A BILL FOR AN ACT

CONCERNING A STATEWIDE PLAN FOR AWARDING COLLEGE CREDIT FOR WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE.

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/)

Making Higher Education Attainable Interim Study Committee. The bill requires an existing council charged with looking at general education courses (council) to implement a plan for determining and awarding academic credit for postsecondary education based on work-related experience.

Furthermore, state institutions of higher education (institutions) are
required to evaluate student learning from work-related experience and award appropriate academic credit for the experience. Also, institutions shall accept and transfer academic credit awarded for work-related experience as courses with guaranteed-transfer designation, unless the council creates a plan concerning awarding and transferring academic credit for work-related experience for courses with guaranteed-transfer designation.

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

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

(a) In addition to the student rights pursuant to section 23-1-125 (1)(a), (1)(c), and (1)(d), Colorado Revised Statutes, students need additional rights for their work-related experience to be evaluated fairly for application toward a postsecondary credential;

(b) To ensure the economic vitality of Colorado, every industry needs access to a skilled workforce, every Coloradan needs access to meaningful employment, and institutions of higher education must maintain the ability to enroll qualified students and produce high-quality credentials of value;

(c) During the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years, high school students earned nine thousand industry credentials related to high-demand jobs and industries in Colorado. These industry credentials should be evaluated for potential application toward a postsecondary credential with transferability among two-year and four-year institutions.

(d) The commission on higher education, in collaboration with representatives from institutions of higher education, must develop a plan to align work-related experience with academic credit that counts toward a student's postsecondary education credential;

(e) The plan must be open, transparent, and credible so students
can progress more efficiently along pathways into postsecondary education and the workforce;

(f) Industry members, especially from high workforce demand and growing industries with critical occupations and top jobs that are identified in the Colorado talent pipeline report, are important stakeholders in this process to ensure Colorado’s higher education system is responsive to students and to the changing economy; and

(g) Through this work, the general assembly ensures additional pathways to career and financial success for Colorado students and workers and reduced costs to students through less time required to earn a degree.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, add 23-5-145.5 as follows:

23-5-145.5. Credit for work-related experience - plan - report - definitions - repeal. (1) As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires:

(a) "Commission on Higher Education" or "Commission" has the same meaning set forth in section 23-1-101.1 (1).

(b) "Council" means the council created and existing pursuant to section 23-1-108.5, convened by the Commission on Higher Education.

(c) "Guaranteed-Transfer Pathways" or "GT Pathways" means the statewide articulation matrix system of common course numbering for general education courses described in section 23-1-108.5 (3)(c).

(d) "State Institution of Higher Education" or "Institution"
HAS THE SAME MEANING SET FORTH IN SECTION 23-1-135 (2).

(e) "STATEWIDE DEGREE TRANSFER AGREEMENT" MEANS A
STATEWIDE DEGREE TRANSFER AGREEMENT DESCRIBED IN SECTION
23-1-108 (7).

(f) "WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE" MEANS ANY EXPERIENCE
ACQUIRED WITHIN THE PAST TEN YEARS THROUGH PAID OR UNPAID
EMPLOYMENT, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO SELF-EMPLOYMENT, AN
INTERNSHIP, A RESIDENCY, A PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM, OR AN
APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM THAT MAY LEAD TO OR RESULT IN A BUSINESS
CREDENTIAL, AN INDUSTRY CREDENTIAL, A TECHNICAL CERTIFICATE, OR
A PROFESSIONAL LICENSE.

(2) (a) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2020, THE COMMISSION, IN
CONSULTATION WITH ALL STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION,
SHALL DEVELOP A PROCESS FOR STUDENTS TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR ANY
COURSE IN THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM THROUGH SUCCESSFUL
COMPLETION OF A PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT, INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT,
EXAMINATION, OR ANY COMBINATION THEREOF THAT IS APPROPRIATE TO
THE LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE COURSE.

(b) BEGINNING IN THE 2020-21 ACADEMIC YEAR, EACH
INSTITUTION SHALL GRANT FULL COURSE CREDIT TO A STUDENT FOR A
COURSE THAT THE STUDENT SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THROUGH THE
REQUIRED PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT, INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT,
EXAMINATION, OR ANY COMBINATION THEREOF FREE OF TUITION. ANY
COURSE CREDIT GRANTED PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (2) MUST BE
TRANSFERABLE TO ANOTHER INSTITUTION PURSUANT TO COMMISSION
POLICY REGARDING GT PATHWAYS OR A STATEWIDE DEGREE TRANSFER
AGREEMENT.
An institution may establish and charge a fee to a student to administer a portfolio assessment, individual assessment, examination, or any combination thereof. A fee must be transparent and reflect the actual cost to administer a portfolio assessment, individual assessment, examination, or any combination thereof, including faculty or staff time and resources, and any appropriately amortized infrastructure cost.

On or before July 1, 2021, and on or before each July 1 thereafter, each institution shall report to the Commission regarding the implementation of this subsection (2). The report must include, at a minimum:

(I) The number of students who were awarded credit and transferred credit pursuant to this subsection (2);

(II) Data regarding the age and demographics of students who were awarded credit and transferred credit to or from the institution pursuant to this subsection (2); and

(III) The fee established and charged by the institution, if any, to administer a portfolio assessment, individual assessment, examination, or any combination thereof pursuant to this subsection (2).

On or before January 1, 2022, the Council, in collaboration with the Commission, shall create, adopt, and implement a plan, referred to in this section as the "Plan", to award postsecondary academic credit for courses in GT pathways or a statewide degree transfer agreement for learning demonstrated from work-related experience. In
CREATING THE PLAN, PRIORITY MAY BE GIVEN TO WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO WORKFORCE DEMANDS AND GROWING INDUSTRIES IDENTIFIED BY THE MOST RECENT COLORADO TALENT PIPELINE REPORT PREPARED PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-46.3-103 OR IDENTIFIED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE COLORADO WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL IN SECTION 24-46.3-101.

(4) THE PLAN MUST INCLUDE:

(a) A PROCESS FOR ASSESSING AND ALIGNING WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCIES REQUIRED FOR AWARDING POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR COURSES IN GT PATHWAYS OR A STATEWIDE DEGREE TRANSFER AGREEMENT, WHICH CREDIT GRANTED MUST BE TRANSFERABLE TO ANOTHER INSTITUTION PURSUANT TO COMMISSION POLICY REGARDING GT PATHWAYS OR A STATEWIDE DEGREE TRANSFER AGREEMENT; AND

(b) A PROCESS FOR EVALUATING CREDENTIALS EARNED BY A STUDENT AT AN AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-60-802 AND DETERMINING HOW POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC CREDIT WILL TRANSFER FROM AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGES, IF APPROPRIATE, TO PUBLIC TWO-YEAR AND FOUR-YEAR STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

(5) THE COUNCIL, IN CREATING THE PLAN, SHALL CONSULT WITH:

(a) REPRESENTATIVES OF INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, FACULTY MEMBERS AND REGISTRARS;

(b) REPRESENTATIVES OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT REPRESENT STUDENTS IN COLORADO;

(c) REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COLORADO WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL;
(d) Representatives of industries with high workforce demand and growing industries identified in the most recent Colorado Talent Pipeline report and organizations representing them; and

(e) Representatives selected by the Commission.

(6) Upon completion of the plan, the Council, in collaboration with the representatives described in subsection (5) of this section, shall continue to work toward expanding opportunities for awarding postsecondary academic credit for learning acquired from work-related experience not otherwise addressed in this section.

(7) Beginning in the 2022-23 academic year, unless the plan is implemented prior to the beginning of the 2022-23 academic year, an institution shall accept in and transfer within the institution and to other institutions postsecondary academic credit awarded for work-related experience for a course that is GT Pathways designated or part of a statewide degree transfer agreement.

(8) (a) During the second regular session of the seventy-third General Assembly in 2022, the Department of Higher Education shall report to the Education Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, or any successor committees, regarding the creation, adoption, and implementation of the plan adopted pursuant to this section.

(b) This subsection (8) is repealed, effective July 1, 2022.

(9) (a) On or before March 1, 2024, and on or before March 1 of each year thereafter, the Council shall report to the
EDUCATION COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, OR ANY SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES, REGARDING THE CONTINUED IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SECTION. THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE, AT A MINIMUM:

(I) THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO WERE AWARDED CREDITS AND WHO TRANSFERRED CREDITS TO OR FROM AN INSTITUTION PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION;

(II) DATA REGARDING THE AGE AND DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDENTS WHO WERE AWARDED CREDITS AND WHO TRANSFERRED CREDITS TO OR FROM AN INSTITUTION PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION;

(III) THE IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES OF THIS SECTION;

(IV) THE FEE ESTABLISHED AND CHARGED BY INSTITUTIONS, IF ANY, TO ADMINISTER A PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT, INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT, EXAMINATION, OR ANY COMBINATION THEREOF PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION;

(V) THE DIRECT COSTS IMPOSED ON INSTITUTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION; AND

(VI) ANY RECOMMENDED STATUTORY REVISIONS TO THIS SECTION.

(b) NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 24-1-136 (11)(a)(I), THE REPORTING REQUIREMENT PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (9) CONTINUES UNTIL THE REPEAL OF THIS SUBSECTION (9).

(c) THIS SUBSECTION (9) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2029.

SECTION 3. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-125, add (4.7) as follows:

23-1-125. Commission directive - student bill of rights - degree requirements - implementation of core courses - competency test - prior learning - prior work-related experience. (4.7) Prior
work-related experience. Pursuant to section 23-5-145.5, the Council created and existing pursuant to section 23-1-108.5, in collaboration with the Commission, shall create, adopt, and implement a plan to determine and award postsecondary academic credit for work-related experience.

SECTION 4. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety.