

Second Regular Session  
Seventy-second General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO

**BILL B**

LLS NO. 20-0409.01 Jacob Baus x2173

**HOUSE BILL**

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**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**McLachlan and Baisley, Kipp**

**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

**Zenzinger and Story,**

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**House Committees**

**Senate Committees**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101 **CONCERNING A STATEWIDE PLAN FOR AWARDING COLLEGE CREDIT**  
102 **FOR WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE.**

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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/>.)*

**Making Higher Education Attainable Interim Study Committee.** The bill requires an existing council charged with looking at general education courses (council) to implement a plan for determining and awarding academic credit for postsecondary education based on work-related experience.

Furthermore, state institutions of higher education (institutions) are

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing statute.  
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

required to evaluate student learning from work-related experience and award appropriate academic credit for the experience. Also, institutions shall accept and transfer academic credit awarded for work-related experience as courses with guaranteed-transfer designation, unless the council creates a plan concerning awarding and transferring academic credit for work-related experience for courses with guaranteed-transfer designation.

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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 hereby finds and declares that:

4 (a) In addition to the student rights pursuant to section 23-1-125  
5 (1)(a), (1)(c), and (1)(d), Colorado Revised Statutes, students need  
6 additional rights for their work-related experience to be evaluated fairly  
7 for application toward a postsecondary credential;

8 (b) To ensure the economic vitality of Colorado, every industry  
9 needs access to a skilled workforce, every Coloradan needs access to  
10 meaningful employment, and institutions of higher education must  
11 maintain the ability to enroll qualified students and produce high-quality  
12 credentials of value;

13 (c) During the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years, high school  
14 students earned nine thousand industry credentials related to high-demand  
15 jobs and industries in Colorado. These industry credentials should be  
16 evaluated for potential application toward a postsecondary credential with  
17 transferability among two-year and four-year institutions.

18 (d) The commission on higher education, in collaboration with  
19 representatives from institutions of higher education, must develop a plan  
20 to align work-related experience with academic credit that counts toward  
21 a student's postsecondary education credential;

22 (e) The plan must be open, transparent, and credible so students

1 can progress more efficiently along pathways into postsecondary  
2 education and the workforce;

3 (f) Industry members, especially from high workforce demand and  
4 growing industries with critical occupations and top jobs that are  
5 identified in the Colorado talent pipeline report, are important  
6 stakeholders in this process to ensure Colorado's higher education system  
7 is responsive to students and to the changing economy; and

8 (g) Through this work, the general assembly ensures additional  
9 pathways to career and financial success for Colorado students and  
10 workers and reduced costs to students through less time required to earn  
11 a degree.

12 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add 23-5-145.5** as  
13 follows:

14 **23-5-145.5. Credit for work-related experience - plan - report**  
15 **- definitions - repeal.** (1) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE  
16 CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

17 (a) "COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION" OR "COMMISSION" HAS  
18 THE SAME MEANING SET FORTH IN SECTION 23-1-101.1 (1).

19 (b) "COUNCIL" MEANS THE COUNCIL CREATED AND EXISTING  
20 PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-108.5, CONVENED BY THE COMMISSION ON  
21 HIGHER EDUCATION.

22 (c) "STATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION" OR "INSTITUTION"  
23 HAS THE SAME MEANING SET FORTH IN SECTION 23-1-135 (2).

24 (d) "WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE" MEANS ANY EXPERIENCE  
25 ACQUIRED WITHIN THE PAST TEN YEARS THROUGH PAID OR UNPAID  
26 EMPLOYMENT, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO SELF-EMPLOYMENT, AN  
27 INTERNSHIP, A RESIDENCY, A PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM, OR AN

1 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM, THAT MAY LEAD TO OR RESULT IN A BUSINESS  
2 CREDENTIAL, AN INDUSTRY CREDENTIAL, A TECHNICAL CERTIFICATE, OR  
3 A PROFESSIONAL LICENSE.

4 (2) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2022, THE COUNCIL, IN  
5 COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMISSION, SHALL CREATE, ADOPT, AND  
6 IMPLEMENT A PLAN, REFERRED TO IN THIS SECTION AS THE "PLAN", TO  
7 AWARD POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC CREDIT, IF APPROPRIATE, FOR  
8 LEARNING DEMONSTRATED FROM WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE.

9 (3) THE COUNCIL, AS A PART OF THE PLAN, SHALL:

10 (a) DEVELOP A PROCESS FOR ASSESSING AND ALIGNING LEARNING  
11 ACQUIRED THROUGH WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE TO THE KNOWLEDGE  
12 AND COMPETENCIES REQUIRED FOR AWARDING POSTSECONDARY  
13 ACADEMIC CREDIT;

14 (b) DEVELOP A PROCESS FOR ASSESSING AND ALIGNING A  
15 PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION OR LICENSE PROGRAM THAT IS PROVIDED OR  
16 ENDORSED BY AN INDUSTRY ACQUIRED THROUGH WORK-RELATED  
17 EXPERIENCE TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCIES REQUIRED FOR  
18 AWARDING POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC CREDIT;

19 (c) IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO DETERMINE HOW LEARNING OR A  
20 PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION OR LICENSE PROGRAM THAT IS PROVIDED OR  
21 ENDORSED BY AN INDUSTRY ACQUIRED THROUGH WORK-RELATED  
22 EXPERIENCE WILL RESULT, IF APPROPRIATE, IN POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC  
23 CREDIT WITH GUARANTEED-TRANSFER DESIGNATION;

24 (d) IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO DETERMINE HOW TO RECOGNIZE  
25 CREDENTIALS EARNED BY A STUDENT AT AN AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE  
26 PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-60-802 AND DETERMINE HOW CREDENTIALS  
27 WILL TRANSFER FROM AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGES, IF APPROPRIATE, TO

1 PUBLIC TWO-YEAR AND FOUR-YEAR STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER  
2 EDUCATION; AND

3 (e) PRIORITIZE THE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCIES ACQUIRED  
4 THROUGH WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO  
5 WORKFORCE DEMANDS AND GROWING INDUSTRIES IDENTIFIED BY THE  
6 MOST RECENT COLORADO TALENT PIPELINE REPORT PREPARED PURSUANT  
7 TO SECTION 24-46.3-103, OR IDENTIFIED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE  
8 COLORADO WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL CREATED IN SECTION  
9 24-46.3-101.

10 (4) THE COUNCIL, IN CREATING THE PLAN, SHALL CONSULT WITH  
11 AND INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS, IF APPROPRIATE, FROM:

12 (a) REPRESENTATIVES OF INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT  
13 LIMITED TO, FACULTY MEMBERS AND REGISTRARS;

14 (b) REPRESENTATIVES OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT REPRESENT  
15 STUDENTS IN COLORADO;

16 (c) REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COLORADO WORK FORCE  
17 DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL;

18 (d) REPRESENTATIVES OF INDUSTRIES WITH HIGH WORKFORCE  
19 DEMAND AND GROWING INDUSTRIES IDENTIFIED IN THE MOST RECENT  
20 COLORADO TALENT PIPELINE REPORT AND ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING  
21 THEM; AND

22 (e) REPRESENTATIVES SELECTED BY THE COMMISSION.

23 (5) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2023, THE COUNCIL, IN  
24 COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMISSION, SHALL CREATE, ADOPT, AND  
25 IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO DETERMINE AND AWARD POSTSECONDARY  
26 ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR LEARNING ACQUIRED FROM WORK-RELATED  
27 EXPERIENCE FOR ADDITIONAL WORKFORCE DEMANDS AND INDUSTRIES NOT

1       ADDRESSED IN SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION.

2               (6) (a) THE PLAN MUST REQUIRE EACH INSTITUTION TO:

3               (I) EVALUATE THE LEARNING ACQUIRED BY A STUDENT FROM  
4       WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE AND DETERMINE AND AWARD APPROPRIATE  
5       ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR THE WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE CONSISTENT  
6       WITH STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY THE PLAN; AND

7               (II) BEGINNING WITH THE 2023-24 ACADEMIC YEAR, ACCEPT AND  
8       TRANSFER WITHIN THE INSTITUTION AND TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS  
9       POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC CREDIT AWARDED FOR WORK-RELATED  
10       EXPERIENCE AS COURSES WITH GUARANTEED-TRANSFER DESIGNATION,  
11       UNLESS THE COUNCIL, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMISSION,  
12       CREATES, ADOPTS, AND IMPLEMENTS A NEW PLAN PRIOR TO THE 2023-24  
13       ACADEMIC YEAR, CONCERNING THE AWARD AND TRANSFER OF ACADEMIC  
14       CREDIT AWARDED FOR WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE FOR COURSES WITH  
15       GUARANTEED-TRANSFER DESIGNATION.

16              (b) EACH INSTITUTION MAY ALSO AWARD ACADEMIC CREDIT TO  
17       STUDENTS FOR OTHER PRIOR LEARNING FROM WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE  
18       TOWARD THE STUDENT'S PROGRAM OF STUDY IF THE LEARNING MEETS  
19       STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY THE INSTITUTION AND ALIGNS WITH POLICIES  
20       ESTABLISHED BY THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION REGARDING  
21       PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT.

22              (7) (a) DURING THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE  
23       SEVENTY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN 2022, THE DEPARTMENT OF  
24       HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL REPORT TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEES OF  
25       THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, OR ANY SUCCESSOR  
26       COMMITTEES, REGARDING THE CREATION, ADOPTION, AND  
27       IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLANS ADOPTED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION.

1 (b) THIS SUBSECTION (7) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2022.

2 (8) (a) ON OR BEFORE MARCH 1, 2024, AND ON OR BEFORE MARCH  
3 1 OF EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, THE COUNCIL SHALL REPORT TO THE  
4 EDUCATION COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF  
5 REPRESENTATIVES, OR ANY SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES, REGARDING THE  
6 IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SECTION. THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE, AT A  
7 MINIMUM:

8 (I) THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO WERE AWARDED CREDITS AND  
9 WHO TRANSFERRED CREDITS TO OR FROM AN INSTITUTION PURSUANT TO  
10 THIS SECTION;

11 (II) DATA REGARDING THE AGE AND DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDENTS  
12 WHO WERE AWARDED CREDITS AND WHO TRANSFERRED CREDITS TO OR  
13 FROM AN INSTITUTION PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION;

14 (III) THE IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES OF THIS SECTION; AND

15 (IV) ANY RECOMMENDED STATUTORY REVISIONS TO THIS SECTION.

16 (b) NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 24-1-136  
17 (11)(a)(I), THE REPORTING REQUIREMENT PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION  
18 (8) CONTINUES UNTIL THE REPEAL OF THIS SUBSECTION (8).

19 (c) THIS SUBSECTION (8) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2029.

20 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-125, **add** (4.7)  
21 as follows:

22 **23-1-125. Commission directive - student bill of rights - degree**  
23 **requirements - implementation of core courses - competency test -**  
24 **prior learning - prior work-related experience. (4.7) Prior**  
25 **work-related experience.** PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-5-145.5, THE  
26 COUNCIL CREATED AND EXISTING PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-108.5, IN  
27 COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMISSION, SHALL CREATE, ADOPT, AND

1 IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO DETERMINE AND AWARD POSTSECONDARY  
2 ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE.

3           **SECTION 4. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act  
4 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the  
5 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August  
6 5, 2020, if adjournment sine die is on May 6, 2020); except that, if a  
7 referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the  
8 state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act  
9 within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect  
10 unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in  
11 November 2020 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the  
12 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.