MINUTES
COLORADO BOARD OF PRIVATE OCCUPATIONAL SCHOOLS
January 27, 2026 at 11:20 a.m.

Join Zoom Meeting
https://highered-colorado-gov.zoom.us/j/89605684038?pwd=azrA3RQU7hbgbTWbUU5KorYMXSXseP.1
Meeting ID: 896 0568 4038
Passcode: 677812

Board Members Present:
Jessica Wagner, Chair;
JoAnn Stevens, Vice Chair
Chris Smith, Secretary;
Ellen Wamser;
Jennifer Hash;
Howard Ogg; and
Jason Wardrip

Division Staff Present:
Chief Occupational Education Officer/Director Lorna Candler;
Deputy Director & Compliance Officer Mary Kanaly;
Compliance Investigator Tamara Simmons;
Program Specialist Rachel Acosta;
Program Specialist Martha Torres-Recinos;
Program Specialist Austin Bentz;
Program Specialist Kerrie Solis;
Division Accountant Nirvan Tyagi; and
Division Specialist Kristi Connors

Division Staff Absent:
Program Specialist Assistant Bernadette Esquibel

Board Counsel Present:
Assistant Attorney General Paige Olson, Office of the Colorado Attorney General

Call to Order:

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Private Occupational Schools Board was called to order by Jessica Wagner, Chair, at 11: 20 a.m. The Board members, Division staff, and guests were introduced. Board roll call was taken. A quorum was present for the Board meeting, and for executive session, if needed.

Consideration of Approval of Minutes:

Following review and consideration of the December 2, 2025, regular and executive session minutes, Secretary Smith motioned to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded and carried.

Additions / Changes to the Agenda:

COEO/Director Candler requested to remove RouteReady CDL Academy – Pueblo from the agenda

Director/Staff Report:

- COEO/Director Candler welcomed new Board member Howard Ogg who has previous experience with truck driving working for the state Department of Revenue.
- COEO/Director Candler welcomed new Board member Jason Wardrip who was able to attend the Board retreat and the December Board meeting.
- COEO/Director Candler reported that the Governor has appointed a new executive director to the Colorado Department of Higher Education – JB Holston on January 9, 2026.

New Business/Action Items:

A. Consideration of Approval of Provisional Certificate

1. Blade & Brow Academy – Pueblo – RA

Program Specialist Acosta presented to the Board for review and consideration of a Provisional School Application to Operate including one program: Barber Program and four stand-alone courses:132 Hour Permanent Makeup Course, Eyelash Extension Course, Microblading Course, and Microshade Course. A school representative was present. A site visit was completed. The Board determined that the school has adequate surety coverage and can maintain compliance with the minimum standards as prescribed by the Private Occupational Education Act of 1981, as amended.

Following review and consideration, Secretary Smith motioned to approve the Provisional Certificate effective January 27, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027. The motion was seconded and carried.

2. ActivateWork – Denver - RA

Program Specialist Acosta presented to the Board for review and consideration of a Provisional School Application to Operate including three stand-alone courses: AI Native Business Intelligence, Cybersecurity with AI Tools, IT Support & Security Fundamentals. A school representative was present. A site visit was completed. The Board determined that the school has adequate surety coverage and can maintain compliance with the minimum standards as prescribed by the Private Occupational Education Act of 1981, as amended.

Following review and consideration, Vice Chair Stevens motioned to approve the Provisional Certificate effective January 27, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027. The motion was seconded and carried.

B. Consideration of Approval of Change of Ownership

1. Colorado Springs School of Massage – Colorado Springs – KS

Program Specialist Solis presented to the Board for review and consideration of approval of change of ownership application. A school representative was present. The Board determined that the school has adequate surety coverage and can maintain compliance with the minimum standards as prescribed by the Private Occupational Education Act of 1981, as amended.

Following review and consideration, Board member Wamser motioned to conditionally approve the

application for change of ownership effective January 27, 2026, and ending June 30, 2028 with the requirement to submit a signed bill of sale, update surety, update agent information, update Secretary of State filings, and any other items as deemed necessary by the Division. The motion was seconded and carried.

2. Westland Beauty Academy – Lakewood – RA

Program Specialist Acosta presented to the Board for review and consideration of approval of change of ownership application. A school representative was present. The Board determined that the school has adequate surety coverage and can maintain compliance with the minimum standards as prescribed by the Private Occupational Education Act of 1981, as amended.

Following review and consideration, Vice Chair Stevens motioned to conditionally approve the application for change of ownership effective January 27, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027 with the requirement to submit a signed bill of sale and any other items as deemed necessary by the Division. The motion was seconded and carried.

C. Consideration of New Program(s)/Stand-Alone Course(s) or Major Revisions

At this time, Secretary Smith recused herself.

1. Colorado School of Healing Arts – Lakewood – AB

Program Specialist Bentz presented to the Board for review and consideration of one new stand-alone course: Thai Massage. A school representative was present. The Board determined that the school has adequate surety coverage and can maintain compliance with the minimum standards as prescribed by the Private Occupational Education Act of 1981, as amended.

Following review and consideration, Vice Chair Stevens motioned to approve the previously mentioned new stand-alone course effective January 27, 2026. The motion was seconded and carried.

At this time, Secretary Smith rejoined the meeting.

2. U.S. Career Institute – Fort Collins – AB

Program Specialist Bentz presented to the Board for review and consideration of one new program: Surgical Technologist. A school representative was present. The Board determined that the school has adequate surety coverage and can maintain compliance with the minimum standards as prescribed by the Private Occupational Education Act of 1981, as amended.

Following review and consideration, Vice Chair Stevens motioned to approve the previously mentioned new program effective January 27, 2026. The motion was seconded and carried.

3. Colorado Media School – Denver – KS

Program Specialist Solis presented to the Board for review and consideration of three new programs: Social Media Marketing, Artificial Intelligence Business Applications, and Podcast Production. A school representative was present. The Board determined that the school has adequate surety coverage and

can maintain compliance with the minimum standards as prescribed by the Private Occupational Education Act of 1981, as amended.

Following review and consideration, Vice Chair Stevens motioned to approve the previously mentioned new programs effective January 27, 2026. The motion was seconded and carried.

4. Victoria James Signature Salon School – Loveland – RA

Program Specialist Acosta presented to the Board for review and consideration of one new program: Hairstylist Program. A school representative was present. The Board determined that the school has adequate surety coverage and can maintain compliance with the minimum standards as prescribed by the Private Occupational Education Act of 1981, as amended.

Following review and consideration, Board member Wamser motioned to approve the previously mentioned new program effective January 27, 2026. The motion was seconded and carried.

C. Closures (No Action)

1. Assist to Succeed – Pueblo

The school has not enrolled students since the date of closure on 08/01/2025. Effective 10/07/2025, all available student records are on deposit at the Division.

Other Business:

A. Legal Update

The Board's Counsel, Assistant Attorney General Paige Olson, updated the Board on the following legal matters and other business items listed on the Board's agenda:

1. Ritually Rooted (Delta County District Court) - No Action

- Background: Occupational school in Paonia, Colorado providing training to students to become "holistic practitioners" or "holistic nutritionists" without Board approval or an exempt status
- Feb. 2024: Board issued Cease and Desist Order to school, ordering the school to cease from continued unlawful operations o Ritually Rooted kept operating after Cease and Desist issued
- Nov. 2025: Hearing for permanent injunction against school and owner to cease from continued unlawful operation
- Dec. 2025: Court issued injunction as requested by the Board

New information:

- Ritually Rooted filed a notice of appeal to the Colorado Court of Appeals, requesting review and overturning of the injunction
- Basis for appeal: Unlawful restraint on religious freedoms, injunction exceeded Court's authority, Board acted in excess of authority, etc.

2. Fadez Academy Barber College (Denver District Court) – No Action

- Background: Approved school until May 2025, when the school owner sent a letter to the Division & Board reporting he did not wish to be subject to Board oversight and surrendered his certificate of approval. The Division accepted the surrender.
- June 2025: Fadez filed a complaint against the Division and Board, alleging the Board failed to take a required oath of office and altered Board meeting minutes
- Oct. 2025: Court dismissed complaint for failure to state a claim
- Fadez appealed the dismissal to the Colorado Supreme Court for extraordinary relief

New information: No updates or action by the Supreme Court at this time

3. Springs Truck Driving School (Denver County District Court) – No Action

- Background: Approved school until June 2023, when the Board denied renewal application. Since that time, the school has continued to operate in a nonexempt manner without Board approval.
- Aug. 2024: Board asked for injunction due to school's continued operation
    - Court issued injunction + payment of civil penalty (Feb. 2025)

- June 2025: Board voted to issue a motion to find the school in contempt of the Court's order against Defendants
- Aug. 2025: Board filed for contempt against school and owner due to continued operation

New information:

- School owner failed to appear for a hearing on advisement (reading of rights) for contempt filing
    - Court issued warrant for failure to appear ($1,000 bond)
- Court will notify the Board when the warrant is executed and schedule hearing on advisement the following week

4. Carter Truck Driving Academy – No Action

- Background: Approved school that ceased operations in or around Dec. 2024. The school is not currently operating, does not have necessary equipment to provide education/training, and does not have an approved location.
- May 2025: school's certificate of approval suspended due to lapse of surety coverage
- Sept. 2025: Board issued Notice of Noncompliance for failure to obtain surety coverage, lack of follow through on statements to the Board (issued Oct. 23, 2025)
    - Incomplete response from school – school did not supplement response or provide required information
    - School did obtain required surety coverage
- Dec. 2025: Board voted to revoke school's certificate of approval due to continued noncompliance after additional time provided

New information: No updates at this time.

B. Conditional Approval Update

Deputy Director Kanaly updated the Board on the following conditional approvals:

- 160 Driving Academy – Commerce City: School has submitted quarterly financial statements for review as requested. Board member Wamser reported that based on the most financials received and reviewed concerns remain regarding financial stability of the parent company. The parent company has reported significant losses and a negative operating cash flow position.

Board member Wamser motioned to move this school to executive session. The motion was seconded and carried.

- IntelliTec College – Colorado Springs: School submitted placement rates for each program to the Division for review as requested. Deputy Director Kanaly reported that concerns remain regarding low placement rates. **Vice Chair Stevens motioned to move this school to executive session. The motion was seconded and carried**.
- Colorado School of Energy Studies: Deputy Director Kanaly reported that the school has met the conditions imposed by submitting revised catalog, enrollment agreement, and advertising to show they are offering two 350-hour programs separate from each other and issuing credentials based on that model. The conditional approval requirements have been met and the school is removed from conditional approval.
- School of Inner Health: Deputy Director Kanaly reported that the school has met the conditions imposed by submitting revised catalog, enrollment agreement, and advertising to show they are offering only a 350-hour program. These documents were submitted as requested; however, the school is still teaching the unapproved 750-hour program and has current student enrolled in that program. **Secretary Smith motioned to move the school to executive session. The motion was seconded and carried.**
- Rise Aesthetic Academy – Deputy Director Kanaly reported that the school submitted year to date financials as requested for review. Board member Wamser reported that the school is showing improvement based on her review of the income statement. However, Board member Wamser requested a full set of financials including the balance sheet to confirm there is nothing concerning.
- Medical Sales College – this school was put on probation in October 2025 due to ongoing concerns about financial stability. In accordance with the letter of probation, the school submitted a detailed explanation regarding the commitment from University Ventures to the school, quarterly financial statements, and a written explanation as to their financial stability. Finacial statement submitted for review on January 15, 2026, show a large net loss and additional net losses versus the projections. **Board member Wamser motioned to move this school to executive session. The motion was seconded and carried.**

C. <u>Cosmo Beauty Academy</u>

- Dec. 2025: Board issued Notice of Noncompliance and Summary Suspension of certain programs (without qualified instructors)
    - Issues: recordkeeping violations, lack of qualified instructors, providing training without qualified instructors, false information reported to Division

New information:

- Summary suspension issued and required records provided
- Notice of Noncompliance issued and school response provided to Board members in Other Business packet. Deputy Director Kanaly reviewed the school's response documents and explanations provided, but they were deemed as non-responsive to the Notice of Noncompliance requirements.

Vice Chair Stevens motioned to move Cosmo Beauty Academy to executive session. The motion was seconded and carried.

D. <u>Executive Security International, LTD</u>

- Dec. 2025: Board issued Notice of Noncompliance to school for Vice President/agent's failure to provide complete and accurate responses on agent's permit application and school renewal application.

New information:

- Division received school's response to Notice of Noncompliance. Division's review of the responses shows ESI provided all requested information and documentation.

Board member Wamser motioned to move Executive Security International to executive session. The motion was seconded and carried.

At this time, Board member Ogg experienced technical difficulties and dropped off the Zoom meeting, but rejoined the meeting a few minutes later.

E. Paul Mitchell The School – Colorado Springs

- Dec. 2025: Board summarily suspended Nail Technician and Cosmetology programs and issued Notice of Noncompliance to school
    - Issues: offering programs in a manner and location not approved by the Board, jeopardizing student and customer safety by not providing training in approved location, failure to report permitting issue to the Division

New information:

- Notice of Noncompliance and school response provided to Board members in Other Business packet
- School reported they completed all required building modifications and are waiting on approval and permits from building inspector (inspection completed 1/16/2026)

Board member Wamser motioned to conditionally remove the summary suspension with the requirement that the school provide the final building inspection showing approval by the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department. The motion was seconded and carried.

F. Rise Aesthetics

Deputy Director Kanaly presented a summary of a complaint filed against Rise Aesthetics alleging the school allows basic Esthetics students to receive advanced trainings within the 600-hour program, school uses unqualified instructors, school utilizes a third-party financer for student tuition who is not approved for educational funding, and the medical director is not allowed to treat female patients. In response to the complaint, the Division investigated the allegations by completing a site visit and requested written response from the school owner.

Vice Chair Stevens motioned to move this school to executive session. The motion was seconded and carried.

G. Whole Body Studios

Deputy Director Kanaly presented a summary of a complaint filed against Whole Body Studios stating that they were offering occupational education without the required authorization from the Board. In response to the complaint, the Division investigated the allegation by completing a review of their website which did advertise a Pilates Teacher Training program. Whole Body Studios was notified via letter in August 2025, that they needed to either apply for an exemption or apply to become an approved school. No response to this letter was received, so a second unauthorized school letter was

hand delivered to the studio location. A memo summarizing communications/history with the school was provided to Board members with the Other Business packet.

Board member Wardrip motioned to issue a cease and desist order to Whole Body Studios to discontinue offering the Pilates Teacher Training program. The motion was seconded and carried.

Following review and consideration of the previous matters discussed during the regular portion of the meeting, Board member Wardrip motioned to convene in executive session with the Board's Counsel to seek legal advice pursuant to C.R.S. §24-6-402(3)(a)(II), on the following matters: 160 Driving Academy, IntelliTec College – Colorado Springs, Medical Sales College, School of Inner Health, Cosmo Beauty Academy, Executive Security International, and Rise Aesthetics, in consideration of relevant parts of the Private Occupational School Act, C.R.S. §23-64-101 et seq. and the Rules and Regulations, 8 CCR 1504-1. The motion was seconded and carried. The public session recorder was turned off at 1:26 p.m.

The Board of Private Occupational Schools convened in executive session with its attorney of record, the Division Director, and Division staff at 1:26 p.m.

Summary of Return to Regular Session:

After the review and consideration of the matters previously mentioned, Chair Wagner resumed regular session at 2:18 p.m. The executive session recorder was turned off. The public session recorder was turned on and the general public was welcomed back.

Assistant Attorney General Paige Olson, affirmed for the record that this executive session was for the sole purpose of providing legal advice to the Board and to otherwise engage in good faith in what is believed to be attorney-client privileged discussions.

Board member Hash left the executive session meeting and will not rejoin the regular Board meeting.

Following executive session, the Board resumed its agenda as follows:

160 Driving Academy – Commerce City
Board member Wamser expressed remaining concerns about the financial stability of the parent corporation. Board member Wamser motioned to issue a notice of noncompliance for violating minimum standards pertaining to the financial stability of the parent company. The motion was seconded and carried. Chair Wagner clarified that the school remains under conditional approval with the requirements still in place to submit quarterly financial statements.

IntelliTec College – Colorado Springs
Board member Wamser expressed concern regarding low placement rates. Board member Wamser motioned to issue a Notice of Noncompliance for violating minimum standards regarding quality of education and deceptive sales and trade practices. The notice should include the requirement for the school to submit an improvement plan to address and improve the placement rates. The motion was seconded and carried.

School of Inner Health
Vice Chair Stevens stated that based on review of the response requested to the conditional approval the Board will take no action at this meeting and the conditional approval will remain in effect.

Medical Sales College

Chair Wagner expressed concern about the financial stability of the school and would like to have a better understanding of the impact on Colorado students. Secretary Smith motioned to continue probationary status for Medical Sales college with the addition of a provision to cease enrollment of new students which includes those students that anticipate a February start date. The motion was seconded and carried.

Cosmo Beauty Academy – Aurora

Chair Wagner raised concerns about the lack of accountability presented in the school's response to the Notice of Noncompliance. Vice Chair Stevens expressed lack of confidence in the response and the ability for the school to ensure students are set up for success by maintaining and implementing standards. Vice Chair Stevens motioned to issue a notice of charges to revoke the certificate of approval. The motion was seconded and carried.

Executive Security International LTD

Board member Wardrip commended the school on the efforts to provide complete response to the Notice of Noncompliance. Chair Wagner stated that no motion was made regarding this school, so no further action would be taken.

Rise Aesthetics

Vice Chair Stevens acknowledged the school for accepting responsibility for the missteps in following rules and regulations and how that impacts operations of the school. Vice Chair Stevens motioned to issue a notice of noncompliance for having conducted advanced training in an unapproved method and having unapproved instructors. The motion was seconded and carried.

Adjournment:

Secretary Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:59 p.m. The motion was seconded and carried. motioned

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board is Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. and will be held via the web conference application, Zoom; meeting details will be posted on the Division's website: highered.colorado.gov/dpos.