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An Act

SENATE BILL 26-170

BY SENATOR(S) Coleman and Bright, Amabile, Benavidez, Bridges, Carson, Cutter, Exum, Frizell, Gonzales J., Jodeh, Kipp, Kirkmeyer, Lindstedt, Mullica, Rodriguez, Sullivan;
also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Bacon and Martinez, Duran, Phillips, Ricks.

CONCERNING CREATING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY HOW TO EXPAND ACCESS
TO EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR COLORADO STUDENTS.

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

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 22-1-153 as follows:

22-1-153. Access to opportunity task force - creation - members - duties - report - definitions - repeal.

(1) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(a) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CREATED AND EXISTING PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-1-115.

Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material added to existing law; dashes through words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law and such material is not part of the act.

(b) "OPPORTUNITY GAPS" MEANS DISPARITIES IN STUDENTS' ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DISPARITIES IN ACADEMIC OUTCOMES, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ACHIEVEMENT, GROWTH, GRADUATION RATES, AND POSTSECONDARY READINESS, EXPERIENCED BY GROUPS OF STUDENTS BASED ON FACTORS SUCH AS RACE, SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, GEOGRAPHY, DISABILITY STATUS, AND ENGLISH LEARNER STATUS. SUCH DISPARITIES MAY BE INFLUENCED BY DIFFERENCES IN ACCESS TO NECESSARY SUPPORTS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM, HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTION, STABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS, AND QUALIFIED EDUCATORS, AS WELL AS BY SCHOOL, DISTRICT, AND STATE-LEVEL POLICIES AND PRACTICES.

(c) "RURAL PUBLIC SCHOOL" MEANS A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN COLORADO THAT THE DEPARTMENT DETERMINES IS RURAL BASED ON THE GEOGRAPHIC SIZE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL'S SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE DISTANCE FROM THE NEAREST LARGE, URBANIZED AREA, AND THE TOTAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT IS SIX THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED OR FEWER STUDENTS.

(d) "STATE BOARD" MEANS THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION CREATED AND EXISTING PURSUANT TO SECTION 1 OF ARTICLE IX OF THE STATE CONSTITUTION.

(2) THE ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY TASK FORCE IS CREATED IN THE DEPARTMENT TO STUDY HOW TO EXPAND ACCESS TO EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND PRACTICES FOR EVERY COLORADO STUDENT.

(3) THE ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY TASK FORCE CONSISTS OF MEMBERS APPOINTED AS FOLLOWS:

(a) THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE SHALL APPOINT THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

(I) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE BOARD;

(II) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A REPRESENTATIVE OF A COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION WITH A FOCUS ON CLOSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS;

(III) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A METRO DENVER SCHOOL LEADER AT A

COLORADO PUBLIC SCHOOL WITH A DEMONSTRATED TRACK RECORD OF MEANINGFULLY NARROWING OPPORTUNITY GAPS; AND

(IV) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A REPRESENTATIVE OF A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION THAT REPRESENTS EDUCATORS;

(b) THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SHALL APPOINT THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

(I) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A SCHOOL LEADER AT A RURAL PUBLIC SCHOOL;

(II) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A REPRESENTATIVE OF A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION THAT REPRESENTS TEACHERS;

(III) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A REPRESENTATIVE OF A STATEWIDE PARENT ORGANIZATION THAT FOCUSES ON EDUCATION POLICY AND CLOSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS; AND

(IV) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN ORGANIZATION THAT WORKS DIRECTLY WITH OR AT A FACILITY SCHOOL;

(c) THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MINORITY LEADER SHALL APPOINT THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

(I) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A SCHOOL LEADER AT A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN SOUTHERN COLORADO WITH A DEMONSTRATED TRACK RECORD OF MEANINGFULLY NARROWING OPPORTUNITY GAPS;

(II) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A REPRESENTATIVE OF A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION THAT REPRESENTS SUPERINTENDENTS; AND

(III) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A SCHOOL TEACHER IN A COLORADO PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM WITH A DEMONSTRATED TRACK RECORD OF MEANINGFULLY NARROWING OPPORTUNITY GAPS;

(d) THE SENATE MINORITY LEADER SHALL APPOINT THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

(I) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A REPRESENTATIVE OF A STATEWIDE

ORGANIZATION THAT FOCUSES ON EDUCATION POLICY AND CLOSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS;

(II) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A REPRESENTATIVE OF A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION THAT REPRESENTS EDUCATORS WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON EDUCATION POLICY AND CLOSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS; AND

(III) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A SCHOOL LEADER AT A COLORADO PUBLIC SCHOOL THAT IS A COMMUNITY SCHOOL AS DEFINED IN SECTION 22-32.5-103 AND THAT HAS A DEMONSTRATED TRACK RECORD OF MEANINGFULLY NARROWING OPPORTUNITY GAPS;

(e) THE GOVERNOR SHALL APPOINT THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

(I) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE;

(II) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A REPRESENTATIVE OF A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION THAT REPRESENTS CHARTER SCHOOLS;

(III) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A SCHOOL LEADER AT A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN NORTHERN COLORADO WITH A DEMONSTRATED TRACK RECORD OF MEANINGFULLY NARROWING OPPORTUNITY GAPS; AND

(IV) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A RECENT GRADUATE OF A COLORADO PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL WITH A DEMONSTRATED TRACK RECORD OF MEANINGFULLY NARROWING OPPORTUNITY GAPS; AND

(f) THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, OR THEIR DESIGNEE, SHALL APPOINT ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT WHO FOCUSES ON ADDRESSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS.

(4) THE APPOINTING AUTHORITIES SHALL MAKE THEIR INITIAL APPOINTMENTS TO THE TASK FORCE NO LATER THAN JULY 1, 2026.

(5) EACH MEMBER OF THE TASK FORCE SERVES AT THE PLEASURE OF THEIR RESPECTIVE APPOINTING OFFICIAL. IF A TASK FORCE VACANCY OCCURS, THE ORIGINAL APPOINTING AUTHORITY SHALL, WITHIN FOURTEEN DAYS AFTER THE VACANCY, APPOINT A NEW TASK FORCE MEMBER WHO SATISFIES THE MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS OF THE VACATED SEAT.

(6) TASK FORCE MEMBERS DO NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION OR REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES.

(7) (a) THE TASK FORCE SHALL ALLOW FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION IN EACH MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE.

(b) THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, OR THEIR DESIGNEE, SHALL CONVENE THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE NO LATER THAN ONE MONTH AFTER THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, OR THEIR DESIGNEE, HAS DETERMINED THAT THE TASK FORCE HAS RECEIVED AN AMOUNT OF GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS SUFFICIENT TO BEGIN ITS WORK DESCRIBED IN THIS SECTION OR JULY 31, 2026, WHICHEVER IS LATER.

(c) AT OR BEFORE THE FIRST TASK FORCE MEETING, THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE SHALL APPOINT THE TASK FORCE CHAIR AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE SHALL APPOINT THE TASK FORCE VICE-CHAIR. THE CHAIR OF THE TASK FORCE SHALL CONVENE THE TASK FORCE MEETINGS AFTER THE FIRST MEETING. THE TASK FORCE SHALL MEET AT LEAST FOUR TIMES AND SHALL COMPLETE ITS DUTIES NO LATER THAN JANUARY 1, 2027.

(8) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL CONTRACT WITH AN INDEPENDENT THIRD-PARTY ENTITY TO FACILITATE TASK FORCE MEETINGS, ASSIST IN CONDUCTING THE STUDY REQUIRED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (10) OF THIS SECTION, AND PREPARE A WRITTEN REPORT SUMMARIZING THE STUDY'S FINDINGS AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE ISSUED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (12) OF THIS SECTION. THE INDEPENDENT THIRD-PARTY ENTITY MUST BE A PREAPPROVED VENDOR FROM THE DEPARTMENT'S PRICE AGREEMENT LIST.

(9) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND STAFF SUPPORT, OTHER THAN THE STAFF SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (8) OF THIS SECTION, TO THE TASK FORCE AND THIRD-PARTY ENTITY UPON THE REQUEST OF THE TASK FORCE CHAIR TO THE EXTENT NECESSARY FOR THE TASK FORCE TO COMPLETE ITS DUTIES DESCRIBED IN THIS SECTION. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE THE THIRD PARTY SECURE ACCESS TO DATA CURRENTLY COLLECTED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO ALLOW THE THIRD PARTY TO COMPILE, ANALYZE, AND PROVIDE TO THE TASK FORCE THE DATA NECESSARY TO CONSIDER THE ISSUES DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (10) OF THIS SECTION.

(10) THE STUDY CONDUCTED BY THE TASK FORCE MUST CONSIDER:

(a) THE CURRENT STATE OF OPPORTUNITY GAPS ACROSS COLORADO, IDENTIFYING WHERE GAPS ARE GEOGRAPHICALLY MOST PREVALENT AND PERSISTENT, AND THE DISAGGREGATED SUBGROUPS OF STUDENTS MOST IMPACTED BY THE GAPS;

(b) THE COLORADO PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS WITH A DEMONSTRATED TRACK RECORD OF CLOSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS BASED ON ACADEMIC OUTCOMES AS A NECESSARY STARTING POINT, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT OPPORTUNITY GAPS ARE INFLUENCED BY MULTIPLE FACTORS AND THAT THE TASK FORCE MAY CHOOSE TO CONSIDER ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF DATA THAT EMPHASIZE STUDENT SUCCESS AND WELL-BEING;

(c) THE PROGRAMS, STRATEGIES, PRACTICES, AND CONDITIONS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT NECESSARILY LIMITED TO, CONDITIONS OF POLICY, RESOURCE ALLOCATION, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY, AND SCHOOL CLIMATE, OF THE SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS IDENTIFIED IN SUBSECTION (10)(b) OF THIS SECTION THAT MOST CONTRIBUTE TO SUCCESS IN CLOSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS;

(d) THE NONFINANCIAL BARRIERS THAT PREVENT EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AND PRACTICES FROM BEING REPLICATED AND EXPANDED ACROSS COLORADO AND WHAT POLICY CHANGES ARE NECESSARY TO REMOVE THOSE BARRIERS WITHIN EXISTING RESOURCES;

(e) STATES AND NEW APPROACHES TO SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLING THAT HAVE DEMONSTRATED PROMISE AND SUSTAINED PROGRESS IN CLOSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS AND WHAT POLICIES AND PRACTICES HAVE ENABLED THEM TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN CLOSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS; AND

(f) HOW COLORADO CAN REDESIGN ITS EDUCATION SYSTEM TO BETTER SUPPORT INNOVATION, CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT, AND FUTURE-READY LEARNING MODELS WHILE MAINTAINING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ACADEMIC OUTCOMES.

(11) (a) THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS THAT THE COST OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SECTION IS FUNDED ENTIRELY BY GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS AND THAT FURTHER GIFTS, GRANTS, AND

DONATIONS CONTINUE THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE STUDY. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL NOT APPROPRIATE MONEY FROM THE GENERAL FUND FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SECTION.

(b) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ACCEPT AND EXPEND GIFTS, GRANTS, OR DONATIONS FROM PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SOURCES TO IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION. THE TASK FORCE SHALL NOT IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES AN AMOUNT OF GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, OR THEIR DESIGNEE, DEEMS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION. WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF A GIFT, GRANT, OR DONATION, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL POST ON ITS WEBSITE THE SOURCE AND AMOUNT OF THE GIFT, GRANT, OR DONATION RECEIVED IN SUPPORT OF THE TASK FORCE.

(c) THE STUDY AND WRITTEN REPORT DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTIONS (10) AND (12) OF THIS SECTION ARE CONTINGENT ON MONEY BEING AVAILABLE TO CARRY OUT THE STUDY AND THE WRITTEN REPORT. IF MONEY IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR THE TASK FORCE OR FOR THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (8) OF THIS SECTION TO CARRY OUT THE DUTIES REQUIRED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION, THE TASK FORCE OR THE ENTITY IS NOT REQUIRED TO CARRY OUT ITS DUTIES. A CONTRACT WITH A THIRD-PARTY ENTITY CONTRACTED WITH PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (8) OF THIS SECTION THAT PROVIDES SERVICES RELATED TO FACILITATION AND THE STUDY AND WRITTEN REPORT IS CONTINGENT ON GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS BEING AVAILABLE FOR THAT PURPOSE.

(12) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2027, THE TASK FORCE SHALL SUBMIT A WRITTEN REPORT WITH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES; THE GOVERNOR; THE STATE BOARD; THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION; AND THE DEPARTMENT. THE WRITTEN REPORT MUST INCLUDE A MINORITY REPORT IF ONE IS REQUESTED BY A MEMBER OF THE TASK FORCE. IF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE IS NOT UNTIL AFTER JULY 31, 2026, THE DEADLINE TO COMPLETE THE WRITTEN REPORT REQUIRED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION MUST BE ADJUSTED TO ALLOW FIVE MONTHS BETWEEN THE FIRST MEETING AND THE WRITTEN REPORT DEADLINE.

(13) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2027.

SECTION 2. Safety clause. The general assembly finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state institutions.

James Rashad Coleman, Sr.
PRESIDENT OF
THE SENATE

Julie McCluskie
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

Esther van Mourik
SECRETARY OF
THE SENATE

Vanessa Reilly
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED _____
(Date and Time)

Jared S. Polis
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF COLORADO