

Second Regular Session  
Seventy-fifth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO

**PREAMENDED**

*This Unofficial Version Includes Committee  
Amendments Not Yet Adopted on Second Reading*

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  
Appropriations

**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, adult education,  
7 and employment programs should empower every Coloradan to discover  
8 their strengths, pursue their passions, meet the demands of a changing  
9 economy, and 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) Adult learners, trainees, and job seekers may need to enter or  
14 reenter the workforce system from diverse points in their lives based on  
15 current needs and life status;

16 (e) Today, Coloradans must navigate a complex postsecondary  
17 talent development system of 472 schools, more than 300 apprenticeship  
18 programs, more than 4,500 eligible training programs, 21 adult education  
19 programs, and nearly 10,000 degree options;

1 (f) More than 20 divisions, offices, and units across seven state  
2 entities deliver 110 programs and initiatives in the system;

3 (g) This fragmentation makes opportunity difficult to find for  
4 Coloradans, and it limits the reach and impact of state investments;

5 (h) Colorado must bring together, streamline, and create seamless  
6 connections between education and skill-building pathways for  
7 Coloradans;

8 (i) Colorado needs a purpose-built, unified department that can  
9 easily connect all Coloradans, including underserved populations, to  
10 opportunity through postsecondary education, skills training, and  
11 employment;

12 (j) Reimagining our workforce system should include  
13 consideration of the connection between health and human services  
14 programs and workforce programs; and

15 (k) We must boldly reimagine how our education, training, and  
16 employment systems are serving Colorado learners, job seekers, workers,  
17 and employers.

18 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** part 3 to article  
19 38 of title 24 as follows:

20 PART 3

21 POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

22 TRANSITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

23 **24-38-301. Definitions.**

24 AS USED IN THIS PART 3, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE  
25 REQUIRES:

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

1           (2) "TRANSITION COMMITTEE" MEANS THE POSTSECONDARY  
2 TALENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TRANSITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
3 CREATED IN SECTION 24-38-302.

4           (3) "TRANSITION PLAN" MEANS THE TRANSITION PLAN PREPARED  
5 BY THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE AND SUBMITTED TO THE JOINT BUDGET  
6 COMMITTEE PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-38-303.

7           **24-38-302. Postsecondary talent development system**  
8 **transition advisory committee - creation - membership - transition**  
9 **plan.**

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

17           (2) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING  
18 MEMBERS:

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

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

23           (c) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC  
24 DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE, OR THE EXECUTIVE  
25 DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE;

26           (d) THE DIRECTOR OF OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION APPOINTED  
27 PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-60-104 (2)(a)(II), OR THE DIRECTOR'S

- 1       DESIGNEE;
- 2               (e) THE CHAIR OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COLORADO  
3       WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL;
- 4               (f) THE CHAIR OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER  
5       EDUCATION;
- 6               (g) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS, APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR:
- 7               (I) A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE;
- 8               (II) AN INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTING LARGE BUSINESS WITH  
9       EXPERTISE IN HUMAN RESOURCES, A TALENT OFFICER, OR ANOTHER  
10       INDIVIDUAL WITH PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE RELATED TO WORKFORCE  
11       DEVELOPMENT AND TALENT STRATEGY;
- 12              (III) TWO DIRECTORS REPRESENTING LOCAL WORKFORCE AREAS;
- 13              (IV) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION OF  
14       HIGHER EDUCATION;
- 15              (V) A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE;
- 16              (VI) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A PUBLIC TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION OF  
17       HIGHER EDUCATION OR LOCAL DISTRICT COLLEGE;
- 18              (VII) A FACULTY MEMBER OF A PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER  
19       EDUCATION WHOSE PRIMARY DUTIES INCLUDE TEACHING OR DIRECT  
20       INSTRUCTION OF STUDENTS;
- 21              (VIII) A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN ADVOCACY GROUP THAT  
22       ADVOCATES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION;
- 23              (IX) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
24       ADVOCACY GROUP OR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION;
- 25              (X) A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL  
26       CREATED IN SECTION 8-15.7-105;
- 27              (XI) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A GROUP APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

1 COMMITTEE;

2 (XII) A REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM EMPLOYER  
3 SPONSOR; AND

4 (XIII) AN INDIVIDUAL WITH EXPERIENCE ADMINISTERING  
5 WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMS IN K-12 EDUCATION OR ADVISING  
6 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ABOUT POSTSECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES;

7 (h) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS, APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF  
8 THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

9 (I) A REPRESENTATIVE OF A PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION OF  
10 HIGHER EDUCATION; ■

11 (II) A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY GROUP  
12 OR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION; AND

13 (III) A COUNTY COMMISSIONER OF A COUNTY THAT DELIVERS  
14 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

15 (i) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS, APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF  
16 THE SENATE:

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

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

22 (j) A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN ASSOCIATION THAT REPRESENTS  
23 BUSINESS, APPOINTED BY THE MINORITY LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF  
24 REPRESENTATIVES; AND

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

27 (3) (a) THE APPOINTING AUTHORITIES DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION

1 (2) OF THIS SECTION SHALL MAKE THEIR APPOINTMENTS TO THE  
2 TRANSITION COMMITTEE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE  
3 OF THIS SECTION, BUT NO LATER THAN JUNE 23, 2026.

4 (b) IN APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE, THE  
5 APPOINTING AUTHORITIES SHALL MAKE REASONABLE EFFORTS TO  
6 CONSIDER APPOINTING MEMBERS THAT, ALONG WITH MEETING THE  
7 BOARD'S SPECIFIED MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS, REFLECT THE  
8 GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY OF THE ENTIRE STATE,  
9 INCLUDING MEMBERS FROM BOTH RURAL AND URBAN PARTS OF THE STATE;  
10 MEMBERS OF DIVERSE POLITICAL, RACIAL, DISABILITY, AND CULTURAL  
11 GROUPS; AND MEMBERS OF DIVERSE SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS AND GENDERS.

12 (c) TO INFORM THE WORK OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE, AND TO  
13 ENSURE CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE  
14 FEEDBACK ON WHAT A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT  
15 DEVELOPMENT MUST DELIVER FOR COLORADO, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS  
16 OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, THE DEPARTMENT OF  
17 HIGHER EDUCATION, AND THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND  
18 INTERNATIONAL TRADE, AND THE DIRECTOR OF OCCUPATIONAL  
19 EDUCATION MAY GATHER FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS THROUGH  
20 MEETINGS HELD SEPARATELY FROM TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETINGS,  
21 INCLUDING THROUGH MEETINGS HELD PRIOR TO THE TRANSITION  
22 COMMITTEE'S FIRST MEETING.

23 (d) THE GOVERNOR SHALL APPOINT THE CHAIR OF THE TRANSITION  
24 COMMITTEE FROM AMONG THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE'S MEMBERS. THE  
25 SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SHALL APPOINT THE  
26 VICE-CHAIR OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE FROM AMONG THE  
27 TRANSITION COMMITTEE'S MEMBERS.

1 (e) MEMBERS OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SERVE WITHOUT  
2 COMPENSATION BUT ARE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE REIMBURSEMENT FOR  
3 ACTUAL AND REASONABLE TRAVEL EXPENSES INCURRED IN THE  
4 PERFORMANCE OF THE MEMBERS' DUTIES ON THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE.

5 (4) (a) THE CHAIR OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL  
6 CONVENE THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE NO LATER  
7 THAN JULY 1, 2026.

8 (b) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL MEET AT LEAST ONCE  
9 EACH MONTH UNTIL THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SUBMITS THE  
10 TRANSITION PLAN TO THE JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE PURSUANT TO  
11 SECTION 24-38-303. THE CHAIR MAY CALL ADDITIONAL MEETINGS AS  
12 NECESSARY FOR THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE TO COMPLETE ITS DUTIES.  
13 THE COMMITTEE IS NOT REQUIRED TO MEET AFTER IT SUBMITS THE  
14 TRANSITION PLAN TO THE JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE.

15 (c) MEMBERS OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE MAY PARTICIPATE  
16 REMOTELY IN TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

17 (d) THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE SHALL PROVIDE STAFF ASSISTANCE,  
18 INCLUDING ASSISTING THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE WITH PREPARING THE  
19 TRANSITION PLAN AND PROVIDING MEETING SPACE AND AUDIOVISUAL  
20 COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES TO ASSIST IN COMPLETING THE  
21 DUTIES OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE.

22 (5) (a) IN CARRYING OUT ITS DUTIES, THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE  
23 SHALL, TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, ENGAGE WITH INTERESTED AND  
24 AFFECTED INDIVIDUALS IN ALL AREAS OF THE STATE AND ACROSS A WIDE  
25 VARIETY OF PROGRAM TYPES, AND SHALL ACTIVELY SEEK INPUT AND  
26 GUIDANCE FROM:

27 (I) EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, THE

1 DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AND ANY OTHER AFFECTED  
2 STATE DEPARTMENT;

3 (II) EMPLOYERS; WORKFORCE CENTER EMPLOYEES AND  
4 PARTICIPANTS; COMMUNITY-BASED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
5 ORGANIZATIONS; REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS AND  
6 APPRENTICES;

7 (III) THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL ESTABLISHED BY THE  
8 DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AND PARTICIPANTS IN  
9 VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS DESCRIBED IN PART 1 OF  
10 ARTICLE 84 OF TITLE 8; ■

11 (IV) EMPLOYEES OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION,  
12 INCLUDING FACULTY, INSTRUCTORS, AND STAFF, AND LABOR  
13 ORGANIZATIONS THAT REPRESENT WORKERS IN PUBLIC HIGHER  
14 EDUCATION; AND

15 (V) STUDENTS ENROLLED IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND  
16 TRAINING PROGRAMS AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION,  
17 INCLUDING AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGES, COMMUNITY COLLEGES, AND  
18 UNIVERSITIES; AND FACULTY, STUDENTS, STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS, AND  
19 OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES FROM PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER  
20 EDUCATION.

21 (b) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL CONSULT WITH  
22 EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE  
23 DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT ABOUT DEPARTMENTAL  
24 OPERATIONS CONSIDERATIONS.

25 **24-38-303. Transition plan - required study by transition**  
26 **advisory committee.**

27 (1) ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 30, 2026, THE TRANSITION

1 COMMITTEE SHALL SUBMIT A TRANSITION PLAN TO THE JOINT BUDGET  
2 COMMITTEE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BUSINESS AFFAIRS AND  
3 LABOR COMMITTEE; THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EDUCATION  
4 COMMITTEE; THE SENATE BUSINESS, LABOR, AND TECHNOLOGY  
5 COMMITTEE; AND THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE, OR THEIR  
6 SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES.

7 (2) (a) THE TRANSITION PLAN MUST INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS  
8 FOR THE STRUCTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS A  
9 DEPARTMENT THAT OVERSEES A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT  
10 DEVELOPMENT THAT INTEGRATES POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL,  
11 TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES FOR COLORADANS, INCLUDING:

12 (I) GOVERNANCE MODELS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER  
13 EDUCATION, WITH CONSIDERATION FOR THE EXISTING ROLE AND  
14 STRUCTURE OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
15 ESTABLISHED IN SECTION 23-1-102 AND THE STATE WORK FORCE  
16 DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL CREATED IN SECTION 24-46.3-101;

17 (II) THE TECHNOLOGY AND STAFFING NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT  
18 OF HIGHER EDUCATION;

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

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

24 (V) THE TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING THE TRANSITION OF THE  
25 DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO A DEPARTMENT THAT OVERSEES  
26 A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT.

27 (b) THE TRANSITION PLAN MUST INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS

1 ABOUT HOW THE FOLLOWING OFFICES, AGENCIES, PROGRAMS, AND  
2 FUNCTIONS TRANSITION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION:

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

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

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

12 (IV) DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO REGIONAL TALENT  
13 DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES, INCLUDING THE REGIONAL TALENT SUMMIT  
14 GRANT PROGRAM CREATED IN SECTION 24-48.5-704 AND, IF CONTINUED  
15 BEYOND JULY 1, 2028, THE REGIONAL TALENT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE  
16 GRANT PROGRAM CREATED IN SECTION 24-48.5-405, COMMONLY KNOWN  
17 AS OPPORTUNITY NOW COLORADO GRANTS, AND ANY SUBSEQUENT  
18 PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE GRANTS TO SUPPORT REGIONAL TALENT  
19 DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES;

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

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

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

3 (c) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL CONSIDER AND INCLUDE  
4 RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE TRANSITION PLAN ABOUT HOW THE  
5 DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION WILL COORDINATE WITH THE  
6 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S POSTSECONDARY WORKFORCE READINESS  
7 ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS FOR YOUTH AND  
8 PRE-APPRENTICESHIP, WORK-BASED LEARNING, AND POSTSECONDARY  
9 CREDENTIAL PROGRAMS.

10 (3) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE MAY CONSIDER AND INCLUDE  
11 RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE TRANSITION PLAN ABOUT:

12 (a) STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ADULT LEARNERS SEEKING  
13 FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS AND CREDENTIALS, SUCH AS A HIGH SCHOOL  
14 DIPLOMA OR EQUIVALENT, AND POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL  
15 ATTAINMENT.

16 (b) THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY CREATED IN SECTION  
17 8-15.7-102, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS THAT MAINTAIN THE  
18 CONNECTION BETWEEN THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY AND THE  
19 DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT;

20 (c) THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL ESTABLISHED IN SECTION  
21 8-15.7-105;

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

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

27 (f) RELOCATING THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ESTABLISHED IN

1 SECTION 24-80-201 AND COMMONLY KNOWN AS HISTORY COLORADO;

2 (g) RELOCATING THE OFFICE OF LABOR MARKET INFORMATION  
3 WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT;

4 (h) THE GOVERNANCE OF AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGES, AS DEFINED  
5 IN SECTION 23-60-103; IMPROVING THE AVAILABILITY OF OCCUPATIONAL  
6 EDUCATION, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS FOR YOUTH AND  
7 WORK-BASED LEARNING PATHWAYS; AND ENABLING AREA TECHNICAL  
8 COLLEGES TO BEST DELIVER OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION AND SUPPORT  
9 SECONDARY-TO-POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION TRANSITIONS IN COLORADO;  
10 AND

11 (i) STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ADULT POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL  
12 ATTAINMENT, INCLUDING STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ADULT LEARNERS IN  
13 ACCESSING AND COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS AND CONNECTING  
14 WITH ADDITIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT  
15 OPPORTUNITIES.

16 (4) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE MAY CONSIDER HOW THE  
17 SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ESTABLISHED  
18 PURSUANT TO PART 3 OF ARTICLE 2 OF TITLE 26; STATE ADMINISTRATION  
19 OF THE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY  
20 FAMILIES, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 26-2-703 (19); AND OTHER PROGRAMS  
21 ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC SECURITY IN THE  
22 DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES ARE ALIGNED WITH THE DEPARTMENT  
23 OF HIGHER EDUCATION'S MISSION, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2028, TO OVERSEE  
24 A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT. THE TRANSITION  
25 COMMITTEE MAY INCLUDE IN THE TRANSITION PLAN A RECOMMENDATION  
26 FOR THE PROGRAMS TO COORDINATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER  
27 EDUCATION.

1 (5) IN PREPARING THE TRANSITION PLAN, THE TRANSITION  
2 COMMITTEE SHALL CONSIDER STRATEGIES TO:

3 (a) ELIMINATE DUPLICATIVE OVERSIGHT OF POSTSECONDARY  
4 TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS;

5 (b) CONTINUE EFFORTS TO ALIGN THE POSTSECONDARY TALENT  
6 DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, INCLUDING STRATEGIES TO REDUCE  
7 BUREAUCRACY AND ENSURE ALIGNMENT WITH RELATED PROGRAMS THAT  
8 ARE NOT ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AS  
9 RECOMMENDED BY THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE;

10 (c) ALIGN POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS  
11 AND SERVICES AMONG THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND  
12 EXISTING STATE AGENCIES; AND

13 (d) ENSURE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND  
14 EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS, INCLUDING BY MEASURING KEY OUTCOMES OF  
15 THE PROGRAMS AND MAKING THE OUTCOMES MORE TRANSPARENT AND  
16 EASY TO UNDERSTAND FOR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS.

17 (6) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE SHALL NOT INCLUDE IN THE  
18 TRANSITION PLAN ANY RECOMMENDATION THAT IS INCONSISTENT WITH  
19 OR, IF IMPLEMENTED, WOULD:

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

23 (b) CHANGE THE APPOINTING AUTHORITY FOR, OR MEMBERSHIP OF,  
24 THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL, CREATED IN SECTION 8-15.7-105;  
25 THE COMMITTEE FOR APPRENTICESHIP IN NEW AND EMERGING INDUSTRIES,  
26 CREATED IN SECTION 8-15.7-104; OR THE COMMITTEE FOR APPRENTICESHIP  
27 IN THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES, CREATED IN SECTION

1 8-15.7-103; ■

2 (c) CHANGE THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY'S STATUS AS A  
3 **TYPE 1 ENTITY**; OR

4 (d) CHANGE THE COLORADO OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS' OR  
5 COLORADO DISABILITY OPPORTUNITY OFFICE'S STATUSES AS **TYPE 1**  
6 ENTITIES OR THE OFFICES' REGULAR ACCESS TO THE OFFICE OF THE  
7 GOVERNOR AND POWER TO CONVENE OTHER STATE AGENCIES.

8 **24-38-304. Funding - in-kind donations.**

9 (1) THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE MAY SEEK, ACCEPT, AND EXPEND  
10 GIFTS, GRANTS, OR DONATIONS FROM PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SOURCES FOR  
11 THE PURPOSES OF THIS PART 3. THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE MAY ACCEPT  
12 DONATIONS OF IN-KIND SERVICES FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS PART 3,  
13 INCLUDING FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

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

16 **24-38-305. Repeal of part.**

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

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

20 **24-1-114. Department of higher education - creation - mission**  
21 **- legislative intent - definitions.**

22 (1) There is ~~hereby~~ created a the department of higher education,  
23 the head of which ~~shall be~~ is the executive director of the ~~Colorado~~  
24 ~~commission on higher education~~ DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION,  
25 who ~~shall be~~ is appointed by the governor and whose powers and duties  
26 are as specified in this section.

27 (1.1) (a) BEGINNING JULY 1, 2028, THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION IS

1 TO OVERSEE A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT THAT  
2 INTEGRATES POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND  
3 EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES FOR COLORADANS. IT IS THE INTENT OF THE  
4 GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO EVALUATE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE  
5 POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TRANSITION ADVISORY  
6 COMMITTEE CREATED IN SECTION 24-38-302, MAKE ANY NECESSARY  
7 STATUTORY CHANGES TO EFFECTUATE THE EXPANSION OF THE  
8 DEPARTMENT'S MISSION TO OVERSEE A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY  
9 TALENT DEVELOPMENT, AND RENAME THE DEPARTMENT ACCORDINGLY.

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

11 (1.5) (a) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT  
12 OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

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

15 (II) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER  
16 EDUCATION.

17 (III) "EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR" MEANS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
18 THE DEPARTMENT.

19 (b) (I) EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2028, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE  
20 COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION IS RENAMED THE  
21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

22 (II) ON AND AFTER JULY 1, 2028, AS USED IN EVERY STATUTE,  
23 UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES, "EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
24 THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION" MEANS THE  
25 "EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION".

26 (III) THE REVISOR OF STATUTES IS AUTHORIZED TO CHANGE ALL  
27 REFERENCES IN THE COLORADO REVISED STATUTES TO THE EXECUTIVE

1 DIRECTOR OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AS  
2 APPROPRIATE.

3 (2) The Colorado commission on higher education and the office  
4 of executive director of the ~~commission~~ DEPARTMENT, created in article  
5 1 of title 23, are **type 1** entities, as defined in section 24-1-105, and  
6 exercise their powers and perform their duties and functions under the  
7 department. ~~of higher education.~~

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

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

19 **23-1-101.1. Definitions.**

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

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

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

26 **23-1-110. Organization, meetings, and staff - repeal.**

27 (2) (a) ~~The governor shall appoint, with the consent of the senate,~~

1 ~~an executive director qualified by substantial training and experience in~~  
2 ~~the field of higher education. The executive director shall be the~~  
3 ~~executive officer of the commission and the department, shall serve at the~~  
4 ~~pleasure of the governor, and shall receive compensation commensurate~~  
5 ~~with the duties of the office as determined by the governor. The duties~~  
6 ~~and responsibilities of the executive director shall be discharged in~~  
7 ~~accordance with the policies, procedures, and directives of the~~  
8 ~~commission and the department. The executive director shall employ such~~  
9 ~~professional and clerical personnel as deemed necessary to carry out the~~  
10 ~~duties and functions of the commission and the department. Offices held~~  
11 ~~by the executive director and professional personnel are declared to be~~  
12 ~~educational in nature and not under the state personnel system.~~

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

17 (II) THIS SUBSECTION (2)(c) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JUNE 30,  
18 2029.

19 (3) ~~The executive director shall conduct all studies and programs~~  
20 ~~of the commission and coordinate such studies and programs with those~~  
21 ~~of other state agencies having duties and functions concerned with higher~~  
22 ~~education, so as to avoid duplication of programs and staff.~~

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

26 **SECTION 6.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** article 1.1 to title  
27 23 as follows:



1 FUNCTIONS AND PROGRAMS AS SET FORTH IN THIS TITLE 23 AND AS  
2 OTHERWISE REQUIRED BY LAW.

3 **23-1.1-103. Executive director of the department -**  
4 **appointment - duties - repeal.**

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

21 (b) (I) NOTWITHSTANDING SUBSECTION (1)(a) OF THIS SECTION,  
22 THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER  
23 EDUCATION ON JUNE 30, 2028, BECOMES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE  
24 DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION ON JULY 1, 2028, UNLESS THE  
25 GOVERNOR APPOINTS A DIFFERENT PERSON TO ASSUME THE OFFICE OF THE  
26 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
27 EFFECTIVE ON JULY 1, 2028.

1 (II) THIS SUBSECTION (1)(b) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 31,  
2 2035.

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

7 (3) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHALL CONDUCT ALL STUDIES AND  
8 PROGRAMS OF THE COMMISSION AND COORDINATE THE STUDIES AND  
9 PROGRAMS WITH THOSE OF OTHER STATE AGENCIES HAVING DUTIES AND  
10 FUNCTIONS CONCERNED WITH HIGHER EDUCATION, SO AS TO AVOID  
11 DUPLICATION OF PROGRAMS AND STAFF.

12 (4) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHALL REVIEW AND APPROVE OR  
13 DENY ANY PROPOSED ACTION OR RECOMMENDATION OF THE PRIVATE  
14 OCCUPATIONAL SCHOOL BOARD ACTING PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 64 OF THIS  
15 TITLE 23.

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

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

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

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

23 **SECTION 8. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds,  
24 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate  
25 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for  
26 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state  
27 institutions.