

# FACT SHEET: SB25-154

## Access to Educator Pathways

Rep. Eliza Hamrick & Sen. Cathy Kipp



### THE NEED FOR ACTION

#### EXCESSIVE LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS

While most states require between zero and two licensure exams for special education teaching candidates, Colorado mandates five—making it one of the most stringent states in the nation.

#### HEAVY FINANCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BURDENS

Candidates must spend over \$475 and nearly eight hours to complete the tests. Many must retake exams multiple times, driving costs into the thousands. Even experienced general education teachers are discouraged from transitioning to special education due to these financial and time constraints.

### WHY THIS MATTERS

#### WE'RE LOSING QUALIFIED EDUCATORS

In 2021, over half of elementary teacher candidates failed their licensure exam on the first attempt. Of those who failed, 40% never tried again. These are often passionate, experienced individuals with the heart and talent to serve in our classrooms—but barriers are driving them away.

#### SEVERE TEACHER SHORTAGES IN COLORADO

The Colorado Department of Education reported nearly 7,000 unfilled teaching positions in the 2023–24 school year.

Three of the top five areas of shortage were in special education.

Students with disabilities are especially impacted when they lack access to qualified, consistent, and compassionate educators.

### WHAT SB25-154 DOES

- Reduces Testing Barriers
- Limits the number of required licensure exams for special education teachers to no more than three.
- Supports Career Mobility for Current Teachers
- Licensed general education teachers can more easily add special education endorsements.
- Expands Early Pathways into Teaching
- SB25-154 broadens which higher education institutions can participate in the Teacher Recruitment Education and Preparation Program (TREP) making higher education more accessible.

### BOTTOM LINE

Colorado's teacher shortage is not just a staffing issue—it's a student equity issue. SB25-154 is a strategic, data-informed, and urgently needed solution that removes unnecessary roadblocks and opens the door for passionate educators to serve where they are most needed.