A BILL FOR AN ACT

CONCERNING SUPPORTING THE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE IN COLORADO.

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 requires the department of education to create, maintain, and manage an online career support and pathways portal (online portal) for educators; staff; school districts, district charter schools, institute charter schools, boards of cooperative services, or approved facility schools (local education providers); and educator preparation programs (educator programs). The online portal must have:
• Access to career incentives, stipends, and loan forgiveness;
• Career pathway information for educators and staff, including, but not limited to, mentoring, induction program coaching, instructional coaching, district curriculum support, special assignments for teachers, and principal leadership; and
• A job posting and application portal for local education providers to post open employment positions and to search for prospective candidates, and for educators and staff to upload resumes and to apply to open employment positions.

Local education providers and educator programs shall post a link to the online portal on their websites to promote the online portal to educators and staff.

The bill allows Indian tribes and tribal organizations to access and use the online portal.

Pursuant to current law, the educator and retention program (ERR program) provides support to members of the armed forces and nonmilitary-affiliated educator candidates. The bill expands criteria for participation in the ERR program to include applicants who are:
• Enrolled in a teacher degree apprenticeship program and employed by an Indian tribe or tribal organization or a local education provider; or
• Enrolled in an educator program to attain a special services provider license with the appropriate endorsement.

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

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-60.5-209.1, amend (1)(a)(III); repeal (1)(a)(II); and add (3) as follows:

22-60.5-209.1. Department of education - adjunct instructor authorization - alternative teacher programs - information - online career support and pathways portal - definitions. (1) (a) The department shall direct resources toward publicizing the existence of:

(II) The teacher residency programs available through the teacher residency expansion program created in part 1 of article 60.3 of this title;

(III) Programs to support paraprofessionals as defined in section
SECTION 22-60.3-201 who are seeking a baccalaureate degree to pursue a professional teaching license;

(3) (a) The department shall create, manage, and maintain an online career support and pathways portal that provides career support and employment pathway information for educators, staff, and local education providers. The online portal must include, but is not limited to:

(I) Access to career incentives, stipends, and loan forgiveness;

(II) Career pathway information for educators and staff, including, but not limited to, mentoring, induction program coaching, instructional coaching, district curriculum and support, special assignments for teachers, and principal leadership; and

(III) A job posting and application portal that allows:

(A) Local education providers to post open employment positions and to search for prospective candidates; and

(B) Educators and staff to upload resumes and to apply to open employment positions.

(b) Local education providers, approved programs of preparation, as defined in section 22-60.5-102, and alternative teacher programs, as defined in section 22-60.5-102, shall post a link to the online portal on their respective websites to promote the online portal to educators and staff.

(c) Indian tribes and tribal organizations may access and use the online portal.

(d) As used in this subsection (3), unless the context
OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(I) "LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDER" MEANS A SCHOOL DISTRICT, CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZED BY A SCHOOL DISTRICT PURSUANT TO PART 1 OF ARTICLE 30.5 OF THIS TITLE 22, A CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZED BY THE STATE CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE PURSUANT TO PART 5 OF ARTICLE 30.5 OF THIS TITLE 22, A BOARD OF COOPERATIVE SERVICES CREATED AND OPERATING PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 5 OF THIS TITLE 22, OR AN APPROVED FACILITY SCHOOL, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 22-2-402.

(II) "ONLINE CAREER SUPPORT AND PATHWAYS PORTAL" OR "ONLINE PORTAL" MEANS THE ONLINE CAREER SUPPORT AND PATHWAYS PORTAL CREATED IN THIS SUBSECTION (3).

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-60.3-201, amend (4); and add (5.5) as follows:

22-60.3-201. Definitions. As used in this part 2, unless the context otherwise requires:

(4) "Local education provider" means a school district, a charter school authorized by a school district pursuant to part 1 of article 30.5 of this title 22, a charter school authorized by the state charter school institute pursuant to part 5 of article 30.5 of this title 22, or a board of cooperative services created and operating pursuant to article 5 of this title 22 that operates one or more public schools, OR AN APPROVED FACILITY SCHOOL, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 22-2-402.

(5.5) "PARAPROFESSIONAL" MEANS A PERSON WHO IS TRAINED TO ASSIST A LICENSED TEACHER.

SECTION 3. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-60.3-204, amend (2) and (4) as follows:

22-60.3-204. Program eligibility - financial assistance - funding
- report. (2) The department shall review each application received and
determine whether the applicant meets the following criteria for
participation in the program:

(a) If the applicant is a member of the armed forces, the
applicant has an honorable discharge status or is currently serving in one
of the armed forces; OR

(b) (I) The applicant has a baccalaureate or advanced degree
from an accredited institution of higher education at the time of
application AND HAS SECURED EMPLOYMENT WITH AN INDIAN TRIBE OR
TRIBAL ORGANIZATION OR IN A LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDER SHORTAGE
AREA WITH AN ALTERNATIVE TEACHER LICENSE PURSUANT TO SECTION
22-60.5-201 (1)(a) OR A TEMPORARY EDUCATOR ELIGIBILITY
AUTHORIZATION PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-60.5-111 (5); or

(II) The applicant is currently employed as a paraprofessional
as defined in section 22-60.3-102, in a school district, charter school, or
board of cooperative services WITH AN INDIAN TRIBE OR TRIBAL
ORGANIZATION OR A LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDER and is working toward
a baccalaureate degree IN AN EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM as
required to pursue a professional teaching license; or

(III) AN APPLICANT IS ENROLLED IN A TEACHER DEGREE
APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-60.5-111.5 AND IS
EMPLOYED BY AN INDIAN TRIBE OR TRIBAL ORGANIZATION OR A LOCAL
EDUCATION PROVIDER WITH A TEACHER APPRENTICESHIP AUTHORIZATION
PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-60.5-111 (16); OR

(c)(I) The applicant meets state career and technical education
requirements; or

(II) Has the equivalent of eighteen semester hours of
postsecondary enrollment and six years of military experience in a career
or technical field; OR

(d) An applicant is enrolled in an educator preparation
program working to attain a special services provider license
with the appropriate endorsement.

(4) (a) The general assembly shall annually appropriate money to
fund the program, including an amount for the direct and indirect costs
incurred by the department in implementing the program.

(b) On or before January 1, 2025, and on or before each
January 1 thereafter, the department shall submit a report to
the general assembly summarizing the total number of
applicants, the total number of applicants who were
apprenticeship educators or special services providers, and the
total number of qualified program participants who were
provided financial assistance. The general assembly shall
consider the report when determining future appropriations to
the program.

SECTION 4. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 24-51-1101, amend
(1.9)(a)(I), (1.9)(a)(II) introductory portion, (1.9)(a)(II)(B),
(1.9)(a)(II)(C), (1.9)(i) introductory portion, (1.9)(i)(I), and (1.9)(i)(II) as
follows:

24-51-1101. Employment after service retirement - report -
definitions - repeal. (1.9) (a) (I) Subject to the provisions of
subsection (1.9)(h) of this section, a service retiree who is a teacher, a school bus
driver, a school food services cook, a school nurse, or a paraprofessional,
as defined in section 22-60.3-102 (9) SECTION 22-60.3-201, and is hired
pursuant to subsection (1.9)(b) of this section by an employer in the
school division of the association that satisfies the criteria specified in subsection (1.9)(a)(II) of this section may receive salary without reduction in benefits for any length of employment in a calendar year if the service retiree has not worked for any employer, as defined in section 24-51-101 (20), during the month of the effective date of retirement. A service retiree described in this subsection (1.9)(a) who works for any employer, as defined in section 24-51-101 (20), during the month of the effective date of retirement shall be subject to a reduction in benefits as provided in section 24-51-1102 (2).

(II) The provisions of this subsection (1.9) apply only if:

(B) The school district, board of cooperative services, or charter school hires the service retiree for the purpose of providing classroom instruction or school bus transportation to students enrolled by the district, enrolled by one or more of the districts served by the board of cooperative services, or enrolled by the charter school, or for the purpose of being a school food services cook, a school nurse, or a paraprofessional, as defined in section 22-60.3-102 (9) and section 22-60.3-201; and

(C) The school district, board of cooperative services, or charter school determines that there is a critical shortage of qualified teachers, school bus drivers, school food services cooks, school nurses, or paraprofessionals, as defined in section 22-60.3-102 (9) and section 22-60.3-201, as applicable, and that the service retiree has specific experience, skills, or qualifications that would benefit the district, board of cooperative services, or charter school.

(i) On or before December 1, 2025, and on or before December 1 of each fifth year thereafter, the association shall submit a report to the finance committees of the house of representatives and the senate, or any
successor committees, regarding the employment after service retirement provisions of this subsection (1.9). Notwithstanding the requirement in section 24-1-136 (11)(a)(I), the requirement to submit the report required in this subsection (1.9)(i) continues indefinitely. The employers in the school division of the association that employ teachers, school bus drivers, school food services cooks, school nurses, or paraprofessionals, as defined in section 22-60.3-102 (9) SECTION 22-60.3-201, pursuant to this subsection (1.9) shall provide information requested by the association for the purposes of the report. The report shall include:

(I) The number of teachers, school bus drivers, school food services cooks, school nurses, and paraprofessionals, as defined in section 22-60.3-102 (9) SECTION 22-60.3-201, who have been employed after service retirement pursuant to this subsection (1.9) as of the date of the report;

(II) The extent to which this subsection (1.9) has helped employers in the school division address teacher, school bus driver, school food services cook, school nurse, and paraprofessional, as defined in section 22-60.3-102 (9) SECTION 22-60.3-201, shortages;

SECTION 5. 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; 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 2024 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.