

CHAPTER 220

EDUCATION - PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HOUSE BILL 17-1003

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 also SENATOR(S) Coram, Aguilar, Court, Crowder, Donovan, Fenberg, Fields, Garcia, Guzman, Jahn, Jones, Kefalas, Kerr, Merrifield, Moreno, Todd, Zenzinger.

AN ACT**CONCERNING A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS TEACHER SHORTAGES IN COLORADO.**

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

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 23-1-120.9 as follows:

23-1-120.9. Department study - teacher shortage - legislative declaration - repeal. (1) (a) **THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT:**

(I) **IN DECEMBER 2016, THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ISSUED THE 2016 LEGISLATIVE REPORT ON EDUCATOR PREPARATION IN COLORADO. THE REPORT FOUND THAT:**

(A) **THE NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO COMPLETED A TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM AT A COLORADO COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY IN THE 2015-16 ACADEMIC YEAR DECLINED BY TWO AND TWO-TENTHS PERCENT FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR. THIS IS THE SIXTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR IN WHICH THE NUMBER OF TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM GRADUATES HAS DECLINED, LEADING TO A TOTAL DECLINE OF TWENTY-FOUR AND FOUR-TENTHS PERCENT FROM 2010 THROUGH 2016. THIS DECREASE IN TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM GRADUATES IS REFLECTED IN NATIONAL AND GLOBAL STATISTICS AS WELL.**

(B) **THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO ENROLL IN TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS CONTINUES TO BE LOW, AND IN THE 2015-16 ACADEMIC YEAR, THERE WERE SIGNIFICANT DECLINES IN THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO ENROLLED IN TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS. THE LOW ENROLLMENT NUMBERS ARE**

Capital letters indicate new material added to existing statutes; dashes through words indicate deletions from existing statutes and such material not part of act.

EXPECTED TO CONTINUE HAVING A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE NUMBER OF TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM GRADUATES FOR THE NEXT FOUR TO FIVE YEARS.

(C) THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO ENROLL IN UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS IN MATH, SCIENCE, AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS HAS ALSO SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASED, NEGATIVELY AFFECTING THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO ARE PREPARED TO SEEK TEACHER PREPARATION AND A TEACHER LICENSE IN THESE AREAS; AND

(D) RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS CONTINUE TO HAVE DIFFICULTY RECRUITING AND RETAINING TEACHERS IN THE HISTORICALLY HARD-TO-STAFF ENDORSEMENT AND LICENSURE AREAS OF MATH, SCIENCE, AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, AND THE OVERALL TEACHER SHORTAGE HAS A PARTICULARLY DRAMATIC IMPACT ON RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS, ESPECIALLY THOSE ON COLORADO'S EASTERN PLAINS.

(II) IN ADDITION TO DECREASING NUMBERS OF PERSONS ENTERING THE TEACHING PROFESSION, INCREASING NUMBERS OF TEACHERS ARE LEAVING THE PROFESSION, SOME AFTER ONLY TEACHING A FEW YEARS, SOME RETIRING WITH SEVERAL YEARS' EXPERIENCE. BASED ON DATA FROM THE 2011-12 AND 2012-13 ACADEMIC YEARS, SIX AND THREE-TENTHS PERCENT OF TEACHERS LEFT THE PROFESSION DURING THOSE YEARS AND EIGHT AND FOUR-TENTHS PERCENT WERE PLANNING TO LEAVE EITHER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE OR AS SOON AS A MORE DESIRABLE JOB OPPORTUNITY BECAME AVAILABLE.

(III) RECENT RESEARCH DEMONSTRATES THAT THE FACTORS THAT MOST INFLUENCE A TEACHER'S DECISION TO LEAVE THE TEACHING PROFESSION ARE:

(A) SALARIES AND OTHER COMPENSATION;

(B) TEACHER PREPARATION AND THE COSTS OF ENTERING THE PROFESSION;

(C) HIRING PRACTICES AND PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT;

(D) INDUCTION PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT FOR NEW TEACHERS; AND

(E) WORKING CONDITIONS, INCLUDING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP, THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION AND SHARED DECISION-MAKING, ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, AND RESOURCES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING;

(IV) THE MEDIA REPORT THAT IT IS DIFFICULT FOR URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO FILL TEACHING POSITIONS AND THAT THE TEACHER SHORTAGE IN RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN COLORADO IS AT A NEAR CRISIS LEVEL; AND

(V) THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE CAUSES OF TEACHER SHORTAGES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS VARY WIDELY ACROSS THE STATE. STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE TEACHER SHORTAGES IN VARIOUS SCHOOL DISTRICTS MUST BE TAILORED TO THE PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT.

(b) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS, THEREFORE, THAT IT IS NECESSARY THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, STUDY THE TEACHER SHORTAGE IN COLORADO TO IDENTIFY THE

REASONS FOR THE SHORTAGE AND TO RECOMMEND STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS IN ALL AREAS OF THE STATE.

(2) THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL CREATE A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS TEACHER SHORTAGES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITHIN THE STATE. THE DEPARTMENTS SHALL PREPARE THE PLAN IN COLLABORATION WITH, AT A MINIMUM, INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING SCHOOL DISTRICTS, A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING BOARDS OF COOPERATIVE SERVICES, ALTERNATIVE TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS, A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING TEACHERS, A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING CHARTER SCHOOLS, A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING ADMINISTRATORS, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS, AND EDUCATION ADVOCACY GROUPS, AS WELL AS OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS OR ORGANIZATIONS. TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, THE DEPARTMENTS MUST SEEK CONSENSUS AMONG THE COLLABORATORS ON THE RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES AND MUST INDICATE IN THE PLAN WHETHER THE RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES ARE SUPPORTED BY CONSENSUS. IN PREPARING THE PLAN, THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL, AT A MINIMUM:

(a) EXAMINE STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN AND COMPLETION OF TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS AND RECOMMEND STRATEGIES TO INCREASE ENROLLMENTS AND THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS COMPLETING OR GRADUATING FROM ALL TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS;

(b) IDENTIFY FINANCIAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ASSIST STUDENTS WHO ENROLL IN TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS AND RECOMMEND STRATEGIES TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF RESOURCES AND STUDENT AWARENESS OF RESOURCES;

(c) IDENTIFY THE SPECIFIC SUBJECT AREAS, GRADE LEVELS, AND GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF THE STATE IN WHICH TEACHER SHORTAGES EXIST OR ARE LIKELY TO EXIST WITHIN FIVE YEARS AND STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING THE SHORTAGES IN THESE SPECIFIC AREAS;

(d) IDENTIFY SCHOOL DISTRICT OR SCHOOL PRACTICES THAT CREATE OBSTACLES FOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION AND RECOMMEND STRATEGIES FOR REMOVING THESE OBSTACLES AND IMPROVING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS, WHICH MAY INCLUDE STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING INDUCTION PROGRAMS;

(e) EXAMINE RELEVANT AND CREDIBLE RESEARCH THAT IDENTIFIES THE COMMON REASONS TEACHERS LEAVE THE TEACHING PROFESSION AND OTHERWISE IDENTIFY ANY OTHER REASONS PREVALENT AMONG COLORADO TEACHERS AND RECOMMEND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THESE REASONS;

(f) CONDUCT COLORADO-SPECIFIC RESEARCH CONCERNING THE EFFECT ON STUDENT OUTCOMES OF REQUIRING A TEACHER TO BE LICENSED AND PROVIDE THE RESEARCH FINDINGS IN THE PLAN WITH STRATEGIES THAT TAKE THE RESEARCH FINDINGS INTO ACCOUNT;

(g) IDENTIFY OBSTACLES TO LICENSURE AND MOBILITY WITHIN THE STATE AND

RECOMMEND STRATEGIES TO REDUCE THESE OBSTACLES, INCLUDING INCREASING TEACHERS' ABILITY TO TRANSFER AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICTS, IDENTIFYING CRITERIA FOR AN EXPEDITED LICENSING PROCESS FOR LICENSED TEACHERS WHO MOVE TO COLORADO, AND SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION;

(h) ENSURE THAT THE PLAN TAKES INTO ACCOUNT DIFFERENCES AMONG THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS THROUGHOUT THE STATE WHEN IDENTIFYING STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE TEACHER SHORTAGE IN ALL AREAS OF THE STATE; AND

(i) EXAMINE AND IDENTIFY THE ANTICIPATED COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED IN THE PLAN AND ENSURE THAT THE PLAN INCLUDES STRATEGIES THAT DO NOT REQUIRE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.

(3) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2017, THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL SUBMIT THE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS TEACHER SHORTAGES IN THE STATE TO THE COMMISSION, THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, AND THE EDUCATION COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE, OR ANY SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES. THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL ALSO POST THE COMPLETED PLAN ON THE DEPARTMENT WEBSITE FOR PUBLIC ACCESS.

(4) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2018.

SECTION 2. Act subject to petition - effective date. This act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August 9, 2017, if adjournment sine die is on May 10, 2017); except that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in November 2018 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.

Approved: May 21, 2017