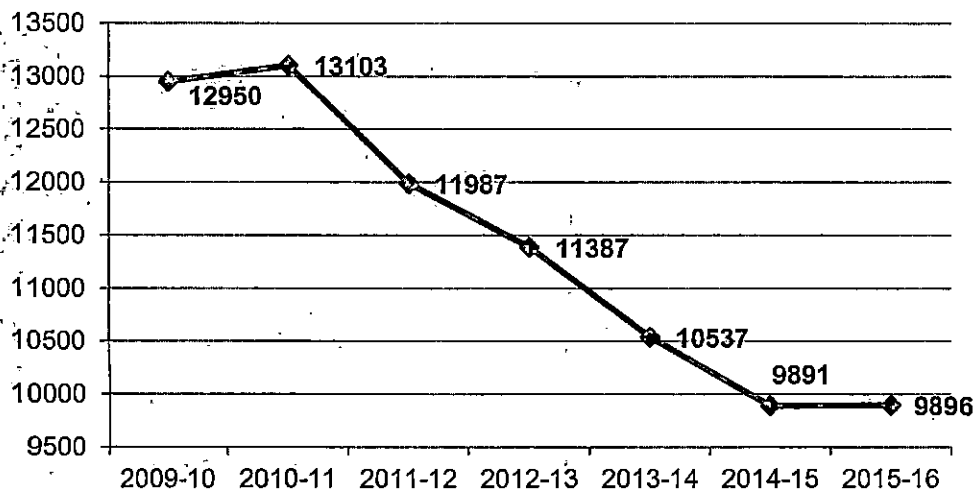
### Program Completion

Declining completion continues to impact Colorado districts. Completion dropped 2.2% since last year, continuing a six-year trend. Since 2010, completion has dropped 24%.



### Program Enrollment

Enrollment has flat-lined. Even with three new programs launched this year, enrollment is still down 23% since 2010.



### Fast Facts

#### In 2015-2016:

- 3,268 individuals completed an educator preparation program, 25% of whom went through an alternative licensure route
- 9,896 students enrolled in education preparation programs

#### Since 2010:

- 24% drop in education preparation program completions
- 23% drop in enrollment

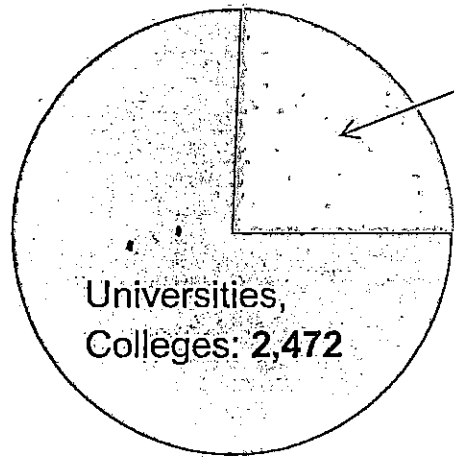
#### Statewide completers by teaching area

- 4 Business education
- 6 agriculture and natural resources
- 31 world language
- 84 mathematics
- 101 early childhood
- 108 science
- 751 elementary education



### Completion Breakdown

Most Colorado students completed traditional programs through a college or university. About a quarter went through an alternative license route, such as an online program.



Alternative programs: 796

Total: 3,268

### Why the decline?

To students, education careers seem difficult, low-paying and thankless.

Reviewing national and state surveys—as well as our own qualitative research—we've identified three main reasons why students opt for other career fields:

- **Perception:** Job is undesirable and teachers seem undervalued by society.
- **Compensation:** In many Colorado communities, the pay does not cover basic costs of living.
- **Return on Investment:** Low salaries result in students struggling to pay back college loans.

### What can we do about it?

Colorado must act on this looming crisis. DHE and the Colorado Department of Education are working on key initiatives, including:

- Lifting up the value of the profession
- Developing a plan to better recruit and retain teachers, looking closely at compensation
- Researching and implementing new educator pathways that maintain quality and maximize retention
- Supporting ongoing work in rural districts and with STEM teacher development

### Where can I learn more?

For more information on educator preparation programs, visit

- **2015-2016 Educator Preparation Report:**  
[http://higher.ed.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Legislative/TED/201612\\_TED\\_toCGA.pdf](http://higher.ed.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Legislative/TED/201612_TED_toCGA.pdf)
- **Educator Preparation in Colorado:**  
<http://higher.ed.colorado.gov/Academics/TeacherEd>