



Education

During the 2018 legislative session, the General Assembly considered measures related to kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) education in Colorado. Specifically, the legislature considered bills pertaining to early childhood education, school safety, workforce readiness programs in schools, and incentive programs for teachers.

Early Childhood Education

House Bill 18-1393 makes changes to state law regarding the implementation of the Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Act. The Act aims to provide early literacy education for students enrolled in kindergarten through third grade. The bill mandates that reading assessments and instructional programming be evidence- or scientific-based and be aligned with each other, as well as the preschool through secondary education standards for reading. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) must maintain a list of State Board of Education reviewed and approved skill level and reading assessments. Local education providers can appeal for the inclusion of materials on the list of instructional programming, professional development, and reading assessments from a nationally recognized, evidence-based information clearinghouse that demonstrates that the program has been successful for a similar population of students. Additionally, the bill specifies that per-pupil intervention funding may be used to purchase tutoring or intervention

services in reading for students who receive instructional support, as well as to provide professional development programming. By September 1, 2018, CDE must convene a working group to review the creation and use of READ plans and recommend changes. CDE must submit a report on the working group's findings and recommendations by February 1, 2020.

Under *House Bill 18-1134*, a child must satisfy certain eligibility requirements for a district to use funding under the Colorado Preschool Program to enroll that child in the district's existing full-day kindergarten program. Requirements include: the child lacks an overall learning readiness due to significant family risk factors; the child is in need of language development; or the child is receiving services from the Colorado Department of Human Services (DHS) as a neglected or dependent child.

School Safety

The General Assembly passed several bills addressing school safety and security in public schools in the 2018 legislative session.

Senate Bill 18-269 creates the School Security Disbursement Program in the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to provide funding to local education providers to improve security within public schools. Funds may be used for capital construction projects to improve the security of public school facilities emergency response

Education (cont'd)

training for on-site school resource officers and all school staff, and student threat assessment training. Priority is given to districts that can match the funding.

Senate Bill 18-229 allows a student in an educator preparation program who is seeking field experience to request that the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) process a fingerprint-based criminal history record check for the student when he or she seeks field experiences in a public school, such as student teaching or other clinical experiences. After the results have been forwarded to CDE, the student may authorize CDE to release the results of the record check to school districts or charter schools. For up to three years following the initial check, a student may request CDE to release the results to additional schools or districts, and the results may be used by the student to satisfy the fingerprint submission requirement for a professional teacher license.

Senate Bill 18-151 requires CDE to research approaches, policies, and practices in other states related to bullying prevention and education. After considering the research, the department is required to develop a model bullying prevention and education policy. CDE must publish its findings on the department website by July 1, 2019, as guidance for school districts, charter schools, and the Charter School Institute in developing and implementing bullying prevention and education policies. The research and model policy must be updated by the department every 3 years.

Workforce Readiness

Currently, CDE determines the level of attainment for each public school, each school district, the Colorado Charter School Institute, and the state based on performance indicators, including postsecondary workforce readiness (PWR), which ensures secondary students

graduate high school and are properly prepared for the workforce. *Senate Bill 18-012* requires that the CDE calculate the percentage of high school graduates who enlist in the military, and weigh that enlistment equally with postsecondary enrollment when calculating the PWR indicator.

House Bill 18-1266 extends the Career Development Success Program, created in 2016, through September 1, 2024. The program provides financial incentives for school districts and charter schools that encourage high school students to complete qualified industry credential programs, internships, residencies, construction pre-apprenticeship, or apprenticeship programs or qualified Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Through the program, the CDE distributes up to \$1,000 to school districts and charter schools for each high school student who successfully completes an identified industry certificate, internship, or pre-apprenticeship program, or completes a qualifying AP course. The bill requires that the General Assembly appropriate at least \$1.0 million annually for incentive payments.

Teacher Programs and Incentives

In the 2018 legislative session, the General Assembly passed bills providing licenses to teachers moving from another state and incentives for teachers to work in rural areas. Previously, a teacher who held a comparable license from another state and had three years of continuous teaching experience could be issued a Colorado professional teacher license. *House Bill 18-1095* exempts the spouse of an active duty member of the armed forces from the requirement that the teaching experience be continuous; however, the teaching experience must have occurred within the last seven years. *House Bill 18-1130* changes the experience requirement for professional teacher and special services licenses for teachers coming to Colorado

Education (cont'd)

from other states. Applicants must now hold a comparable license in another state and have at least three years of experience within the previous seven years.

Senate Bill 18-085 increases the number of available financial stipends from 20 to 60 for teachers in rural schools or school districts who are seeking certification as a national board certified teacher or concurrent enrollment teacher. Stipends cannot exceed \$6,000 per teacher, and teachers who accept the stipend must remain employed in a rural school, school district, or board of cooperative educational services for a minimum of three years. The stipends may be used to cover application, tuition, evaluation, or other costs associated with obtaining initial licensure or in support of professional development for a teacher. The bill also expands the program to include teachers in rural school districts who are completing course work leading to certification as a special services provider.