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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

Introduced By: Representatives Kazarian, O'Brien, Messier, Amore, and Bennett

Date Introduced: February 01, 2017

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. This act shall be entitled the "Rhode Island School Social Workers Quality
2 Assessment Act of 2017".

3 SECTION 2. The general assembly adopts the following findings:

4 (1) The Rhode Island general assembly finds school social workers are an essential
5 component of the school's educational team with specific expertise in the domains of mental
6 health, social/emotional learning and social services.

7 (2) School social workers are professionals employed by school districts to enhance the
8 academic mission by providing services that strengthen home/school/community partnerships.

9 (3) School social workers' expertise is working with students and families from a family-
10 strength, empowerment model.

11 (4) School social workers bridge systems by locating and mobilizing community
12 resources that may serve a student and/or family facing challenges.

13 (5) Research indicates that when families' basic needs are met, there is a higher likelihood
14 that the students will succeed in school (G-14-3.3, Basic Education Plan, 2009, Rhode Island
15 Department of Education).

16 (6) "Mental and social/emotional health issues directly impede students' abilities to learn.
17 Such issues include, but are not limited to, psychiatric disorders, domestic violence, alcohol and
18 drug abuse, child abuse and neglect, as well as various forms of bullying" (G-14-3.2, BEP).

19 (7) The role of the school social worker continues to evolve as it confronts the ever-

1 changing complex needs of schools and the students they serve.

2 (8) The scope of responsibilities and involvement of the practitioner is broad and may
3 vary not only from one district to another but also within each district.

4 SECTION 3. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended
5 by adding thereto the following chapter:

6 CHAPTER 73.1

7 SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS QUALITY ASSESSMENT ACT OF 2017

8 **16-73.1-1. Compilation of data – School social worker duties and responsibilities. --**

9 (a) Accumulated data is needed to identify and assess the workload, duties and responsibilities of
10 school social workers. The 2009 basic education plan drafted by the state department of
11 education:

12 (1) Delegates to the local education agency the ultimate responsibility for the operation of
13 a system of education and support services that is reasonably designed and adequately resourced
14 to achieve compliance with all aspects of the basic education plan;

15 (2) Requires that the local education agency provide a supportive and nurturing school
16 community; and

17 (3) Provides adequate psychological, mental health and social services.

18 (b) The state department of education shall develop a standard measure which will
19 identify the number of school social workers in the state, and the actual nature and scope of work
20 and services that they provide. Specifically, it shall solicit information concerning:

21 (1) Prevention and intervention services;

22 (2) Counsellor services assessments;

23 (3) Consultation;

24 (4) Parent and community liaison;

25 (5) Attempts to reduce violence;

26 (6) Referrals and collaboration; and

27 (7) Promoting adherence to federal mandates, involvement in school activities and
28 training.

29 (c) School departments shall ascertain and forward to the state department of education
30 the following information:

31 (1) The number of social assessments completed;

32 (2) The number of family contacts;

33 (3) The number of staff meetings attended;

34 (4) The number of community contacts;

- 1 (5) The number of teacher consultation contacts;
2 (6) The number of functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) completed;
3 (7) The number of individualized educational plan (IEP) meetings attended;
4 (8) The number of individual counseling sessions; and
5 (9) The number of group counseling sessions.
6 (d) Every school worker shall complete this standard measure for one complete school
7 year.

8 **16-73.1-2. Report.**

9 The state department of education shall gather all the information concerning the duties
10 and responsibilities of school social workers provided to it by local school departments. It shall
11 summarize the information in a report which shall be delivered to the chairpersons of the house of
12 representatives health education and welfare committee and the senate committee on education in
13 January of 2019.

14 SECTION 4. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO EDUCATION - SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

1 This act would create a process for the department of education relating to the collection
2 and organization of information concerning the workload and scope of the duties and
3 responsibilities performed by school social workers.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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