

Updated: 2/6/2024

Position: SUPPORT

HB24-1087, Professional Endorsement Special Education Teaching

Reps. McCormick & Armagost

Sens. Marchman & Kirkmeyer

Groups supporting: CASE, CASB, Consortium of Directors of Special Education, Colorado Rural Schools Alliance, DougCo, 27J, PSD, Jeffco, Greeley-Evans, Lewis-Palmer, Weld RE-1, RE-3J, & RE-4, Cherry Creek, Cañon City, Morgan County RE-3, Pikes Peak, Adams 12.

Summary: This bill proposes a new pathway for educators to obtain a teaching endorsement in special education or early childhood special education. To receive the endorsement, the educator must hold a professional teaching license (available after 3 years of teaching experience); take and pass the appropriate content-based exams, as determined by the department; and complete a specialized induction program that meets or exceeds the standards and criteria established by rule of the state board of education.

Background: Under current law, a person seeking a teaching endorsement in special education or early childhood special education (endorsement) must either have university coursework based on a rubric or complete a program and a student teaching practicum through an institution of higher education or approved program run by the district and pass one or more appropriate content-based exams. Experienced teachers must -give up their classrooms and enter into cumbersome and expensive programs in order to receive a Special Education endorsement.

HB24-1087:

- **Addressing Critical Teacher Shortages:** Proposing a solution to Colorado's severe shortage of special education and early childhood special education teachers by leveraging the expertise of professionally licensed teachers to bridge the workforce gap.
- **High-Quality Teacher Preparation:** Creating an accessible pathway for professionally licensed teachers to obtain special education or early childhood special education endorsements through PRAXIS testing and a CDE-approved induction program, expanding the pool of educators by reducing traditional barriers.
- **Temporary Endorsements Bring Immediate Relief:** Offering a solution to the shortage of special education teachers by allowing professionally licensed teachers to quickly gain temporary endorsements, ensuring qualified educators are in classrooms to support students with disabilities.
- **Empowering District Flexibility:** Recognizing diverse district needs and empowering them to develop tailored special education and early childhood special education induction programs, promoting a collaborative, community-driven approach to education.

Pathways to Special Education Licensure

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Traditional Pathway Added Endorsement Worksheet</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Proposed OPTIONAL Additional Pathway</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Alternative Licensure</u></p>
<p>Applies to a limited group - primarily those with a Special Education minor on their BA teaching degree.</p>	<p>Only available to professionally licensed teachers.</p>	<p>Available to anyone with a BA or higher - No previous teaching experience or pedagogy knowledge is required.</p>
<p>Pass Praxis Exams.</p>	<p>Option 1: (1) pass PRAXIS exams, (2) obtain a Special Education position ("Temp Educator Eligibility"), (3) complete the district Special Education induction program.</p>	<p>Must (1) be hired for a Special Education teaching position and (2) pass the required Praxis exams before applying to a Special Education program.</p>
<p>Must complete 24 semester hours of university coursework related to Special Education. Professionally licensed teachers must go back to school if they did not initially enroll in these classes while in college.</p>	<p>Option 2: (1) complete the district Special Education induction program, (2) pass PRAXIS exams during/after the induction program, (3) remain in the current teaching position and apply for a Special Education position when ready.</p>	<p>Must complete an approved Special Education program - usually offered by a college or university.</p>
<p>Receive endorsement after (1) passing all required PRAXIS exams and (2) completing 24 semester hours of university coursework in an approved Special Education program.</p>	<p>Receive endorsement after (1) passing all required PRAXIS exams and (2) completing the district Special Education induction program.</p>	<p>Receive endorsement after (1) being hired for a Special Education teaching position, (2) passing all required PRAXIS Exams, (3) completing an approved prep program, and (4) receiving an Alternative Teaching License.</p>