

Second Regular Session
Seventy-fifth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

ENGROSSED

*This Version Includes All Amendments Adopted
on Second Reading in the House of Introduction*

LLS NO. 26-0471.01 Conrad Imel x2313

HOUSE BILL 26-1317

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

McCluskie and Taggart,

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Bridges and Frizell,

House Committees

Education
Appropriations

Senate Committees

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.**

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.

HOUSE
Amended 2nd Reading
April 17, 2026

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.

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 AND WITHOUT REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES.

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

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

13 (c) MEMBERS OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE MAY PARTICIPATE
14 REMOTELY IN TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

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

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

25 (I) EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, THE
26 DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AND ANY OTHER AFFECTED
27 STATE DEPARTMENT;

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

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

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

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

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

23 **24-38-303. Transition plan - required study by transition**
24 **advisory committee.**

25 (1) ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 30, 2026, THE TRANSITION
26 COMMITTEE SHALL SUBMIT A TRANSITION PLAN TO THE JOINT BUDGET
27 COMMITTEE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BUSINESS AFFAIRS AND

1 LABOR COMMITTEE; THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EDUCATION
2 COMMITTEE; THE SENATE BUSINESS, LABOR, AND TECHNOLOGY
3 COMMITTEE; AND THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE, OR THEIR
4 SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES.

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

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

15 (II) THE TECHNOLOGY AND STAFFING NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT
16 OF HIGHER EDUCATION;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 (3) THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE MAY CONSIDER AND INCLUDE
9 RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE TRANSITION PLAN ABOUT:

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

14 (b) THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY CREATED IN SECTION
15 8-15.7-102, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS THAT MAINTAIN THE
16 CONNECTION BETWEEN THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY AND THE
17 DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT;

18 (c) THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL ESTABLISHED IN SECTION
19 8-15.7-105;

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

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

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

27 (g) RELOCATING THE OFFICE OF LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

1 WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT;

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

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

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

26 (5) IN PREPARING THE TRANSITION PLAN, THE TRANSITION
27 COMMITTEE SHALL CONSIDER STRATEGIES TO:

1 (a) ELIMINATE DUPLICATIVE OVERSIGHT OF POSTSECONDARY
2 TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS;

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

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

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

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

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

21 (b) CHANGE THE APPOINTING AUTHORITY FOR, OR MEMBERSHIP OF,
22 THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL, CREATED IN SECTION 8-15.7-105;
23 THE COMMITTEE FOR APPRENTICESHIP IN NEW AND EMERGING INDUSTRIES,
24 CREATED IN SECTION 8-15.7-104; OR THE COMMITTEE FOR APPRENTICESHIP
25 IN THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES, CREATED IN SECTION
26 8-15.7-103; ■

27 (c) CHANGE THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY'S STATUS AS A

1 **TYPE 1 ENTITY; OR**

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

6 **24-38-304. Funding - in-kind donations.**

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

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

14 **24-38-305. Repeal of part.**

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

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

18 **24-1-114. Department of higher education - creation - mission**
19 **- legislative intent - definitions.**

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

25 (1.1) (a) BEGINNING JULY 1, 2028, THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION IS
26 TO OVERSEE A SYSTEM OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT THAT
27 INTEGRATES POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND

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

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

9 (1.5) (a) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT
10 OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

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

13 (II) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER
14 EDUCATION.

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

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

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

24 (III) THE REVISOR OF STATUTES IS AUTHORIZED TO CHANGE ALL
25 REFERENCES IN THE COLORADO REVISED STATUTES TO THE EXECUTIVE
26 DIRECTOR OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AS
27 APPROPRIATE.

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

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

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

17 **23-1-101.1. Definitions.**

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

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

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

24 **23-1-110. Organization, meetings, and staff - repeal.**

25 (2) (a) ~~The governor shall appoint, with the consent of the senate,~~
26 ~~an executive director qualified by substantial training and experience in~~
27 ~~the field of higher education. The executive director shall be the~~

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

11 (c) (I) EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2028, IN HOUSE BILL 26-1317, ENACTED
12 IN 2026, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON
13 HIGHER EDUCATION IS RENAMED THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
14 DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

15 (II) THIS SUBSECTION (2)(c) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JUNE 30,
16 2029.

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

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

24 **SECTION 6.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** article 1.1 to title
25 23 as follows:

26 **ARTICLE 1.1**

27 **Department of Higher Education**

1 **23-1.1-101. Definitions.**

2 AS USED IN THIS ARTICLE 1.1, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE
3 REQUIRES:

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

6 (2) "EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR" MEANS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
7 THE DEPARTMENT.

8 **23-1.1-102. Department structure - mission - duties.**

9 (1) (a) THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS CREATED IN
10 SECTION 24-1-114. THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION IS TO OVERSEE A SYSTEM
11 OF POSTSECONDARY TALENT DEVELOPMENT THAT INTEGRATES
12 POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES
13 FOR COLORADANS.

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

16 (2) THE DEPARTMENT CONSISTS OF THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE
17 DIRECTOR AND THE DIVISIONS, SECTIONS, OTHER UNITS, AND ADVISORY
18 BOARDS AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAY ESTABLISH; AS MAY BE
19 SPECIFIED IN THIS TITLE 23; AND AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 24-1-114.

20 (3) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAY ESTABLISH DIVISIONS,
21 SECTIONS, OTHER UNITS, AND ADVISORY BOARDS WITHIN THE
22 DEPARTMENT AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DETERMINES ARE NECESSARY
23 FOR THE PROPER AND EFFICIENT DISCHARGE OF THE POWERS, DUTIES, AND
24 FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT.

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

1 **23-1.1-103. Executive director of the department -**
2 **appointment - duties - repeal.**

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

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

26 (II) THIS SUBSECTION (1)(b) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 31,
27 2035.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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