

**Second Regular Session  
Seventy-fourth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO**

**PREAMENDED**

*This Unofficial Version Includes Committee  
Amendments Not Yet Adopted on Second Reading*

LLS NO. 24-0660.01 Chelsea Princell x4335

**SENATE BILL 24-164**

---

**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

**Buckner and Lundeen,**

**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**McCluskie and Pugliese,**

---

**Senate Committees**  
Education

**House Committees**

---

**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101      **CONCERNING TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR INSTITUTIONS OF**  
102      **HIGHER EDUCATION.**

---

**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>.)*

The bill adds the following rights to the rights of higher education students:

- Cost transparency regarding a postsecondary education program;
- A timely response on whether transfer credit will be accepted by a public institution of higher education

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

- (institution); and  
● The right to appeal an institution's decision not to accept a student's request to transfer credits.

The bill makes changes to the statewide common course numbering system to guarantee certain course transfer credits between community colleges, local district colleges, and area technical colleges.

The bill requires the department of higher education to establish an appeal process if an institution wrongfully denies a student's transfer credit.

The bill requires an institution to issue a decision to a student regarding the acceptance or denial of transfer credits within 30 days after the date the student submits a request for transfer credit.

Beginning January 1, 2025, the bill requires an institution to provide a financial aid and cost disclosure form to a student prior to the student decision deadline to accept admission to the institution.

---

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

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-125, **amend** (1)  
3 **introductory portion; and add** (1)(h), (1)(i), (1)(j), (1)(k), (1.5), and (6) as  
4 **follows:**

5 **23-1-125. Commission directive - student bill of rights - degree**  
6 **requirements - implementation of core courses - competency test -**  
7 **prior learning - prior work-related experience - policies - definitions**  
8 **- repeal. (1) Student bill of rights.** The general assembly **hereby finds**  
9 **that students enrolled in public institutions of higher education shall have**  
10 **the following rights:**

11 **(h) STUDENTS HAVE A RIGHT TO TRANSPARENCY OF THE COST OF**  
12 **POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON**  
13 **FEES, ASSOCIATED EXPENSES, AND FINANCIAL AID IN THE FORM OF**  
14 **SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, AND LOANS;**

15 **(i) STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO SEAMLESS TRANSFER OF**  
16 **COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX,**  
17 **TRANSPARENCY IN THE PROCESS FOR TRANSFERRING CREDITS, A TIMELY**

1 RESPONSE ON APPLICATIONS FOR TRANSFERRING CREDITS, AND  
2 TRANSPARENCY IN HOW AND WHY A CREDIT IS ACCEPTED OR REJECTED BY  
3 AN INSTITUTION AND HOW AND WHY A CREDIT IS OR IS NOT APPLIED  
4 TOWARD DEGREE REQUIREMENTS;

5 (j) STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPEAL AN INSTITUTION'S  
6 FAILURE TO ACCEPT THE STUDENT'S REQUEST FOR TRANSFER CREDIT; AND

7 (k) STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW WHAT WORK-RELATED  
8 EXPERIENCES OR PRIOR LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ARE AWARDED  
9 POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC CREDIT AT THE INSTITUTION IN WHICH THE  
10 STUDENT IS ENROLLED, PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-5-145.5.

11 (1.5) Policies. ON OR BEFORE APRIL 1, 2025, THE COMMISSION  
12 SHALL ADOPT POLICIES FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
13 ON HOW TO BEST IMPLEMENT THE RIGHT DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (1)(i)  
14 OF THIS SECTION.

15 (6) Definitions. AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT  
16 OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

17 (a) "GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE" MEANS A LOWER-DIVISION  
18 COURSE OFFERED BY AN INSTITUTION THAT ANY DEGREE-SEEKING  
19 STUDENT ENROLLED AT THE INSTITUTION MUST SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE  
20 IN ORDER TO OBTAIN AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE OR A BACHELOR'S DEGREE  
21 FROM THE INSTITUTION.

22 (b) "GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX" MEANS A GROUP  
23 OF GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES OR LOWER-DIVISION COURSES REQUIRED  
24 FOR A SPECIFIC PROGRAM AT THE INSTITUTION THAT EVERY STUDENT  
25 ENROLLED IN THE SPECIFIC PROGRAM AT THE INSTITUTION MUST  
26 SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE IN ORDER TO TRANSFER TO OR FROM AN  
27 INSTITUTION AND HAS EQUIVALENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AS THE SAME

1 COURSES OFFERED BY ANOTHER INSTITUTION.

2 (c) "LOWER-DIVISION COURSE" MEANS A COURSE NUMBERED FROM  
3 ONE HUNDRED TO TWO HUNDRED NINETY-NINE.

4 (d) "PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION" OR  
5 "INSTITUTION" HAS THE SAME MEANING SET FORTH IN SECTION 23-4.5-102.

6 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-108.5, amend  
7 (1), (2)(c), (3)(a), (3)(b), (3)(c), (4), and (5); repeal (2)(b) and (2)(d); and  
8 add (2)(e), (2)(f), (2)(g), (3)(d.5), (3)(d.7), (6.5), and (8) as follows:

9 **23-1-108.5. Duties and powers of the commission with regard**  
10 **to common course numbering system - council of higher education**  
11 **representatives - rules - legislative declaration - definitions - repeal.**

12 (1) The general assembly hereby finds that, for many students, the ability  
13 to transfer among all state-supported institutions of higher education  
14 INSTITUTIONS is critical to their success in achieving a degree. The  
15 general assembly further finds that it is necessary for the state to have  
16 sound transfer policies that provide the broadest and simplest mechanisms  
17 feasible while protecting the academic quality of the institutions of higher  
18 education and their undergraduate degree programs. The general  
19 assembly finds, therefore, that it is in the best interests of the state for the  
20 commission to oversee the adoption of a statewide articulation matrix  
21 system of course numbering for general education courses THE  
22 GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX, that WHICH includes all  
23 state-supported institutions of higher education INSTITUTIONS and that  
24 will ensure that the quality of and requirements that pertain to general  
25 education courses THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX  
26 COURSES are comparable and transferable systemwide.

27 (2) As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires:

1           (b) "Course numbering system" means the statewide articulation  
2 matrix system of common course numbering for general education  
3 courses adopted by the commission pursuant to paragraph (c) of  
4 subsection (3) of this section.

5           (c) "General education courses COURSE" means the group of  
6 courses offered by an institution of higher education that every student  
7 enrolled in the institution must successfully complete to attain an  
8 associate's or bachelor's degree A LOWER-DIVISION COURSE OFFERED BY  
9 AN INSTITUTION THAT ANY DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENT ENROLLED AT THE  
10 INSTITUTION MUST SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN AN  
11 ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE OR A BACHELOR'S DEGREE FROM THE INSTITUTION.

12           (d) "Higher education institution" means a state-supported  
13 institution of higher education.

14           (e) "GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX" MEANS A GROUP  
15 OF GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES OR LOWER-DIVISION COURSES REQUIRED  
16 FOR A SPECIFIC PROGRAM AT THE INSTITUTION THAT EVERY STUDENT  
17 ENROLLED IN THE SPECIFIC PROGRAM AT THE INSTITUTION MUST  
18 SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE IN ORDER TO TRANSFER TO OR FROM AN  
19 INSTITUTION AND THAT HAS EQUIVALENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AS THE  
20 SAME COURSES OFFERED BY ANOTHER INSTITUTION.

21           (f) "HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION" OR "INSTITUTION" MEANS  
22 A PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS DEFINED IN SECTION  
23 23-4.5-102.

24           (g) "LOWER-DIVISION COURSE" MEANS A COURSE NUMBERED FROM  
25 ONE HUNDRED TO TWO HUNDRED NINETY-NINE.

26           (d.5) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2024, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL  
27 ADD ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIVES AS NECESSARY TO THE COUNCIL TO

1 ENSURE EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF INSTITUTIONS ON THE COUNCIL.

2 (d.7) ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2025, AND EVERY OCTOBER 1  
3 THEREAFTER, THE COUNCIL SHALL REVIEW THE LIST OF COURSES IN THE  
4 GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX AND MAKE  
5 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION AS NECESSARY TO MAKE  
6 CHANGES AND MAINTAIN ACCURACY. AS PART OF THE REVIEW, THE  
7 COUNCIL SHALL IDENTIFY:

8 (I) THE HIGHEST ENROLLMENT AND TRANSFER ACTIVITY FOR  
9 COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX;

10 (II) COURSES THAT STUDENTS ARE LESS LIKELY TO RECEIVE FULL  
11 CREDIT FOR THAT APPLY TOWARD THE STUDENT'S CHOSEN ACADEMIC  
12 PROGRAM UPON TRANSFER; AND

13 (III) HOW THE NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS DIFFERS AMONG  
14 INSTITUTIONS AND WHERE MISALIGNMENT OCCURS BETWEEN COURSES IN  
15 THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX.

16 (3) (a) On or before July 1, 2001, the commission shall convene  
17 a council consisting of representatives from each of the higher education  
18 governing boards and each of the four-year higher education institutions,  
19 a representative sample of the two-year higher education institutions, and  
20 a representative of the commission. The commission shall consult with  
21 the governing boards when convening representatives from the higher  
22 education institutions. By July 1, 2011, the council shall create a process  
23 through which it shall seek input from and consult with various higher  
24 education student organizations for each articulation agreement and for  
25 the review of general education courses and the course numbering system  
26 as required in paragraph (c) of this subsection (3) COURSES IN THE  
27 GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX AS REQUIRED IN SUBSECTION

1 (3)(c) OF THIS SECTION.

2 (b) The council shall recommend to the commission a statewide  
3 articulation matrix system of common course numbering GUARANTEED  
4 TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX to which the general education courses for  
5 each higher education institution may be mapped.

6 (c) (I) On or before October 1, 2002, the council shall recommend  
7 to the commission a list of general education courses to be included in the  
8 course numbering system GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX. In  
9 identifying said general education THE courses, the council shall review  
10 the course descriptions and may request summaries of course syllabi for  
11 review, focusing first on lower-division general education courses. The  
12 commission shall review the council's recommendations and adopt a  
13 statewide articulation matrix system of common course numbering  
14 GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX for general education courses,  
15 including criteria for such THE courses, on or before January 1, 2003.

16 (II) The council shall annually review the list of general education  
17 courses and the course numbering system GUARANTEED TRANSFER  
18 PATHWAY MATRIX, including the criteria, adopted by the commission and  
19 recommend such changes as may be necessary to maintain the accuracy  
20 and integrity of the course numbering system GUARANTEED TRANSFER  
21 PATHWAY MATRIX. The council's annual review shall MUST include  
22 consideration of the course descriptions, and the council may request  
23 summaries of course syllabi for further review.

24 (4) (a) Following adoption of the course numbering system, each  
25 higher education institution shall review its course offerings and identify  
26 those general education courses offered by the institution that correspond  
27 with the courses included in the course numbering system. The EACH

1 higher education institution shall submit its list of identified courses IN  
2 THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX, including course  
3 descriptions and, upon request of the commission, summaries of course  
4 syllabi, for review and approval by the commission on or before March  
5 1, 2003, AND ON MARCH 1 OF EACH ODD-NUMBERED YEAR THEREAFTER.

6 (b) Beginning with the fall semester of 2003, each higher  
7 education institution shall publish, and update as necessary, a list of  
8 course offerings that identifies those general education courses offered by  
9 the institution that correspond with the courses included in the course  
10 numbering system GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX.

11 (5) (a) All credits earned by a student in any general education  
12 course identified as corresponding with a course included in the course  
13 numbering system shall be THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY  
14 MATRIX ARE automatically transferable AND APPLICABLE among all higher  
15 education institutions upon transfer and enrollment of the student. All  
16 higher education institutions in Colorado shall participate in the course  
17 numbering system GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX. The  
18 commission shall adopt such policies and guidelines as may be necessary  
19 for the implementation of this section. Each INSTITUTION'S governing  
20 board shall modify its existing policies as may be necessary to accept the  
21 transfer of these credits.

22 (b) ALL COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY  
23 MATRIX SYSTEM MUST QUALIFY AS THE SAME COURSE AT THE RECEIVING  
24 INSTITUTION, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE TOTAL CREDITS ASSIGNED TO THE  
25 COURSE.

26 (c) A RECEIVING INSTITUTION SHALL NOT REQUIRE A TRANSFER  
27 STUDENT TO TAKE THE SAME OR SIMILAR COURSES WHO HAS COMPLETED



1 THE REQUIRED COURSE IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX,  
2 REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE STUDENT EARNED AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE  
3 PRIOR TO TRANSFER.

4 (6.5) (a) NOTWITHSTANDING SECTION 24-1-136 (11)(a)(I),  
5 BEGINNING JANUARY 2026, AND EVERY JANUARY THEREAFTER, THE  
6 DEPARTMENT SHALL INCLUDE AS PART OF ITS "SMART ACT" HEARING,  
7 REQUIRED BY SECTION 2-7-203, A COMPILED REPORT OF INFORMATION  
8 RECEIVED FROM EACH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION THAT INCLUDES:

9 (I) THE NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS TRANSFERRING  
10 TO THE INSTITUTION AND EACH INSTITUTION THAT A STUDENT IS  
11 TRANSFERRING FROM;

12 (II) THE AVERAGE TIME NEEDED TO COMPLETE A BACHELOR'S  
13 DEGREE FOR A TRANSFER STUDENT COMPARED TO A NON-TRANSFER  
14 STUDENT;

15 (III) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CREDITS ACCEPTED AND APPLIED  
16 RELATED TO GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY COURSES, GENERAL  
17 EDUCATION COURSES, AND OTHER COURSE EQUIVALENTS; AND

18 (IV) THE NUMBER OF CREDITS THAT WERE ACCEPTED AND NOT  
19 ACCEPTED, AND THE NUMBER OF CREDITS THAT WERE APPLIED AND WERE  
20 NOT APPLIED TO EACH STUDENT'S DEGREE PROGRAM COURSE  
21 REQUIREMENTS, DISAGGREGATED BY DEGREE PROGRAM.

22 (b) USING EXISTING STATEWIDE DATA, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL  
23 ALSO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FOR EACH INSTITUTION  
24 REGARDING THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TRANSFER CREDITS EARNED AND THE  
25 TOTAL AMOUNT OF CREDITS APPLIED TOWARD DEGREE REQUIREMENTS IN  
26 THE REPORT REQUIRED IN SUBSECTION (6.5)(a) OF THIS SECTION:

27 (I) THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF CREDITS ATTEMPTED AND THE

1 NUMBER OF CREDITS EARNED TO OBTAIN A BACHELOR'S DEGREE FOR A  
2 TRANSFER STUDENT COMPARED TO A STUDENT WHO DID NOT TRANSFER TO  
3 ANOTHER INSTITUTION BEFORE EARNING THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE; AND

4 (II) THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF ACADEMIC TERMS NEEDED TO  
5 COMPLETE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE FOR A TRANSFER STUDENT COMPARED  
6 TO A STUDENT WHO DID NOT TRANSFER TO ANOTHER INSTITUTION BEFORE  
7 EARNING THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE.

8 (8)(a) THE DEPARTMENT HAS EXCLUSIVE AUTHORITY TO BRING AN  
9 ENFORCEMENT ACTION ON BEHALF OF THE STATE AGAINST AN INSTITUTION  
10 FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION.

11 (b) PRIOR TO AN ENFORCEMENT ACTION PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION  
12 (8)(a) OF THIS SECTION, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ISSUE A NOTICE OF  
13 VIOLATION TO THE INSTITUTION AND EXPLAIN HOW THE INSTITUTION MAY  
14 REMEDY THE VIOLATION, IF POSSIBLE. IF THE INSTITUTION FAILS TO  
15 REMEDY THE VIOLATION WITHIN THREE MONTHS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE  
16 NOTICE OF VIOLATION, THE DEPARTMENT MAY BRING AN ENFORCEMENT  
17 ACTION AGAINST THE INSTITUTION.

18 (c) THE DEPARTMENT HAS THE AUTHORITY TO OVERTURN A  
19 COURSE TRANSFER DECISION MADE BY AN INSTITUTION THAT IS IN  
20 VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION.

21 (d) A STUDENT ENROLLED AT AN INSTITUTION MAY APPEAL AN  
22 INSTITUTION'S DECISION REGARDING THE DENIAL OF CREDIT FOR COURSES  
23 IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX THAT THE STUDENT  
24 SEEKS TO TRANSFER THROUGH AN APPEALS PROCESS ESTABLISHED BY THE  
25 DEPARTMENT.

26 (e) THE DEPARTMENT MAY PROMULGATE RULES AS NECESSARY TO  
27 IMPLEMENT THIS SUBSECTION (8).

1           **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add 23-5-150** as  
2 follows:

3           **23-5-150. Transfer credit review process and nontransferable**  
4 **credit - notice - definition.** (1) AN INSTITUTION SHALL PROVIDE A  
5 STUDENT SEEKING TO TRANSFER CREDIT FROM THE INSTITUTION WITH A  
6 DETERMINATION REGARDING THE ACCEPTANCE OR DENIAL OF THE  
7 STUDENT'S REQUEST AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR TRANSFER  
8 CREDIT WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER THE DATE THE STUDENT SUBMITS A  
9 REQUEST FOR TRANSFER CREDIT.

10           (2) AN INSTITUTION SHALL PUBLISH THE INSTITUTION'S PROCESS  
11 AND TIMELINE FOR REVIEWING AND MAKING A DECISION REGARDING  
12 TRANSFER CREDIT REQUESTS ON THE INSTITUTION'S WEBSITE. THE  
13 INSTITUTION SHALL UPDATE ITS WEBSITE WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER  
14 MAKING A CHANGE TO ITS PROCESS AND TIMELINE FOR REVIEWING AND  
15 ISSUING DECISIONS REGARDING TRANSFER CREDIT REQUESTS.

16           (3) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE  
17 REQUIRES, "INSTITUTION" MEANS A "PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER  
18 EDUCATION" AS DEFINED IN SECTION 23-4.5-102.

19           **SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **23-70-103, amend**  
20 (3) as follows:

21           **23-70-103. Responsibility of governing boards of constituent**  
22 **institutions.** (3) The respective governing boards of the constituent  
23 institutions shall ~~provide~~ ENSURE that credits earned at each of the  
24 constituent institutions ~~shall be~~ ARE transferable between institutions  
25 ~~insofar as they meet the degree and grade requirements of the student's~~  
26 ~~chosen program of studies at one of the constituent institutions as~~  
27 ~~determined by the degree-granting institution~~ AS REQUIRED BY SECTION

1 23-1-108.5.

2 SECTION 5. Safety clause. The general assembly finds,  
3 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate  
4 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for  
5 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state  
6 institutions.