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## Higher Education

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During the 2017 legislative session, the General Assembly considered measures related to transfer of credit at institutions of higher education, free speech on college campuses, technical colleges, tuition assistance, dual enrollment, and postsecondary and workforce readiness.

### Academic Credit

*House Bill 17-1004* requires that each state institution of higher education adopt a policy for assessing and awarding academic credit for college-level learning acquired while in the military. Each policy must assign credit for military experience, provide guidance to active military members and veterans in selecting a program of study, and, beginning June 1, 2018, accept transfer credit for military credit awarded by other state institutions for guaranteed-transfer courses.

*House Bill 17-1081* allows a state-supported institution of higher education to charge the resident tuition rate to an Olympic athlete residing anywhere in the state. The athlete must be training in programs approved by the U.S. Olympic Committee and the governing body of an Olympic, Paralympic, Pan American, or Parapan American sport. Previously, only Olympic athletes training at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs could receive the resident tuition rate.

### Free Speech on Campuses

*Senate Bill 17-062* prohibits an institution of higher education from limiting or restricting a student's verbal or written expression in a student forum based on the content of the expression or the reaction or opposition to the expression by observers. Institutions of higher education may not designate an area of campus as a free speech zone or implement any policy that restricts a student's expressive actions to a particular area. Institutions of higher education may only restrict the time, place, and manner of student expression if the restrictions are reasonable, justified without reference to the content of the restricted speech, serve a significant government interest, and leave open alternative ways to communicate the information.

### Technical Colleges

Area technical colleges are governed by a local school district or board of cooperative educational services and offer postsecondary vocational programs that are approved by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education. There are three area technical colleges in Colorado: Emily Griffith Technical College, Pickens Technical College, and Delta-Montrose Technical College of the Rockies. Delta-Montrose serves Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel Counties. *House Bill 17-1258* changes the name of Delta-Montrose Technical College to Technical College of the Rockies.

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## Higher Education (cont'd)

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### Tuition Assistance

*House Bill 17-1180* expands a tuition assistance program in the Colorado Department of Higher Education. The program is for students enrolled in career and technical education certificate programs who meet income eligibility requirements, but do not qualify for the federal Pell Grant Program because the certificate program does not meet minimum credit hour requirements. Eligibility for the tuition assistance program is expanded to include students who meet a state income eligibility standard established by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.

### Dual Enrollment

Pathways in technology early college high schools (p-tech schools) are public-private partnership programs to equip students in grades 9 through 14 with the necessary skills for careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. A p-tech school enables students to graduate simultaneously with a high school diploma and an associate's degree. There are currently three p-tech schools in Colorado, operating in Adams County School District 12, St. Vrain Valley School District, and James Irwin Charter School. *House Bill 17-1194* amends the definition of a p-tech school to include a program that operates within a host school, rather than stand-alone schools only.

*House Bill 17-1201* allows a local education provider (LEP) to grant a diploma endorsement in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) to a graduating high school student who demonstrates mastery in the STEM disciplines. Each LEP choosing to offer a STEM endorsement is required to work with STEM-related businesses and with appropriate institutions of higher education in their communities to establish the proficiency levels that mastery students must demonstrate in various STEM competencies. These LEPs must also communicate information about the endorsement to parents and students in grades 6 through 12.

### Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

The Colorado Department of Education measures the postsecondary and workforce readiness performance of public schools, school districts, and the Colorado Charter School Institute. Specifically, the department measures high school graduation and dropout rates, the percentage of graduates who achieve a postsecondary and workforce readiness-endorsed diploma, student scores on statewide high school assessments, and the percentage of students who enroll in higher education within one year of high school graduation. Beginning with the 2020-21 academic year, *Senate Bill 17-272* requires schools and districts to calculate the percentage of high school students who demonstrate college and postsecondary and workforce readiness. The State Board of Education is required to set achievement standards, specifically the minimum achievement level required for high school graduation and the higher achievement level of student preparedness for higher education without remediation. The higher achievement standards must include specified minimum scores on high school assessments, and the receipt of college course credit for concurrent enrollment.