A BILL FOR AN ACT

CONCERNING INCREASING THE DIVERSITY OF COLORADO'S EDUCATORS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

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 directs the department of higher education and the department of education to convene a workgroup on diversity in the educator workforce (workgroup).

The department of higher education and the department of education shall select the members of the workgroup, which shall include
but are not limited to those agencies, persons, and organizations specified in the bill.

The workgroup shall investigate barriers to the preparation, retention, and recruitment of a diverse educator workforce and shall consider strategies to increase diversity in the educator workforce. The bill includes specific issues for the workgroup to consider.

The workgroup shall submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the education committees of the general assembly no later than September 30, 2021. The workgroup may submit interim findings and recommendations during the 2021 legislative session.

Under current law, the department of higher education reports annually concerning educator preparation programs, including enrollment, graduation rates, outcomes of graduates, and performance on assessments administered for licensure. The bill requires the department to include the required information disaggregated by the candidates' or graduates' gender, race, and ethnicity. Further, the information contained in the annual report must be posted on the department of higher education's and the department of education's websites.

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

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, add 23-1-121.8 as follows:

23-1-121.8. Workgroup on diversity in the educator workforce - duties - recommendations - report - legislative declaration - definitions - repeal. (1) (a) The general assembly finds and declares that:

(I) A high-quality teacher is the most important in-school factor for student achievement;

(II) Further, students benefit from seeing a diverse group of educators in school classrooms;

(III) In Colorado in 2019, seventy-six percent of all teachers are women and sixty-seven percent of all teachers in Colorado identify as white women;

(IV) However, the student demographics in Colorado are
SIGNIFICANTLY MORE DIVERSE AND WILL CONTINUE TO BECOME MORE DIVERSE. FOR EXAMPLE, NEARLY FORTY-SEVEN PERCENT OF ALL PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS IDENTIFY AS NON-WHITE, AND FOURTEEN PERCENT OF STUDENTS CONSIDER THEMSELVES TO BE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS.

(b) (I) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FURTHER FINDS AND DECLARES THAT THERE ARE MANY BARRIERS TO PREPARING, RECRUITING, AND RETAINING A HIGH-QUALITY, DIVERSE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE;

(II) ONE BARRIER IS HOW TEACHERS ARE LICENSED. A STUDY BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON TEACHER QUALITY REPORTED THAT ONLY FORTY-SIX PERCENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHING CANDIDATES PASS THEIR LICENSING TEST ON THE FIRST TRY. MOREOVER, ONLY THIRTY-EIGHT PERCENT OF BLACK TEACHING CANDIDATES, FIFTY-FOUR PERCENT OF HISPANIC TEACHING CANDIDATES, AND SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT OF WHITE TEACHING CANDIDATES PASS THE LICENSING TEST, EVEN AFTER MULTIPLE ATTEMPTS AND EVEN THOUGH THEY COMPLETED AND GRADUATED FROM AN ACCREDITED TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM.

(c) THEREFORE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECLARES THAT AN IMPORTANT STEP TO INCREASING DIVERSITY AMONG COLORADO'S EDUCATORS IS TO TASK THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO INVESTIGATE BARRIERS TO AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR PREPARING, RECRUITING, AND RETAINING A DIVERSE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE THAT BETTER REFLECTS THE DIVERSITY OF COLORADO'S STUDENTS.

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

(a) "DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION CREATED IN SECTION 24-1-115.

(b) "DIVERSE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE" MEANS TEACHERS AND SPECIAL SERVICES PROVIDERS WHO ARE OF A GENDER, ETHNICITY, OR RACE THAT IS UNDERREPRESENTED IN THE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE RELATIVE TO THE GENDER, ETHNICITY, OR RACE OF COLORADO STUDENTS SERVED BY THE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE.

(3) THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SHALL CONVENE A WORKGROUP TO INVESTIGATE BARRIERS TO THE PREPARATION, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION OF A DIVERSE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE AND TO RECOMMEND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR PREPARING, RECRUITING, AND RETAINING A DIVERSE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE.

(4) THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL SELECT WORKGROUP MEMBERS AND MAY SEEK RECOMMENDATIONS OR NOMINATIONS FROM INTERESTED STAKEHOLDERS. THE SELECTED WORKGROUP MEMBERS MUST INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING PERSONS OR ORGANIZATIONS, OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES:

(a) A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION;

(b) A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION;

(c) DEANS OF TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS AT STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION;

(d) DIRECTORS OF ALTERNATIVE TEACHER PROGRAMS;

(e) REPRESENTATIVES FROM COMMUNITY COLLEGES GOVERNED BY THE STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION;
(f) Teachers serving in traditional district schools who hold an initial or professional teacher's license pursuant to Article 60.5 of Title 22;

(g) Teachers serving in district charter schools;

(h) Principals or school leaders of traditional district schools or district charter schools, including schools that have a diverse educator workforce;

(i) Graduates of teacher preparation programs, who may include graduates who did not pass the licensing test on the first try;

(j) Researchers with expertise in the preparation, recruitment, or retention of a diverse educator workforce; and

(k) Nonprofit or other organizations that have expertise in the preparation, recruitment, or retention of a diverse educator workforce.

(5) The workgroup shall investigate barriers to the preparation, retention, and recruitment of a diverse educator workforce and shall consider strategies to increase diversity in the educator workforce. The issues considered by the workgroup may include but are not limited to:

(a) The data and recommendations from the December 16, 2014, report prepared for the Department of Education by Augenblick, Palaich and Associates titled "Keeping Up with the Kids: Increasing Minority Teacher Representation in Colorado";

(b) Effective strategies to build a strong local pipeline for students, especially diverse students, who are or may consider becoming educators, including paid mentorships and
TEACHING AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES;

(c) Educator preparation programs and how they may inhibit or promote success for diverse educator candidates;

(d) Effective strategies to assist paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, and noncertified educators who are engaged in the profession but who are not licensed due to financial difficulties, difficulty in passing the state-certified content test, distance to testing location, preparation and testing fees, or for other reasons;

(e) Whether creating partnerships between school districts that serve minority students and minority-serving institutions will increase the diversity of the educator workforce; and

(f) Effective strategies to retain the existing diverse educator workforce in Colorado, including diverse educators in hard-to-staff schools, which strategies may include financial incentives, such as stipends or bonuses, and robust professional development opportunities.

(6) (a) On or before September 30, 2021, the Department of Higher Education and the Department of Education shall submit a written report from the workgroup to the Education Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate, or any successor committees, concerning:

(I) The workgroup's findings, including identification of existing barriers to the preparation, recruitment, and retention of a diverse educator workforce;

(II) The relevance of the findings and recommendations
SET FORTH IN THE DECEMBER 16, 2014, REPORT REFERENCED IN
SUBSECTION (5)(a) OF THIS SECTION;

(III) EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR PREPARING, RECRUITING, AND
RETAINING A DIVERSE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE IN COLORADO; AND

(IV) THE WORKGROUP'S RECOMMENDATIONS, INCLUDING ANY
NECESSARY CHANGES TO STATUTES OR AGENCY RULES.

(b) THE WORKGROUP MAY SUBMIT INTERIM FINDINGS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION DURING THE 2021 REGULAR
LEGISLATIVE SESSION PRIOR TO THE COMPLETION OF THE FINAL WRITTEN
REPORT PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (6)(a) OF THIS SECTION.

(7) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2022.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-121, amend (6)
as follows:

23-1-121. Commission directive - approval of educator
preparation programs - review - legislative declaration.

(6) (a) NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 24-1-136
(11)(a)(I) TO THE CONTRARY, the department shall annually prepare a
report concerning the enrollment in, graduation rates from, and
effectiveness of the review of educator preparation programs authorized
by the commission. In addition, the report shall include data on the
outcomes of graduates of educator preparation programs pursuant to
section 22-2-112 (1)(q). § 23-1-121. The report shall also state the
percentage of educator candidates graduating from each program during
the preceding twelve months that applied for and received an initial
license pursuant to section 22-60.5-201 § 22-60.5-201, and the percentage of the
graduates who passed the assessments administered pursuant to section
22-60.5-203, § 22-60.5-203, INCLUDING THE PERCENTAGE OF GRADUATES WHO
PASSED THE ASSESSMENTS ON THE FIRST ATTEMPT. For purposes of completing the report required pursuant to this subsection (6), the department of higher education and the department of education shall share any relevant data that complies with state and federal regulations with the other agency. The department shall provide notice to the education committees of the senate and the house of representatives, or any successor committees, that the report is available to the members of the committees upon request.

(b) (I) The general assembly finds and declares that:

(A) A high-quality teacher is the most important in-school factor for student achievement;

(B) Further, students benefit from seeing a diverse group of educators in school classrooms;

(C) However, the educator workforce in Colorado is not as diverse as the population of students it serves or will serve in the future; and

(D) Therefore, the general assembly declares that educator preparation programs must clearly and transparently show the first-time pass rates of candidates, especially those candidates who are of a gender, race, or ethnicity that is underrepresented in the educator workforce, and that diverse educator candidates should have access to the necessary information to determine which educator preparation program gives the candidate the best chance of success at becoming an educator.

(II) To the extent possible, the department shall report all data and information required to be reported annually.
PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (6)(a) OF THIS SECTION, DISAGGREGATED BY
THE GENDER, RACE, AND ETHNICITY OF THE CANDIDATES AND GRADUATES.

(c) THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL POST THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER
EDUCATION'S ANNUAL REPORT, REQUIRED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION
(6)(a) OF THIS SECTION, ON EACH DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE IN THE
LOCATION RELATING TO TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS AND TEACHER
LICENSURE, AS APPLICABLE.

SECTION 3. Appropriation. For the 2020-21 state fiscal year,
$7,400 is appropriated to the department of higher education. This
appropriation is from the general fund. To implement this act, the
department may use this appropriation for a workgroup on diversity in the
educator workforce.

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 (August
5, 2020, if adjournment sine die is on May 6, 2020); 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 2020 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.