

CHAPTER 239

EDUCATION - PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HOUSE BILL 24-1446

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) McLachlan and Hartsook, Amabile, Bacon, Boesenecker, Brown, Clifford, Daugherty, Duran, English, Hamrick, Herod, Jodeh, Joseph, Kipp, Lieder, Lindstedt, Lukens, Mabrey, Marshall, Martinez, Mauro, McCormick, Ortiz, Parenti, Pugliese, Rutinel, Story, Taggart, Valdez, Woodrow, Young, McCluskie;
also SENATOR(S) Buckner and Pelton B., Coleman, Exum, Ginal, Gonzales, Jaquez Lewis, Michaelson Jenet, Priola, Roberts, Rodriguez, Winter F.

AN ACT

CONCERNING IMPROVING RESOURCES FOR SCIENCE EDUCATORS, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

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) Access to high-quality, evidence-informed science instruction means that students will develop an in-depth understanding of content, develop key skills, and be prepared to fill the workforce needs of the state;

(b) In 2018, the Colorado state board of education adopted the Next Generation Science Standards, a set of research-based academic standards designed to give local educators flexibility while holding students to higher performance expectations in science;

(c) The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted Colorado public schools' ability to measure student progress in science and implement supports for the transition to the Next Generation Science Standards;

(d) State assessment results in 2023 showed low proficiency in science among students in fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades;

(e) Educators are the most important in-school support for improving student outcomes in science; and

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.

(f) All teachers, regardless of their duration of time in the classroom, deserve access to high-quality professional development opportunities that align with the Next Generation Science Standards.

(2) The general assembly finds, therefore, that action is required to better equip educators to deliver high-quality, evidence-informed science instruction.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 22-2-146.8 as follows:

22-2-146.8. Department of education - improving science outcomes - teacher professional development - report - appropriation - legislative declaration - definitions. (1) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(a) "CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES" HAS THE SAME MEANING AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 22-20-103.

(b) "COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR SCIENCE" MEANS EVIDENCE-INFORMED STANDARDS FOR STUDENT LEARNING IN SCIENCE AS ADOPTED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

(c) "ELIGIBLE TEACHER" MEANS A PERSON WHO IS LICENSED PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 60.5 OF THIS TITLE 22 OR IS AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-60.5-111 TO TEACH AND WHO IS EMPLOYED BY A LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDER IN THE STATE TO PROVIDE SCIENCE INSTRUCTION. "ELIGIBLE TEACHER" ALSO INCLUDES AN EDUCATOR WHO IS EMPLOYED BY AN INDIAN TRIBE OR TRIBAL ORGANIZATION IN THE STATE TO PROVIDE SCIENCE INSTRUCTION.

(d) "EVIDENCE-INFORMED" MEANS A PROGRAM OR PRACTICE IN SCIENCE THAT RELIES ON PEER-REVIEWED EVIDENCE TO ESTABLISH A BASIS FOR ACCELERATING LEARNING. "EVIDENCE-INFORMED" INCLUDES EVIDENCE-INFORMED CURRICULA, INTERVENTIONS, ACCELERATION STRATEGIES, AND ASSESSMENT OPTIONS.

(e) "LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDER" MEANS A SCHOOL DISTRICT, A CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZED BY A SCHOOL DISTRICT PURSUANT TO PART 1 OF ARTICLE 30.5 OF THIS TITLE 22, A CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZED BY THE STATE CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE PURSUANT TO PART 5 OF ARTICLE 30.5 THIS TITLE 22, OR A BOARD OF COOPERATIVE SERVICES CREATED AND OPERATING PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 5 OF THIS TITLE 22 THAT OPERATES MORE THAN ONE PUBLIC SCHOOL.

(f) "RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT" MEANS A SCHOOL DISTRICT IN COLORADO THAT THE DEPARTMENT DETERMINES IS RURAL BASED ON THE GEOGRAPHIC SIZE OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE DISTANCE OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT FROM THE NEAREST LARGE, URBANIZED AREA.

(g) "SMALL RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT" MEANS A SCHOOL DISTRICT IN COLORADO THAT THE DEPARTMENT DETERMINES IS RURAL BASED ON THE GEOGRAPHIC SIZE OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE DISTANCE OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT FROM THE NEAREST LARGE, URBANIZED AREA AND THAT ENROLLS FEWER THAN ONE THOUSAND STUDENTS IN PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH TWELFTH GRADE.

(h) "STANDARD" HAS THE SAME MEANING AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 22-7-1003.

(2) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL CONTRACT WITH A COLORADO INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE "PROCUREMENT CODE", ARTICLES 101 TO 112 OF TITLE 24, TO MAKE AVAILABLE NO LATER THAN THE BEGINNING OF THE 2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR A FREE, OPTIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM HOSTED ON A REGIONAL BASIS AROUND THE STATE THAT INCLUDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION AND THAT IS DESIGNED TO ENHANCE PEDAGOGY AROUND THE COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR SCIENCE. THE COLORADO INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SELECTED FOR THE CONTRACT MAY PARTNER WITH OTHER NON-PROFITS OR THIRD-PARTY PROVIDERS THAT OFFER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO TEACHERS THAT ENHANCE PEDAGOGY AROUND THE COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR SCIENCE. THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM MUST:

(a) BE DESIGNED TO ENHANCE STUDENT INSTRUCTION AROUND THE COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR SCIENCE, INCLUDING COVERAGE OF THE SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING PRACTICES, DISCIPLINARY CORE IDEAS, AND CROSS-CUTTING CONCEPTS PROVIDED BY THE STANDARDS;

(b) INCLUDE EVIDENCE-INFORMED INTERVENTIONS AND STRATEGIES TO GROW AND ACCELERATE STUDENT PROFICIENCIES IN SCIENCE TO HELP STUDENTS WHO ARE BELOW GRADE LEVEL OR STRUGGLING IN SCIENCE, CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, GIFTED STUDENTS, AND STUDENTS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS;

(c) INCLUDE, BUT NEED NOT BE LIMITED TO, CONTENT ALIGNED WITH COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR SCIENCE, WHICH INCLUDE CULTIVATION OF SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY AND BEST PRACTICES;

(d) INCENTIVIZE ELIGIBLE TEACHER PARTICIPATION BY OFFERING ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDIT TOWARD LICENSURE RENEWAL PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 60.5 OF THIS TITLE 22;

(e) BE STRUCTURED TO GIVE LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS AND TEACHERS PLANNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES SUFFICIENT TIME TO PURSUE ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDIT TOWARD LICENSURE RENEWAL PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 60.5 OF THIS TITLE 22; AND

(f) PRIORITIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ELIGIBLE TEACHERS EMPLOYED AT LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS LOCATED IN RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND SMALL RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS IF DEMAND EXCEEDS PROGRAM CAPACITY.

(3) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 30, 2027, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REPORT TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES, AND THE STATE BOARD ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE TEACHERS, DISAGGREGATED BY LICENSE TYPE AND LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDER, WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CREATED IN THIS SECTION.

(4) (a) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECLARES THAT, FOR PURPOSES OF SECTION 17 OF ARTICLE IX OF THE STATE CONSTITUTION, A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM TO ENHANCE PEDAGOGY AROUND THE COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR SCIENCE IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN IMPLEMENTING ACCOUNTABLE PROGRAMS TO MEET STATE ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND MAY THEREFORE RECEIVE FUNDING FROM THE STATE EDUCATION FUND CREATED IN SECTION 17 (4) OF ARTICLE IX OF THE STATE CONSTITUTION.

(b) FOR THE 2024-25 BUDGET YEAR, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL APPROPRIATE THREE MILLION DOLLARS FROM THE STATE EDUCATION FUND TO THE DEPARTMENT. ANY MONEY APPROPRIATED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION THAT IS NOT EXPENDED PRIOR TO JULY 1, 2025, REMAINS AVAILABLE FOR EXPENDITURE FOR THE SAME PURPOSE IN THE 2026-27 BUDGET YEAR WITHOUT FURTHER APPROPRIATION. AT THE END OF THE 2026-27 BUDGET YEAR, THE MONEY THAT IS UNEXPENDED OR UNENCUMBERED REVERTS TO THE STATE EDUCATION FUND.

SECTION 3. Appropriation. For the 2024-25 state fiscal year, \$3,000,000 is appropriated to the department of education for use by student learning. This appropriation is from the state education fund created in section 17 (4)(a) of article IX of the state constitution. To implement this act, the division may use this appropriation for professional development for science teachers.

SECTION 4. Act subject to petition - effective date. This act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in November 2024 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.

Approved: May 23, 2024