A BILL FOR AN ACT

CONCERNING GROW YOUR OWN TEACHER PROGRAMS IN HIGH SCHOOLS THAT ENCOURAGE STUDENT EXPLORATION OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION.

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://www.leg.state.co.us/billsummaries.)

As part of the concurrent enrollment and accelerating students through concurrent enrollment programs, school districts, boards of cooperative services, district charter schools, and institute charter schools (local education providers) are encouraged to enter into an agreement with a teacher preparation program at institutions of higher education in
Colorado to provide a grow your own teacher program (program), as defined in the bill. The program allows upper-grade high school students to take a college credit-bearing course or courses designed to increase the student's awareness of the teaching profession and opportunities to pursue teaching by taking a course affiliated with a college with an undergraduate teacher licensure program. The bill outlines the elements of a successful program, which elements include a year-long curriculum, student field experience teaching in elementary schools, and mentoring of students through the college selection and application process.

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

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, add 22-35-109.7 as follows:

22-35-109.7. Grow your own teacher program - definitions - legislative declaration. (1) The General Assembly finds and declares that:

(a) National research indicates that fewer individuals are choosing to enter the teacher workforce due, in part, to a decline in public opinion of the teaching profession;

(b) Colorado is experiencing teacher shortages in the critical areas of teaching English as a second language, special education, foreign languages, mathematics, and science, and in teachers who are bilingual;

(c) Further, male teachers are underrepresented in Colorado, and specifically, African American, Latino, and Native American male teachers are grossly underrepresented;

(d) Pursuant to House Bill 14-1175, enacted in 2014, the Department of Education commissioned a study to review and develop strategies to increase and improve the recruitment, preparation, development, and retention of high-quality
MINORITY TEACHERS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS THE STATE. THE RESULTING REPORT BY AUGENBLICK, PALAICH AND ASSOCIATES, TITLED "KEEPING UP WITH THE KIDS: INCREASING MINORITY TEACHER REPRESENTATION IN COLORADO" WAS RELEASED IN DECEMBER 2014;

(e) SOME OF THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES HIGHLIGHTED IN THE REPORT INCLUDED RECRUITING FROM WITHIN COMMUNITIES IN NEED OF TEACHERS AND DEVELOPING GROW YOUR OWN TEACHER PROGRAMS;

(f) ONE SUCCESSFUL GROW YOUR OWN TEACHER PROGRAM IS THE PATHWAYS2TEACHING PROGRAM. THE PROGRAM IS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER AND LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS. SINCE 2010, THE PROGRAM HAS SERVED NEARLY 300 COLORADO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, MOST OF WHOM LIVE IN LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES AND MANY OF WHOM ARE THE FIRST IN THEIR FAMILIES TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL. TWO-THIRDS OF THE STUDENTS ARE BILINGUAL, AND OVER FORTY PERCENT ARE MALE. THROUGH THE PROGRAM, MANY UNDERSERVED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE CONSIDERED BECOMING TEACHERS.

(g) A GROW YOUR OWN TEACHER PROGRAM IN RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS MAY ALSO BE AN EFFECTIVE TOOL TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN TEACHERS COMMITTED TO TEACHING IN RURAL DISTRICTS; AND

(h) BECAUSE OF THE STRONG EVIDENCE-BASED CONNECTION BETWEEN STRONG GROW YOUR OWN TEACHER PROGRAMS AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN TEACHING AS A CAREER, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECLARES THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENCOURAGE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO
PARTNER WITH UNDERGRADUATE TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE MORE STUDENTS WITH ACCESS TO GROW YOUR OWN TEACHER PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT COLORADO.

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

(a) "GROW YOUR OWN TEACHER PROGRAM" MEANS A CREDIT-BEARING COLLEGE COURSE OR SERIES OF COURSES OFFERED TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS BY TRAINED HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUCTORS THAT ARE DESIGNED TO INCREASE STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PURSUE TEACHING CAREERS THROUGH POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION. GROW YOUR OWN TEACHER PROGRAMS ARE OFFERED IN CONJUNCTION WITH TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN COLORADO.

(b) "TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS" MEANS AN EDUCATOR PREPARATION UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAM AT AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION THAT IS APPROVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-121, C.R.S.

(3) (a) A LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDER IS ENCOURAGED TO ENTER INTO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ONE OR MORE TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM TO PROVIDE A GROW YOUR OWN TEACHER PROGRAM TO INCREASE STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PURSUE TEACHING CAREERS THROUGH POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.

(b) SUCCESSFUL GROW YOUR OWN TEACHER PROGRAMS MAY INCLUDE:

(I) OPEN-ENROLLMENT WITHOUT ACADEMIC PREREQUISITES FOR ALL INTERESTED ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH GRADE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
(I) Open enrollment for all ASSET Students;

(II) College credit-bearing courses that transfer into undergraduate teacher preparation programs;

(III) A year-long curriculum that is culturally responsive and encourages the development of research and writing skills;

(IV) Student academic supports and college readiness development;

(V) Mentoring of students enrolled in the program and connections with college students and faculty in the teacher preparation program;

(VI) College exploration, including college tours and admission guidance;

(VII) Strong support of the program by the collaborating teacher preparation program;

(VIII) Significant student field experience through teaching in local elementary schools, supported through close collaboration with elementary school teachers;

IX) Family and community engagement throughout the program; and

(X) Instructor training in the elements of a successful Grow Your Own program provided by the collaborating teacher preparation program with ongoing instructor support.

(c) A local education provider is encouraged to authorize and reimburse the cost of instructor training for a Grow Your Own Teacher Program as part of educator professional development and training.
SECTION 2. Act subject to petition - effective date. This act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August 5, 2015, if adjournment sine die is on May 6, 2015); except that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in November 2016 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.