

CHAPTER 182

EDUCATION - PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HOUSE BILL 07-1118

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also SENATOR(S) Tupa, Windels, Bacon, Boyd, Penry, Romer, Schwartz, Shaffer, Tochtrop, and Williams.

AN ACT**CONCERNING GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION.**

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

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) The general assembly hereby finds and declares that:

(a) When the general assembly embraced standards-based education with the passage of House Bill 93-1313, its intent was to ensure that Colorado schools would put in place academic standards that would enable students of all cultural backgrounds to achieve the highest level of knowledge and skills to compete in the world economy of the twenty-first century;

(b) The expressed goal of standards-based education is to provide children with schools that reflect the state's high expectations and to create conditions where these expectations can be met through a shared sense of accountability and a cooperative spirit among state government, school districts, educators, parents, business persons, and the community;

(c) Colorado's approach to developing academic standards was to follow a "meet-in-the-middle" strategy in which the state developed model academic content standards and school districts subsequently developed their own academic content standards to meet or exceed the state model academic content standards;

(d) The Colorado student assessment program ("CSAP") was introduced in 1997 to measure how well students were meeting the academic content standards in core academic subject areas;

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

(e) In 2000, Colorado created an accountability system that linked student performance on the CSAP exams to consequences for schools and school districts. Standards-based accountability in Colorado was further supplemented by the federal "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001", which requires schools, school districts, and states to demonstrate annual progress toward grade-level proficiency by virtually all students by the 2013-14 school year.

(f) Dramatic changes have occurred in our national, state, and local economies that were unforeseeable in the mid-1990s when the academic content standards were developed. As a result, students need to be prepared for a variety of possible futures as businesses adjust to competitive national and international pressures. Simultaneously, technology and innovation have changed expectations in the workplace and introduced a level of sophistication that was not present even ten years ago in traditional office jobs, jobs in technical fields, such as manufacturing, construction, and auto mechanics, and jobs in agriculture and health care.

(g) As a result, the demands on public education have grown to ensure that all students graduate from high school prepared for an increasingly challenging future;

(h) A recent nationwide survey of employers and faculty at postsecondary institutions concluded that all students need to take a rigorous curriculum in high school to be prepared for whatever future they choose;

(i) In addition, a list has been developed by The Partnership for 21st Century Skills of intellectual and social skills that graduates will need as our economy transitions to a more sophisticated level, including but not limited to innovation, creativity, information and communication technology, and adaptability;

(j) Unfortunately, some research shows that a significant number of students are ill-prepared for the futures they will face. This is reflected in the academic achievement gaps found in Colorado between Caucasian and Asian students and their Hispanic and African American counterparts, and in the statistic that only seventy-two percent of ninth graders in Colorado will graduate from high school four years later. An additional concern to state and local policymakers is that, of the students who enter two-year or four-year colleges in Colorado after graduating from high school, nearly three in every ten of them will require remedial course work before they are considered ready for college-level work.

(k) Several recent initiatives have addressed these problems and concerns, including new admission requirements for institutions of higher education, implemented by the Colorado commission on higher education and an education alignment task force appointed by the governor in 2006; and

(l) As Colorado seeks to implement state policy that will spur local school boards to adopt high school graduation requirements to meet the challenges of preparing students for the twenty-first century, it is crucial to build upon the work that has already been done in identifying the problems and issues facing public education in the context of a standards-based education system.

(2) The general assembly therefore finds and declares that the state can be most effective in creating an environment for systemic change by setting aspirational high

school graduation guidelines as a model for school districts to meet or exceed when developing local high school graduation requirements. The state should further ensure that all school districts have the resources and technical expertise to offer a rigorous and relevant curriculum to each student no matter what career path the student chooses to follow.

SECTION 2. 22-2-106 (1), Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW PARAGRAPH to read:

22-2-106. State board - duties. (1) It is the duty of the state board:

(a.5) TO ADOPT, ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2008, A COMPREHENSIVE SET OF GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS TO BE USED BY EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS. EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL RETAIN THE AUTHORITY TO DEVELOP ITS OWN UNIQUE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS, SO LONG AS THOSE LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS MEET OR EXCEED ANY MINIMUM STANDARDS OR BASIC CORE COMPETENCIES OR SKILLS IDENTIFIED IN THE COMPREHENSIVE SET OF GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION DEVELOPED BY THE STATE BOARD PURSUANT TO THIS PARAGRAPH (a.5). IN DEVELOPING THE GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, THE STATE BOARD SHALL NOT IDENTIFY SPECIFIC COURSES THAT A STUDENT SHALL TAKE NOR THE LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY A STUDENT SHALL ACHIEVE TO MEET THE GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED BY THE STATE BOARD. IN DEVELOPING THE GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, THE STATE BOARD SHALL UTILIZE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STATE GRADUATION GUIDELINES DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ESTABLISHED IN SECTION 22-7-414 AND SHALL:

(I) TAKE INTO ACCOUNT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2006 REPORT OF THE COLORADO EDUCATION ALIGNMENT COUNCIL APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR PURSUANT TO EXECUTIVE ORDER B 009 05;

(II) CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE P-16 COUNCIL CREATED IN SENATE BILL 07-053, ENACTED AT THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE SIXTY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY;

(III) WORK WITH THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION TO ENSURE THAT THE STATE BOARD'S GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION ADOPTED PURSUANT TO THIS PARAGRAPH (a.5) AND THE POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC ADMISSION STANDARDS ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-113, C.R.S., ARE ALIGNED FOR STUDENTS ENTERING A FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION INSTITUTION ON OR AFTER AUGUST 1, 2012;

(IV) RECOGNIZE AND ADDRESS THE MULTIPLE AND DIVERSE PATHWAYS TO DIPLOMAS OFFERED BY SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE STATE. THE GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION SHALL ACCOMMODATE THE DIFFERING AND BROAD CATEGORIES OF STUDENT INTERESTS AND ECONOMIC NEEDS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO AGRICULTURE, ARCHITECTURE, ARTS, COMMUNICATIONS, BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT, CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY, EDUCATION, FINANCE, GOVERNMENT, HEALTH SCIENCES, TOURISM, HUMAN SERVICES, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY, MANUFACTURING, MARKETING AND SALES, PHYSICAL

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, AND TRANSPORTATION. THE GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION ADOPTED BY THE STATE BOARD PURSUANT TO THIS PARAGRAPH (a.5) SHALL ENSURE, AT A MINIMUM, THAT, WHILE NOT IDENTICAL, EACH PATHWAY IS EQUALLY RIGOROUS.

(V) UTILIZE STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION, AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 22-7-402, AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND CONSIDER HOW HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS CAN BE ARTICULATED IN A STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION SYSTEM. IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, THE STATE BOARD SHALL ENSURE THAT THE STATE MODEL CONTENT STANDARDS, ADOPTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-7-406, ARE SUFFICIENTLY RIGOROUS, PARTICULARLY IN THE CORE ACADEMIC SUBJECT AREAS OF MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, READING, AND WRITING SO THAT STUDENTS ARE EXPOSED TO SUBJECT MATTER THAT RESEARCH INDICATES WILL ADEQUATELY PREPARE THEM FOR ENTRANCE INTO THE WORKFORCE OR THE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM. ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 1, 2007, THE STATE BOARD SHALL BEGIN TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE ADEQUACY OF THE EXISTING STATE MODEL CONTENT STANDARDS. AS PART OF RECEIVING PUBLIC COMMENT, THE STATE BOARD IS ENCOURAGED TO FORM A STAKEHOLDER GROUP OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND OTHERS TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO MODERNIZING THE STATE MODEL CONTENT STANDARDS IN MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, READING, AND WRITING. ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 1, 2008, THE STATE BOARD SHALL REPORT TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE, OR ANY SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES, ON THE ADEQUACY OF THE EXISTING STATE MODEL CONTENT STANDARDS IN THESE SUBJECT MATTERS.

(VI) RECOGNIZE AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPORTANCE OF OBTAINING THE CORE COMPETENCY SKILLS AND STANDARDS TO SUCCEED IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO PROFICIENCY IN MATH, SCIENCE, AND WRITTEN AND VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS; AND

(VII) TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE IMPORTANCE OF PRE-HIGH SCHOOL AND POSTSECONDARY CAREER PLANNING THAT PROVIDES MIDDLE SCHOOL AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND PARENTS WITH AWARENESS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS, THE MULTIPLE PATHWAYS A STUDENT CAN FOLLOW, AND OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION THAT WILL HELP PREPARE A STUDENT FOR A SUCCESSFUL HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE.

SECTION 3. Part 4 of article 7 of title 22, Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION to read:

22-7-414. State graduation guidelines development council - creation - membership - duties - repeal. (1) (a) THERE IS HEREBY CREATED WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION THE STATE GRADUATION GUIDELINES DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, REFERRED TO IN THIS SECTION AS THE "GRADUATION GUIDELINES COUNCIL".

(b) THE GRADUATION GUIDELINES COUNCIL SHALL CONSIST OF TWELVE MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR. COUNCIL MEMBERS SHALL BE RESIDENTS OF COLORADO AND SHALL BE APPOINTED FOR TWO-YEAR TERMS. COUNCIL MEMBERS

SHALL INCLUDE:

(I) EXPERTS IN THE AREAS OF CURRICULUM, STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS, CAREER AND TECHNICAL SKILLS, AND LEARNING AND THINKING SKILLS;

(II) REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, PUBLIC SCHOOLS, INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, COMMUNITY COLLEGES, AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS;

(III) REPRESENTATIVES FROM ALL AREAS OF THE STATE, INCLUDING URBAN AND RURAL AREAS, AND LARGE AND SMALL SCHOOL DISTRICTS. THE GRADUATION GUIDELINES COUNCIL SHALL REPRESENT THE ETHNIC, RACIAL, CULTURAL, AND GENDER DIVERSITY OF THE STATE.

(IV) AT LEAST ONE RESIDENT OF THE WESTERN SLOPE; AND

(V) AT LEAST ONE PERSON WITH EXPERTISE IN ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS.

(2) ANY MEMBER OF THE GRADUATION GUIDELINES COUNCIL MAY BE REMOVED AT ANY TIME FOR CAUSE BY THE GOVERNOR. VACANCIES IN THE MEMBERSHIP SHALL BE FILLED BY THE GOVERNOR TO SERVE THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM OF THE VACATING MEMBER.

(3) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE SUCH OFFICE SPACE, EQUIPMENT, AND STAFF SERVICES TO THE GRADUATION GUIDELINES COUNCIL AS MAY BE NECESSARY FOR THE COUNCIL TO CARRY OUT ITS DUTIES PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION.

(4) (a) ON OR BEFORE MAY 1, 2008, THE GRADUATION GUIDELINES COUNCIL SHALL DEVELOP AND RECOMMEND TO THE STATE BOARD FOR ADOPTION A COMPREHENSIVE SET OF GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS. THE GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION SHALL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE FACTORS SET FORTH IN SECTION 22-2-106 (1) (a.5) AND RECOGNIZE AND ADDRESS THE MULTIPLE AND DIVERSE PATHWAYS TO DIPLOMAS OFFERED BY SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF THE STATE.

(b) IN DEVELOPING THE STATE GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, THE GRADUATION GUIDELINES COUNCIL SHALL UTILIZE THE EXPERTISE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT PERSONNEL AND OTHER EDUCATION EXPERTS.

(c) IN DEVELOPING THE STATE GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, THE GRADUATION GUIDELINES COUNCIL, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE STATE BOARD, SHALL PROVIDE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC NOTICE AND HOLD A SERIES OF AT LEAST SIX PUBLIC MEETINGS THROUGHOUT THE STATE AT WHICH IT SHALL HEAR TESTIMONY REGARDING THE STATE GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION. THE GRADUATION GUIDELINES COUNCIL SHALL ALSO SPECIFICALLY SEEK RECOMMENDATIONS FROM AND WORK IN COOPERATION WITH SCHOOL DISTRICTS, EDUCATORS, PARENTS, STUDENTS, REPRESENTATIVES FROM POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, BUSINESS PERSONS, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY WHO ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF THE STATE.

(5) THE GRADUATION GUIDELINES COUNCIL IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2008.

SECTION 4. 22-32-109 (1), Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW PARAGRAPH to read:

22-32-109. Board of education - specific duties. (1) In addition to any other duty required to be performed by law, each board of education shall have and perform the following specific duties:

(kk) (I) TO UNDERTAKE A COMMUNITY-BASED PROCESS TO DEVELOP A BLUEPRINT FOR THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE COMMUNITY AND TO DETERMINE THE SKILLS STUDENTS WILL NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL AFTER GRADUATION. EACH BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL SEEK INPUT FROM THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE, WHICH MAY INCLUDE, BUT NEED NOT BE LIMITED TO, STUDENTS, PARENTS, BUSINESS PERSONS, NEIGHBORING SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND REGIONAL BOARDS OF COOPERATIVE SERVICES. EACH BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL USE THIS BLUEPRINT, TOGETHER WITH THE GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS DEVELOPED BY THE STATE BOARD PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-2-106 (1) (a.5), TO ESTABLISH LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO STUDENTS ENROLLING IN NINTH GRADE BEGINNING JULY 1, 2009. A BOARD OF EDUCATION THAT HAS UNDERTAKEN A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY-BASED PROCESS AND HAS REVISED ITS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS WITHIN THE PREVIOUS TWO YEARS SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED TO DEVELOP A NEW BLUEPRINT FOR THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN ITS COMMUNITY OR MAKE ANY REVISIONS TO ITS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.

(II) EACH BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL REPORT ITS BLUEPRINT FOR THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE COMMUNITY AND ITS NEW OR REVISED HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS, AS DETERMINED BY THE STATE BOARD. IN ITS REPORT, THE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL DEMONSTRATE HOW ITS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS MEET OR EXCEED ANY MINIMUM STANDARDS OR CORE COMPETENCIES OR SKILLS IDENTIFIED IN THE GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS DEVELOPED BY THE STATE BOARD PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-2-106 (1) (a.5).

SECTION 5. 23-1-113, Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SUBSECTION to read:

23-1-113. Commission directive - admission standards for baccalaureate and graduate institutions of higher education. (4) THE COMMISSION SHALL WORK WITH THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ALIGN THE ACADEMIC ADMISSION STANDARDS ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION WITH THE GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS DEVELOPED PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-2-106 (1) (a.5), C.R.S. ANY REVISED ACADEMIC ADMISSION STANDARDS SHALL BE IMPLEMENTED NO LATER THAN THE SELECTION OF THE FRESHMAN CLASS OF FALL 2012.

SECTION 6. Effective date. (1) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (2) of this section, this act shall take effect upon passage.

(2) Section 22-2-106 (1) (a.5) (II), as enacted in section 1 of this act, shall take effect only if Senate Bill 07-053 is enacted at the first regular session of the sixty-sixth general assembly and becomes law. Said section 22-2-106 (1) (a.5) (II) shall take effect either upon passage of this act or when Senate Bill 07-053 becomes law, whichever is later.

SECTION 7. 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: May 2, 2007