

**Second Regular Session  
Seventy-fifth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO**

**REVISED**

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

LLS NO. 26-0935.01 Anna Petrini x5497

**SENATE BILL 26-153**

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**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

**Kolker and Simpson**, Coleman, Cutter, Frizell, Gonzales J., Jodeh, Kipp, Lindstedt, Marchman, Rodriguez, Sullivan, Wallace

**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**Bacon and Martinez**,

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**Senate Committees**  
Education

**House Committees**  
Education

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101      **CONCERNING GRADUATE ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR A LICENSED**  
102              **SCHOOL COUNSELOR, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH,**  
103              **ESTABLISHING A MINIMUM NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS**  
104              **REQUIRED FOR SPECIAL SERVICES LICENSURE WITH A SCHOOL**  
105              **COUNSELOR ENDORSEMENT.**

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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>.)*

To qualify for an initial special services license as a school counselor, an applicant must hold a master's degree or higher from an

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  
2nd Reading Unamended  
April 17, 2026

SENATE  
3rd Reading Unamended  
April 9, 2026

SENATE  
2nd Reading Unamended  
April 8, 2026

accredited institution of higher education. The degree must be in school counseling and require completion of at least 48 graduate semester credit hours.

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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) Schools play a critical role in preparing students for academic  
5 achievement, postsecondary education, and participation in the  
6 workforce;

7 (b) Students' ability to succeed academically is often influenced  
8 by personal, developmental, and social challenges that may affect school  
9 engagement and learning;

10 (c) The social, emotional, and behavioral health needs of students  
11 in Colorado schools have increased significantly in recent years. Failing  
12 to address these needs affects students' academic success, school  
13 attendance, safety, and long-term well-being.

14 (d) School counselors provide essential services to students and  
15 schools by identifying and confronting obstacles to student learning and  
16 supporting students with social and emotional development, academic  
17 planning, and career and postsecondary readiness;

18 (e) In many schools, particularly in rural and smaller districts and  
19 underserved communities, a licensed school counselor is often the only  
20 readily available professional whose preparation includes training in  
21 counseling practices and student development;

22 (f) School counselors are increasingly called upon to perform risk  
23 and safety assessments, provide short-term counseling and crisis  
24 intervention when tragedy strikes a school, coordinate services with

1 families and community providers, and support students experiencing  
2 trauma and other behavioral health challenges;

3 (g) Because of these responsibilities, it is important that  
4 individuals seeking licensure as school counselors receive comprehensive  
5 graduate-level preparation that includes coursework in counseling  
6 practices, student development, and strategies to help students  
7 experiencing stress, behavioral challenges, or other barriers to academic  
8 success;

9 (h) National standards for counselor preparation, including those  
10 established by recognized accrediting bodies, typically require graduate  
11 programs of at least sixty semester credit hours and include coursework  
12 related to mental health counseling, assessment, and crisis response; and

13 (i) Establishing minimum graduate credit requirements will help  
14 ensure that school counselors entering Colorado schools possess the  
15 knowledge and skills necessary to support students effectively.

16 (2) Therefore, the general assembly declares that establishing  
17 minimum graduate-level preparation requirements for licensed school  
18 counselors is necessary to provide effective student services, promote safe  
19 and supportive learning environments, and ensure that students across  
20 Colorado have access to well-prepared school counseling professionals.

21 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-60.5-210, **amend**  
22 (1)(a)(I)(B) as follows:

23 **22-60.5-210. Types of special services licenses issued - term.**

24 (1) The department of education is designated as the sole agency  
25 authorized to issue the following types of special services licenses to  
26 persons of good moral character:

27 (a) **Initial special services license.**

1 (I) The department of education, in its discretion, may issue an  
2 initial special services license to any applicant who:

3 (B) Has met the standards of the state board of education  
4 concerning academic and professional preparation, ~~and~~ experience, and  
5 performance, as appropriate for the subject matter area or areas for which  
6 ~~such~~ THE initial special services license is to be endorsed; EXCEPT THAT,  
7 TO QUALIFY FOR SPECIAL SERVICES LICENSURE WITH A SCHOOL  
8 COUNSELOR ENDORSEMENT, AN APPLICANT MUST HOLD, FROM AN  
9 ACCREDITED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, A MASTER'S DEGREE OR  
10 HIGHER IN SCHOOL COUNSELING THAT CONSISTS OF AT LEAST FORTY-EIGHT  
11 GRADUATE SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS.

12 **SECTION 3. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds,  
13 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate  
14 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for  
15 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state  
16 institutions.