

Second Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 24-0319.01 Jane Ritter x4342

HOUSE BILL 24-1087

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

McCormick and Armagost,

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Kirkmeyer and Marchman,

House Committees
Education

Senate Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 CONCERNING THE CREATION OF AN ADDITIONAL PATHWAY FOR
102 EDUCATORS TO GAIN AN ENDORSEMENT FOR SPECIAL
103 EDUCATION INSTRUCTION.

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>.)

Under current law, a person seeking a teaching endorsement in special education or early childhood special education (endorsement) must complete an approved program and a student teaching practicum through an institution of higher education and pass one or more appropriate content-based exams. The bill requires the department of

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.

education (department) to establish an additional pathway for an educator to obtain an endorsement. To receive the endorsement, the educator must hold a valid teaching license other than an initial license; take and pass the appropriate content-based exams, as determined by the department; and complete a specialized induction program that meets the standards and criteria established by rule of the state board of education. Upon the educator's completion of all the components of the additional pathway, the department shall grant the educator a professional endorsement for instruction in special education or early childhood special education.

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

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

4 (a) To meet the requirements of the federal "Individuals with
5 Disabilities Education Act", 20 U.S.C. sec. 1400 et seq., as amended, the
6 demand for special education educators in Colorado and nationwide has
7 reached a critical point;

8 (b) Currently, Colorado requires that an individual who is seeking
9 an endorsement in special education or early childhood special education
10 complete an approved program, a student teaching practicum, and pass
11 one or more appropriate content-based exams;

12 (c) Because of an extreme shortage of special education educators,
13 school districts have filled special education positions with substitute
14 teachers, contract teachers, alternative licensed teachers, emergency
15 licensed teachers, and virtual services, all of which are expensive and
16 none of which is the best method to serve children with special education
17 needs; and

18 (d) Experienced and professionally licensed educators who want
19 to educate special needs or early childhood special education students
20 might lack the time or resources to return to school to fulfill the current

1 Colorado special education endorsement requirements. These educators
2 already collaborate with special education teachers to follow
3 individualized education plans, possess pedagogical expertise, and
4 showcase teaching skills.

5 (2) The general assembly finds that for this unique group of
6 educators, an additional endorsement pathway is essential. This additional
7 endorsement pathway would:

8 (a) Allow educators with a professional teaching license who have
9 passed appropriate content-based exams and completed a specialized
10 induction program to earn an endorsement in special education or early
11 childhood special education; and

12 (b) Significantly alleviate the shortage in educators for special
13 education and early childhood special education.

14 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-60.5-102, **add**
15 (11.7) as follows:

16 **22-60.5-102. Definitions.** As used in this article 60.5, unless the
17 context otherwise requires:

18 (11.7) "LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDER" MEANS A SCHOOL DISTRICT,
19 A BOARD OF COOPERATIVE SERVICES, THE STATE CHARTER SCHOOL
20 INSTITUTE, OR A FACILITY SCHOOL.

21 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-60.5-106, **amend**
22 (2); and **add** (2.5) as follows:

23 **22-60.5-106. Endorsement of license - effect - special education**
24 **specialized induction program - rules.** (2) Notwithstanding the
25 discretionary authority granted in subsection (1) of this section, AND
26 EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (2.5) OF THIS SECTION, the
27 department of education shall issue a special education teacher

1 endorsement to an applicant who completes course work and assessments,
2 as specified by rule of the state board of education, in a program in
3 special education offered by an accepted institution of higher education,
4 which program has been approved by the state board of education.

5 (2.5) (a) THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL ESTABLISH AN
6 ADDITIONAL PATHWAY FOR AN EDUCATOR WHO HOLDS A VALID TEACHING
7 LICENSE OTHER THAN AN INITIAL TEACHING LICENSE PURSUANT TO THIS
8 ARTICLE 60.5 TO GAIN AN ENDORSEMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION OR EARLY
9 CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION. AN EDUCATOR SEEKING TO GAIN AN
10 ENDORSEMENT THROUGH THIS ADDITIONAL PATHWAY SHALL:

11 (I) TAKE AND PASS THE APPROPRIATE CONTENT-BASED EXAMS AS
12 REQUIRED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR THE PARTICULAR
13 ENDORSEMENT THE EDUCATOR IS SEEKING; AND

14 (II) COMPLETE A SPECIALIZED INDUCTION PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED
15 IN SUBSECTION (2.5)(b) OF THIS SECTION.

16 (b) A LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDER MAY CREATE A SPECIALIZED
17 INDUCTION PROGRAM THAT MEETS THE STANDARDS AND CRITERIA
18 ESTABLISHED BY RULE OF THE STATE BOARD AS PART OF THE ADDITIONAL
19 PATHWAY FOR PROFESSIONALLY LICENSED EDUCATORS TO OBTAIN AN
20 ENDORSEMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION OR EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL
21 EDUCATION. THE SPECIALIZED INDUCTION PROGRAM MUST BE TAILORED
22 TO THE EDUCATOR'S CHOSEN FIELD OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND MEET THE
23 REQUIREMENTS FOR INDUCTION PROGRAMS SET FORTH IN SECTION
24 22-60.5-204. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL APPROVE A
25 SPECIALIZED INDUCTION PROGRAM CREATED PURSUANT TO THIS
26 SUBSECTION (2.5)(b). THE SPECIALIZED INDUCTION PROGRAM ALLOWS THE
27 EDUCATOR TO WORK, UNDER CLOSE SUPERVISION, WITH SPECIAL

1 EDUCATION STUDENTS AS FOLLOWS:

2 (I) IF A PROFESSIONALLY LICENSED EDUCATOR PASSES THE
3 APPROPRIATE CONTENT-BASED EXAMS PRIOR TO STARTING THE
4 SPECIALIZED INDUCTION PROGRAM, THE EDUCATOR MAY WORK UNDER
5 CLOSE SUPERVISION WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS UNDER
6 TEMPORARY EDUCATOR ELIGIBILITY WHILE ALSO PARTICIPATING IN THE
7 SPECIALIZED INDUCTION PROGRAM; OR

8 (II) IF A PROFESSIONALLY LICENSED EDUCATOR ENTERS THE
9 SPECIALIZED INDUCTION PROGRAM WITHOUT FIRST PASSING THE
10 APPROPRIATE CONTENT-BASED EXAMS, THE EDUCATOR MAY TAKE THE
11 NECESSARY EXAM OR EXAMS WHILE IN OR AFTER COMPLETING THE
12 SPECIALIZED INDUCTION PROGRAM, PROVIDED THAT THE EDUCATOR
13 PASSES THE APPROPRIATE CONTENT-BASED EXAMS PRIOR TO WORKING
14 WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS.

15 (c) AFTER AN EDUCATOR PASSES THE APPROPRIATE
16 CONTENT-BASED EXAMS AND COMPLETES THE SPECIALIZED INDUCTION
17 PROGRAM, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL GRANT THE EDUCATOR
18 A PROFESSIONAL ENDORSEMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION OR EARLY
19 CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION.

20 (d) THE STATE BOARD SHALL PROMULGATE RULES TO ESTABLISH
21 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR THE APPROVAL OF PROPOSED SPECIALIZED
22 INDUCTION PROGRAMS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD
23 SPECIAL EDUCATION EDUCATORS. THE RULES MUST REQUIRE THE
24 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA TO BE FULLY IMPLEMENTED ON OR BEFORE
25 JULY 1, 2024. THE STANDARDS AND CRITERIA MUST, AT A MINIMUM,
26 PROVIDE MULTIPLE APPROACHES AND OPTIONS FOR THE PROVISION OF
27 APPROVED SPECIALIZED INDUCTION PROGRAMS, WHICH MUST TAKE INTO

1 CONSIDERATION FACTORS DEEMED RELEVANT BY THE STATE BOARD.
2 FACTORS MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO, THE APPROPRIATE
3 TRAINING AND EXPERTISE NEEDED TO WORK WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION
4 STUDENTS, THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF LOCAL EDUCATION
5 PROVIDERS, THE COST OF PROVIDING APPROVED SPECIALIZED INDUCTION
6 PROGRAMS, AND THE AVAILABILITY OF STATE MONEY TO FUND, IN WHOLE
7 OR IN PART, APPROVED SPECIALIZED INDUCTION PROGRAMS.

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