

Second Regular Session  
Seventy-fifth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 26-0471.01 Conrad Imel x2313

HOUSE BILL 26-1317

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HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

McCluskie and Taggart,

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Bridges and Frizell,

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House Committees  
Education

Senate Committees

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A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 CONCERNING CREATING A UNIFIED SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY  
102 TALENT DEVELOPMENT, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH,  
103 CREATING A COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO TRANSITION  
104 OVERSIGHT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO THE  
105 DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

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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 creates the postsecondary talent development system transition advisory committee (transition committee) to integrate

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.*  
*Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.*

oversight of higher education and workforce development programs (transition plan). The transition committee shall begin meeting by July 1, 2026, and shall submit the transition plan to the joint budget committee by November 1, 2026. The transition plan must include recommendations about the structure of the department of higher education (department), including a recommendation to rename the department, and recommendations about transitioning various offices, agencies, programs, and functions to the department or other state agencies.

Effective July 1, 2028, the executive director of the Colorado commission on higher education is renamed the executive director of the department (executive director). The governor appoints, with the consent of the senate, the executive director.

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

2           **SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly  
3 finds and declares that:

4           (a) Colorado has an economic and civic interest in ensuring that  
5 Coloradans can access high-quality postsecondary opportunities;

6           (b) Higher education, workforce development, and employment  
7 programs should empower every Coloradan to discover their strengths,  
8 pursue their passions, meet the demands of a changing economy, and  
9 build careers that provide economic security;

10           (c) Too many Coloradans get disconnected from workforce and  
11 employment opportunity, and as a result, Colorado has struggled to train  
12 and retain homegrown talent;

13           (d) Today, Coloradans must navigate a complex postsecondary  
14 talent development system of 472 schools, more than 300 apprenticeship  
15 programs, more than 4,500 eligible training programs, and nearly 10,000  
16 degree options;

17           (e) More than 20 divisions, offices, and units across seven state  
18 entities deliver 110 programs and initiatives in the system;

19           (f) This fragmentation makes opportunity difficult to find for



1           **24-38-302. Postsecondary talent development system**  
2           **transition advisory committee - creation - membership - transition**  
3           **plan.**

4           (1) THE POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM  
5           TRANSITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE IS CREATED IN THE GOVERNOR'S  
6           OFFICE. THE PURPOSE OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE IS TO DEVELOP THE  
7           TRANSITION PLAN DESCRIBED IN SECTION 24-38-303 THAT INCLUDES  
8           RECOMMENDATIONS TO INTEGRATE THE STATE'S DELIVERY OF PUBLIC  
9           PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT SUPPORT COLORADANS PURSUING  
10          POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, TRAINING, OR EMPLOYMENT.

11          (2) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING  
12          MEMBERS:

13          (a) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND  
14          EMPLOYMENT, OR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE;

15          (b) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER  
16          EDUCATION, OR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE;

17          (c) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC  
18          DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE, OR THE EXECUTIVE  
19          DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE;

20          (d) THE DIRECTOR OF OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION APPOINTED  
21          PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-60-104 (2)(a)(II), OR THE DIRECTOR'S  
22          DESIGNEE;

23          (e) THE CHAIR OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COLORADO  
24          WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL;

25          (f) THE CHAIR OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER  
26          EDUCATION;

27          (g) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS, APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR:

- 1 (I) A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE;
- 2 (II) AN INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTING LARGE BUSINESS WITH  
3 EXPERTISE IN HUMAN RESOURCES, A TALENT OFFICER, OR ANOTHER  
4 INDIVIDUAL WITH PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE RELATED TO WORKFORCE  
5 DEVELOPMENT AND TALENT STRATEGY;
- 6 (III) TWO DIRECTORS REPRESENTING LOCAL WORKFORCE AREAS;
- 7 (IV) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION OF  
8 HIGHER EDUCATION;
- 9 (V) A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE;
- 10 (VI) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A PUBLIC TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION OF  
11 HIGHER EDUCATION OR LOCAL DISTRICT COLLEGE;
- 12 (VII) A FACULTY MEMBER OF A PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER  
13 EDUCATION;
- 14 (VIII) A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN ADVOCACY GROUP THAT  
15 ADVOCATES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION;
- 16 (IX) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
17 ADVOCACY GROUP OR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION;
- 18 (X) A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL  
19 CREATED IN SECTION 8-15.7-105;
- 20 (XI) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A GROUP APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING  
21 COMMITTEE;
- 22 (XII) A REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM EMPLOYER  
23 SPONSOR; AND
- 24 (XIII) AN INDIVIDUAL WITH EXPERIENCE ADMINISTERING  
25 WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMS IN K-12 EDUCATION OR ADVISING  
26 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ABOUT POSTSECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES;
- 27 (h) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS, APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF

1 THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 (I) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION OF  
3 HIGHER EDUCATION; AND

4 (II) A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY GROUP  
5 OR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION;

6 (i) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS, APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF  
7 THE SENATE:

8 (I) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A PUBLIC TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION OF  
9 HIGHER EDUCATION OR LOCAL DISTRICT COLLEGE; AND

10 (II) A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION  
11 CERTIFIED AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF COVERED EMPLOYEES IN A  
12 PARTNERSHIP UNIT PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-50-1106;

13 (j) A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN ASSOCIATION THAT REPRESENTS  
14 BUSINESS, APPOINTED BY THE MINORITY LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF  
15 REPRESENTATIVES; AND

16 (k) A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY,  
17 APPOINTED BY THE MINORITY LEADER OF THE SENATE.

18 (3) (a) THE APPOINTING AUTHORITIES DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION  
19 (2) OF THIS SECTION SHALL MAKE THEIR APPOINTMENTS TO THE  
20 TRANSITION COMMITTEE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE  
21 OF THIS SECTION, BUT NO LATER THAN JUNE 23, 2026.

22 (b) IN APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE, THE  
23 APPOINTING AUTHORITIES SHALL MAKE REASONABLE EFFORTS TO  
24 CONSIDER APPOINTING MEMBERS THAT, ALONG WITH MEETING THE  
25 BOARD'S SPECIFIED MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS, REFLECT THE  
26 GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY OF THE ENTIRE STATE,  
27 INCLUDING MEMBERS FROM BOTH RURAL AND URBAN PARTS OF THE STATE;

1 MEMBERS OF DIVERSE POLITICAL, RACIAL, DISABILITY, AND CULTURAL  
2 GROUPS; AND MEMBERS OF DIVERSE SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS AND GENDERS.

3 (c) TO INFORM THE WORK OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE, AND TO  
4 ENSURE CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE  
5 FEEDBACK ON WHAT A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT  
6 DEVELOPMENT MUST DELIVER FOR COLORADO, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS  
7 OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, THE DEPARTMENT OF  
8 HIGHER EDUCATION, AND THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND  
9 INTERNATIONAL TRADE, AND THE DIRECTOR OF OCCUPATIONAL  
10 EDUCATION MAY GATHER FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS THROUGH  
11 MEETINGS HELD SEPARATELY FROM TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETINGS,  
12 INCLUDING THROUGH MEETINGS HELD PRIOR TO THE TRANSITION  
13 COMMITTEE'S FIRST MEETING.

14 (d) THE GOVERNOR SHALL APPOINT THE CHAIR OF THE TRANSITION  
15 COMMITTEE FROM AMONG THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE'S MEMBERS. THE  
16 SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SHALL APPOINT THE  
17 VICE-CHAIR OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE FROM AMONG THE  
18 TRANSITION COMMITTEE'S MEMBERS.

19 (e) MEMBERS OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SERVE WITHOUT  
20 COMPENSATION BUT ARE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE REIMBURSEMENT FOR  
21 ACTUAL AND REASONABLE TRAVEL EXPENSES INCURRED IN THE  
22 PERFORMANCE OF THE MEMBERS' DUTIES ON THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE.

23 (4) (a) THE CHAIR OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL  
24 CONVENE THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE NO LATER  
25 THAN JULY 1, 2026.

26 (b) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL MEET AT LEAST ONCE  
27 EACH MONTH UNTIL THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SUBMITS THE

1       TRANSITION PLAN TO THE JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE PURSUANT TO  
2       SECTION 24-38-303. THE CHAIR MAY CALL ADDITIONAL MEETINGS AS  
3       NECESSARY FOR THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE TO COMPLETE ITS DUTIES.  
4       THE COMMITTEE IS NOT REQUIRED TO MEET AFTER IT SUBMITS THE  
5       TRANSITION PLAN TO THE JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE.

6               (c) MEMBERS OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE MAY PARTICIPATE  
7       REMOTELY IN TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

8               (d) THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE SHALL PROVIDE STAFF ASSISTANCE,  
9       INCLUDING ASSISTING THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE WITH PREPARING THE  
10       TRANSITION PLAN AND PROVIDING MEETING SPACE AND AUDIOVISUAL  
11       COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES TO ASSIST IN COMPLETING THE  
12       DUTIES OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE.

13              (5) (a) IN CARRYING OUT ITS DUTIES, THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE  
14       SHALL, TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, ENGAGE WITH INTERESTED AND  
15       AFFECTED INDIVIDUALS IN ALL AREAS OF THE STATE AND ACROSS A WIDE  
16       VARIETY OF PROGRAM TYPES, AND SHALL ACTIVELY SEEK INPUT AND  
17       GUIDANCE FROM:

18              (I) EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, THE  
19       DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AND ANY OTHER AFFECTED  
20       STATE DEPARTMENT;

21              (II)     EMPLOYERS; WORKFORCE CENTER PARTICIPANTS;  
22       COMMUNITY-BASED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS;  
23       REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS AND APPRENTICES;

24              (III) THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL ESTABLISHED BY THE  
25       DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AND PARTICIPANTS IN  
26       VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS DESCRIBED IN PART 1 OF  
27       ARTICLE 84 OF TITLE 8; AND

1 (IV) STUDENTS ENROLLED IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND  
2 TRAINING PROGRAMS AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION,  
3 INCLUDING AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGES, COMMUNITY COLLEGES, AND  
4 UNIVERSITIES; AND FACULTY, STUDENTS, STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS, AND  
5 OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES FROM PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER  
6 EDUCATION.

7 (b) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL CONSULT WITH  
8 EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE  
9 DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT ABOUT DEPARTMENTAL  
10 OPERATIONS CONSIDERATIONS.

11 **24-38-303. Transition plan - required study by transition**  
12 **advisory committee.**

13 (1) ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 30, 2026, THE TRANSITION  
14 COMMITTEE SHALL SUBMIT A TRANSITION PLAN TO THE JOINT BUDGET  
15 COMMITTEE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BUSINESS AFFAIRS AND  
16 LABOR COMMITTEE; THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EDUCATION  
17 COMMITTEE; THE SENATE BUSINESS, LABOR, AND TECHNOLOGY  
18 COMMITTEE; AND THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE, OR THEIR  
19 SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES.

20 (2) (a) THE TRANSITION PLAN MUST INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS  
21 FOR THE STRUCTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS A  
22 DEPARTMENT THAT OVERSEES A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT  
23 DEVELOPMENT THAT INTEGRATES POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL,  
24 TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES FOR COLORADANS, INCLUDING:

25 (I) GOVERNANCE MODELS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER  
26 EDUCATION, WITH CONSIDERATION FOR THE EXISTING ROLE AND  
27 STRUCTURE OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

1 ESTABLISHED IN SECTION 23-1-102 AND THE STATE WORK FORCE  
2 DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL CREATED IN SECTION 24-46.3-101;

3 (II) THE TECHNOLOGY AND STAFFING NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT  
4 OF HIGHER EDUCATION;

5 (III) DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS SYSTEMS NECESSARY OR  
6 BENEFICIAL FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION;

7 (IV) RENAMING THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO  
8 REFLECT ITS MISSION, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2028, TO OVERSEE A SYSTEM OF  
9 POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT; AND

10 (V) THE TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING THE TRANSITION OF THE  
11 DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO A DEPARTMENT THAT OVERSEES  
12 A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT.

13 (b) THE TRANSITION PLAN MUST INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS  
14 ABOUT HOW THE FOLLOWING OFFICES, AGENCIES, PROGRAMS, AND  
15 FUNCTIONS TRANSITION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION:

16 (I) THE PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE DIVISION OF  
17 EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING, CREATED IN SECTION 8-83-102, WITHIN THE  
18 DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT;

19 (II) THE STATE'S DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER AND FOR  
20 IMPLEMENTING TITLES I, II, AND III OF THE FEDERAL "WORKFORCE  
21 INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT", 29 U.S.C. SEC. 3101 ET SEQ.;

22 (III) THE DETERMINATIONS RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL  
23 STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATION FOR APPRENTICESHIP  
24 PROGRAMS, AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 8-83-1002;

25 (IV) DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO REGIONAL TALENT  
26 DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES, INCLUDING THE REGIONAL TALENT SUMMIT  
27 GRANT PROGRAM CREATED IN SECTION 24-48.5-704 AND, IF CONTINUED

1 BEYOND JULY 1, 2028, THE REGIONAL TALENT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE  
2 GRANT PROGRAM CREATED IN SECTION 24-48.5-405, COMMONLY KNOWN  
3 AS OPPORTUNITY NOW COLORADO GRANTS, AND ANY SUBSEQUENT  
4 PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE GRANTS TO SUPPORT REGIONAL TALENT  
5 DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES;

6 (V) ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS DESCRIBED IN  
7 ARTICLE 10 OF TITLE 22, INCLUDING THE ADULT EDUCATION AND  
8 LITERACY GRANT PROGRAM CREATED IN SECTION 22-10-104, AND THE  
9 DUTY TO CONVENE MEETINGS TO DISCUSS THE STATE'S WORKFORCE  
10 DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND THE LEVELS OF UNMET NEED FOR ADULT  
11 EDUCATION WITHIN THE STATE, AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 22-10-106;

12 (VI) THE COLORADO OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS CREATED IN  
13 SECTION 8-3.7-103; AND

14 (VII) THE COLORADO DISABILITY OPPORTUNITY OFFICE CREATED  
15 IN SECTION 8-88-102.

16 (c) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL CONSIDER AND INCLUDE  
17 RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE TRANSITION PLAN ABOUT HOW THE  
18 DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION WILL COORDINATE WITH THE  
19 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S POSTSECONDARY WORKFORCE READINESS  
20 ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS FOR YOUTH AND  
21 PRE-APPRENTICESHIP, WORK-BASED LEARNING, AND POSTSECONDARY  
22 CREDENTIAL PROGRAMS.

23 (3) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE MAY CONSIDER AND INCLUDE  
24 RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE TRANSITION PLAN ABOUT:

25 (a) STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ADULT LEARNERS SEEKING  
26 FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS AND CREDENTIALS, SUCH AS A HIGH SCHOOL  
27 DIPLOMA OR EQUIVALENT, AND POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL

1     ATTAINMENT.

2           (b) THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY CREATED IN SECTION  
3     8-15.7-102, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS THAT MAINTAIN THE  
4     CONNECTION BETWEEN THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY AND THE  
5     DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT;

6           (c) THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL ESTABLISHED IN SECTION  
7     8-15.7-105;

8           (d) THE COLORADO STATE APPRENTICESHIP RESOURCE DIRECTORY  
9     CREATED IN SECTION 8-83-308;

10          (e) RELOCATING THE OFFICE OF FUTURE OF WORK, CREATED IN  
11     SECTION 8-15.8-103, TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION OR  
12     DISCONTINUING THE OFFICE OF FUTURE OF WORK;

13          (f) RELOCATING THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ESTABLISHED IN  
14     SECTION 24-80-201 AND COMMONLY KNOWN AS HISTORY COLORADO;

15          (g) RELOCATING THE OFFICE OF LABOR MARKET INFORMATION  
16     WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT;

17          (h) THE GOVERNANCE OF AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGES, AS DEFINED  
18     IN SECTION 23-60-103; IMPROVING THE AVAILABILITY OF OCCUPATIONAL  
19     EDUCATION, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS FOR YOUTH AND  
20     WORK-BASED LEARNING PATHWAYS; AND ENABLING AREA TECHNICAL  
21     COLLEGES TO BEST DELIVER OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION AND SUPPORT  
22     SECONDARY-TO-POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION TRANSITIONS IN COLORADO;  
23     AND

24          (i) STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ADULT POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL  
25     ATTAINMENT, INCLUDING STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ADULT LEARNERS IN  
26     ACCESSING AND COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS AND CONNECTING  
27     WITH ADDITIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT

1 OPPORTUNITIES.

2 (4) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE MAY CONSIDER HOW THE  
3 SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ESTABLISHED  
4 PURSUANT TO PART 3 OF ARTICLE 2 OF TITLE 26; STATE ADMINISTRATION  
5 OF THE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY  
6 FAMILIES, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 26-2-703 (19); AND OTHER PROGRAMS  
7 ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC SECURITY IN THE  
8 DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES ARE ALIGNED WITH THE DEPARTMENT  
9 OF HIGHER EDUCATION'S MISSION, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2028, TO OVERSEE  
10 A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT. THE TRANSITION  
11 COMMITTEE MAY INCLUDE IN THE TRANSITION PLAN A RECOMMENDATION  
12 FOR THE PROGRAMS TO COORDINATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER  
13 EDUCATION.

14 (5) IN PREPARING THE TRANSITION PLAN, THE TRANSITION  
15 COMMITTEE SHALL CONSIDER STRATEGIES TO:

16 (a) ELIMINATE DUPLICATIVE OVERSIGHT OF POSTSECONDARY  
17 TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS;

18 (b) CONTINUE EFFORTS TO ALIGN THE POSTSECONDARY TALENT  
19 DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, INCLUDING STRATEGIES TO REDUCE  
20 BUREAUCRACY AND ENSURE ALIGNMENT WITH RELATED PROGRAMS THAT  
21 ARE NOT ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AS  
22 RECOMMENDED BY THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE;

23 (c) ALIGN POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS  
24 AND SERVICES AMONG THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND  
25 EXISTING STATE AGENCIES; AND

26 (d) ENSURE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND  
27 EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

1 (6) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL NOT INCLUDE IN THE  
2 TRANSITION PLAN ANY RECOMMENDATION THAT IS INCONSISTENT WITH  
3 OR, IF IMPLEMENTED, WOULD:

4 (a) BE INCONSISTENT WITH OR WOULD RESULT IN A VIOLATION OF  
5 FEDERAL LAW OR RULE, INCLUDING THE REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE  
6 APPRENTICESHIP AGENCIES IN 29 CFR 29.13;

7 (b) CHANGE THE APPOINTING AUTHORITY FOR, OR MEMBERSHIP OF,  
8 THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL, CREATED IN SECTION 8-15.7-105;  
9 THE COMMITTEE FOR APPRENTICESHIP IN NEW AND EMERGING INDUSTRIES,  
10 CREATED IN SECTION 8-15.7-104; OR THE COMMITTEE FOR APPRENTICESHIP  
11 IN THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES, CREATED IN SECTION  
12 8-15.7-103; OR

13 (c) CHANGE THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY'S STATUS AS A  
14 **TYPE 1** ENTITY.

15 **24-38-304. Funding - in-kind donations.**

16 (1) THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE MAY SEEK, ACCEPT, AND EXPEND  
17 GIFTS, GRANTS, OR DONATIONS FROM PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SOURCES FOR  
18 THE PURPOSES OF THIS PART 3. THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE MAY ACCEPT  
19 DONATIONS OF IN-KIND SERVICES FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS PART 3,  
20 INCLUDING FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

21 (2) THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE AND THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE  
22 SHALL CARRY OUT THIS PART 3 WITHIN EXISTING APPROPRIATIONS.

23 **24-38-305. Repeal of part.**

24 THIS PART 3 IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JUNE 30, 2027.

25 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 24-1-114, **amend** (1),  
26 (2), and (5)(b); and **add** (1.1) and (1.5) as follows:

27 **24-1-114. Department of higher education - creation - mission**

1     **- legislative intent - definitions.**

2             (1) There is hereby created a THE department of higher education,  
3     the head of which shall be IS the executive director of the Colorado  
4     ~~commission on higher education~~ DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION,  
5     who shall be IS appointed by the governor and whose powers and duties  
6     are as specified in this section.

7             (1.1) (a) BEGINNING JULY 1, 2028, THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION IS  
8     TO OVERSEE A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT THAT  
9     INTEGRATES POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND  
10    EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES FOR COLORADANS. IT IS THE INTENT OF THE  
11    GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO EVALUATE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE  
12    POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TRANSITION ADVISORY  
13    COMMITTEE CREATED IN SECTION 24-38-302, MAKE ANY NECESSARY  
14    STATUTORY CHANGES TO EFFECTUATE THE EXPANSION OF THE  
15    DEPARTMENT'S MISSION TO OVERSEE A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY  
16    TALENT DEVELOPMENT, AND RENAME THE DEPARTMENT ACCORDINGLY.

17            (b) THIS SUBSECTION (1.1) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JUNE 30, 2029.

18            (1.5) (a) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT  
19    OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

20            (I) "COMMISSION" MEANS THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER  
21    EDUCATION CREATED IN SECTION 23-1-102.

22            (II) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER  
23    EDUCATION.

24            (III) "EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR" MEANS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
25    THE DEPARTMENT.

26            (b) (I) EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2028, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE  
27    COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION IS RENAMED THE

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

2 (II) ON AND AFTER JULY 1, 2028, AS USED IN EVERY STATUTE,  
3 UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES, "EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
4 THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION" MEANS THE  
5 "EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION".

6 (III) THE REVISOR OF STATUTES IS AUTHORIZED TO CHANGE ALL  
7 REFERENCES IN THE COLORADO REVISED STATUTES TO THE EXECUTIVE  
8 DIRECTOR OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AS  
9 APPROPRIATE.

10 (2) The Colorado commission on higher education and the office  
11 of executive director of the ~~commission~~ DEPARTMENT, created in article  
12 1 of title 23, are **type 1** entities, as defined in section 24-1-105, and  
13 exercise their powers and perform their duties and functions under the  
14 department. ~~of higher education.~~

15 (5) (b) With respect to the Colorado commission on higher  
16 education and the universities, colleges, and boards specified in  
17 subsection (4) of this section, the executive director has only those  
18 powers, duties, and functions prescribed in article 1 of title 23; except that  
19 the executive director ~~of the Colorado commission on higher education~~  
20 is authorized to negotiate, implement, and monitor contracts, as described  
21 in sections 23-18-201 (2), 23-18-303.5, and 23-18-304, with universities,  
22 colleges, and boards, in consultation with the Colorado commission on  
23 higher education.

24 **SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-101.1, **amend**  
25 (3) as follows:

26 **23-1-101.1. Definitions.**

27 As used in this article 1, unless the context otherwise requires:

1           (3) "Executive director" means the office of the executive director  
2 of the ~~Colorado commission on higher education created and existing~~  
3 ~~pursuant to section 24-1-114, C.R.S.~~ DEPARTMENT.

4           **SECTION 5.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-110, **repeal**  
5 (2)(a), (3), and (4); and **add** (2)(c) as follows:

6           **23-1-110. Organization, meetings, and staff - repeal.**

7           (2) (a) ~~The governor shall appoint, with the consent of the senate,~~  
8 ~~an executive director qualified by substantial training and experience in~~  
9 ~~the field of higher education. The executive director shall be the~~  
10 ~~executive officer of the commission and the department, shall serve at the~~  
11 ~~pleasure of the governor, and shall receive compensation commensurate~~  
12 ~~with the duties of the office as determined by the governor. The duties~~  
13 ~~and responsibilities of the executive director shall be discharged in~~  
14 ~~accordance with the policies, procedures, and directives of the~~  
15 ~~commission and the department. The executive director shall employ such~~  
16 ~~professional and clerical personnel as deemed necessary to carry out the~~  
17 ~~duties and functions of the commission and the department. Offices held~~  
18 ~~by the executive director and professional personnel are declared to be~~  
19 ~~educational in nature and not under the state personnel system.~~

20           (c) (I) EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2028, IN THIS HOUSE BILL 26-\_\_\_\_,  
21 ENACTED IN 2026, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COLORADO  
22 COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION IS RENAMED THE EXECUTIVE  
23 DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

24           (II) THIS SUBSECTION (2)(c) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JUNE 30,  
25 2029.

26           (3) ~~The executive director shall conduct all studies and programs~~  
27 ~~of the commission and coordinate such studies and programs with those~~

1 of other state agencies having duties and functions concerned with higher  
2 education, so as to avoid duplication of programs and staff.

3 (4) ~~The executive director shall review and approve or deny any~~  
4 ~~proposed action or recommendation of the private occupational school~~  
5 ~~board acting pursuant to article 64 of this title 23.~~

6 **SECTION 6.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** article 1.1 to title  
7 23 as follows:

8 **ARTICLE 1.1**

9 **Department of Higher Education**

10 **23-1.1-101. Definitions.**

11 AS USED IN THIS ARTICLE 1.1, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE  
12 REQUIRES:

13 (1) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER  
14 EDUCATION CREATED IN SECTION 24-1-114.

15 (2) "EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR" MEANS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
16 THE DEPARTMENT.

17 **23-1.1-102. Department structure - mission - duties.**

18 (1) (a) THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS CREATED IN  
19 SECTION 24-1-114. THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION IS TO OVERSEE A SYSTEM  
20 OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT THAT INTEGRATES  
21 POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES  
22 FOR COLORADANS.

23 (b) PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-1-114, THE HEAD OF THE  
24 DEPARTMENT IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

25 (2) THE DEPARTMENT CONSISTS OF THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE  
26 DIRECTOR AND THE DIVISIONS, SECTIONS, OTHER UNITS, AND ADVISORY  
27 BOARDS AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAY ESTABLISH; AS MAY BE

1 SPECIFIED IN THIS TITLE 23; AND AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 24-1-114.

2 (3) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAY ESTABLISH DIVISIONS,  
3 SECTIONS, OTHER UNITS, AND ADVISORY BOARDS WITHIN THE  
4 DEPARTMENT AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DETERMINES ARE NECESSARY  
5 FOR THE PROPER AND EFFICIENT DISCHARGE OF THE POWERS, DUTIES, AND  
6 FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT.

7 (4) THE DEPARTMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING THE  
8 FUNCTIONS AND PROGRAMS AS SET FORTH IN THIS TITLE 23 AND AS  
9 OTHERWISE REQUIRED BY LAW.

10 **23-1.1-103. Executive director of the department -**  
11 **appointment - duties - repeal.**

12 (1)(a) THE GOVERNOR SHALL APPOINT, WITH THE CONSENT OF THE  
13 SENATE, AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR QUALIFIED BY SUBSTANTIAL TRAINING  
14 AND EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE  
15 DEVELOPMENT. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF  
16 THE COMMISSION AND THE DEPARTMENT, SERVES AT THE PLEASURE OF THE  
17 GOVERNOR, AND MUST RECEIVE COMPENSATION COMMENSURATE WITH  
18 THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR. THE  
19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHALL DISCHARGE THEIR DUTIES AND  
20 RESPONSIBILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND  
21 DIRECTIVES OF THE COMMISSION AND THE DEPARTMENT. THE EXECUTIVE  
22 DIRECTOR SHALL EMPLOY PROFESSIONAL AND CLERICAL PERSONNEL AS  
23 THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DEEMS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE DUTIES  
24 AND FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION AND THE DEPARTMENT. OFFICES  
25 HELD BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ARE  
26 DECLARED TO BE EDUCATIONAL IN NATURE AND NOT UNDER THE STATE  
27 PERSONNEL SYSTEM.

1 (b) (I) NOTWITHSTANDING SUBSECTION (1)(a) OF THIS SECTION,  
2 THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER  
3 EDUCATION ON JUNE 30, 2028, BECOMES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE  
4 DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION ON JULY 1, 2028, UNLESS THE  
5 GOVERNOR APPOINTS A DIFFERENT PERSON TO ASSUME THE OFFICE OF THE  
6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
7 EFFECTIVE ON JULY 1, 2028.

8 (II) THIS SUBSECTION (1)(b) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 31,  
9 2035.

10 (2) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HAS THE POWERS, DUTIES, AND  
11 FUNCTIONS PRESCRIBED IN ARTICLE 1 OF TITLE 24 FOR HEADS OF PRINCIPAL  
12 DEPARTMENTS, AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 24-1-114, AND HAS THE  
13 POWERS, DUTIES, AND FUNCTIONS SET FORTH IN STATE LAW.

14 (3) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHALL CONDUCT ALL STUDIES AND  
15 PROGRAMS OF THE COMMISSION AND COORDINATE THE STUDIES AND  
16 PROGRAMS WITH THOSE OF OTHER STATE AGENCIES HAVING DUTIES AND  
17 FUNCTIONS CONCERNED WITH HIGHER EDUCATION, SO AS TO AVOID  
18 DUPLICATION OF PROGRAMS AND STAFF.

19 (4) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHALL REVIEW AND APPROVE OR  
20 DENY ANY PROPOSED ACTION OR RECOMMENDATION OF THE PRIVATE  
21 OCCUPATIONAL SCHOOL BOARD ACTING PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 64 OF THIS  
22 TITLE 23.

23 **SECTION 7. Effective date.** (1) Except as otherwise provided  
24 in this section, this act takes effect upon passage.

25 (2) Sections 4 and 6 of this act take effect July 1, 2028.

26 (3) Section 24-1-114 (1), (1.5), (2), and (5)(b), Colorado Revised  
27 Statutes, amended in section 3 of this act, takes effect July 1, 2028.

1           (4) Section 23-1-110 (2)(a), (3), and (4), Colorado Revised  
2 Statutes, amended in section 5 of this act, takes effect July 1, 2028.

3           **SECTION 8. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds,  
4 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate  
5 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for  
6 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state  
7 institutions.