

CHAPTER 147

EDUCATION - UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

HOUSE BILL 03-1159

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Paccione, Groff, Merrifield, Pommer, Spence, Williams S., Butcher, Carroll, Coleman, Madden, Marshall, and Tochtrop;
also SENATOR(S) Johnson S., Hanna, Phillips, Tapia, Tupa, and Windels.

AN ACT**CONCERNING CERTIFICATION OF EDUCATION PARAPROFESSIONALS.**

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

SECTION 1. Article 1 of title 23, Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION to read:

23-1-121.7. Commission directive - paraprofessional programs. (1) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT:

(a) THE NUMBER OF PARAPROFESSIONALS WHO ASSIST TEACHERS IN THE CLASSROOM HAS INCREASED IN RECENT YEARS BOTH IN ABSOLUTE NUMBERS AND AS A PROPORTION OF ALL INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF;

(b) PARAPROFESSIONALS ARE A VALUABLE ASSET TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS, PROVIDING MANY HOURS OF ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL TIME FOR STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY AS PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE CALLED UPON TO PROVIDE INCREASING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND CHILDREN FOR WHOM ENGLISH IS A SECOND LANGUAGE;

(c) AS PARENTS ARE REQUESTING AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS ARE ATTEMPTING TO PROVIDE SMALLER CLASS SIZES, THE PRUDENT USE OF WELL-QUALIFIED PARAPROFESSIONALS TO MAXIMIZE INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION PROVIDES SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH A MEANS TO REACH EVERY STUDENT AND TO ASSIST EVERY STUDENT IN REACHING HIS OR HER FULL POTENTIAL;

(d) IN PASSING THE "NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001", PUBLIC LAW 107-110, CONGRESS HAS EXPRESSED THE INTENTION THAT ALL PARAPROFESSIONALS WORKING

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

IN TITLE I PROGRAMS BE HIGHLY QUALIFIED;

(e) A PARAPROFESSIONAL WORKING IN A TITLE I PROGRAM MAY DEMONSTRATE THAT HE OR SHE IS HIGHLY QUALIFIED IN SEVERAL WAYS, INCLUDING COMPLETION OF AT LEAST TWO YEARS OF POSTSECONDARY STUDY, OBTAINING AN ASSOCIATES OR HIGHER DEGREE, OR SUCCESSFULLY TAKING AN ASSESSMENT SELECTED BY THE STATE OR BY THE EMPLOYING SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT MEETS STATE AND FEDERAL STANDARDS AND THAT DEMONSTRATES KNOWLEDGE OF AND THE ABILITY TO ASSIST IN INSTRUCTION OF READING, WRITING, AND MATHEMATICS;

(f) BECAUSE STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS IDENTIFY SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS RETAIN FLEXIBILITY FOR USING PARAPROFESSIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES, FURTHER REGULATION OF PARAPROFESSIONALS, INCLUDING CERTIFICATION OR LICENSING, IS NOT REQUIRED;

(g) TO ASSIST SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN IDENTIFYING HIGHLY QUALIFIED PARAPROFESSIONALS, COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO PROVIDE EDUCATION PARAPROFESSIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS, AND IT IS USEFUL TO CREATE A PROCEDURE FOR APPROVAL OF EDUCATION PARAPROFESSIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS.

(2) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES, "PARAPROFESSIONAL" MEANS A PERSON WHO IS TRAINED TO ASSIST A LICENSED TEACHER OR SPECIAL SERVICES PROVIDER.

(3) THE COMMISSION, ACTING WITHIN ITS AUTHORITY TO APPROVE TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-121, MAY CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL OF AN EDUCATION PARAPROFESSIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAM OFFERED BY AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION. A COMMUNITY COLLEGE OR A FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION THAT OFFERS AN APPROVED TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM, MAY OFFER AN EDUCATION PARAPROFESSIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAM.

(4) AT A MINIMUM, AN APPROVED EDUCATION PARAPROFESSIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAM SHALL:

(a) BE ALIGNED WITH FEDERAL AND STATE STANDARDS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS;

(b) CONSIST OF COURSES DESIGNED TO CONVEY TO A STUDENT KNOWLEDGE IN READING, WRITING, MATHEMATICS, AND SCIENCE, AND THE SKILLS NECESSARY TO ASSIST A LICENSED TEACHER IN TEACHING READING, WRITING, MATHEMATICS, AND SCIENCE;

(c) BE ALIGNED WITH STATEWIDE TRANSFER AGREEMENTS.

SECTION 2. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.

Approved: April 17, 2003