

2020 -- H 7826

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION

Introduced By: Representatives Fogarty, Walsh, Ajello, Hull, and Tanzi

Date Introduced: February 26, 2020

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-60-4 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-60 entitled "Council on
2 Elementary and Secondary Education [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of
3 Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-60-4. Council on elementary and secondary education -- Powers and duties.**

5 (a) The council on elementary and secondary education shall have in addition to those
6 enumerated in § 16-60-1, the following powers and duties:

7 (1) To approve a systematic program of information gathering, processing, and analysis
8 addressed to every aspect of elementary and secondary education in this state especially as that
9 information relates to current and future educational needs so that current needs may be met with
10 reasonable promptness and plans formulated to meet future needs as they arise in the most
11 efficient and economical manner possible;

12 (2) To approve a master plan implementing the broad goals and objectives for elementary
13 and secondary education in the state that have been established by the board of education. These
14 goals and objectives shall be expressed in terms of what men and women should know and be
15 able to do as a result of their educational experience. The council on elementary and secondary
16 education shall continually evaluate the efforts and results of education in the light of these
17 objectives;

18 (3) To adopt standards and require enforcement and to exercise general supervision over

1 all elementary and secondary public and nonpublic education in the state as provided in
2 subsection (a)(8) of this section. The council on elementary and secondary education shall not
3 engage in the operation or administration of any subordinate committee, local school district,
4 school, school service, or school program, except its own department of elementary and
5 secondary education, and except as specifically authorized by an act of the general assembly. The
6 adoption and submittal of the budget and the allocation of appropriations, the acquisition,
7 holding, disposition, and general management of property shall not be construed to come within
8 the purview of the preceding prohibition. The council on elementary and secondary education
9 shall communicate with, and seek the advice of, the commissioner of elementary and secondary
10 education and all those concerned with and affected by its determinations as a regular procedure
11 in arriving at its conclusions and in setting its policy;

12 (4) To allocate and coordinate the various educational functions among the educational
13 agencies of the state and local school districts and to promote cooperation among them so that
14 maximum efficiency and economy shall be achieved;

15 (5)(i) To prepare, with the assistance of the commissioner of elementary and secondary
16 education, and to present annually to the state budget officer, in accordance with § 35-3-4, a total
17 educational budget for the elementary and secondary sector that shall include, but not be limited
18 to, the budgets of the department of elementary and secondary education, subordinate boards and
19 agencies, and state aid to local school districts. Prior to submitting the budget as required by the
20 budget office instructions and this subsection, the council shall present the budget to the board of
21 education for review and approval; and

22 (ii) In the preparation of the budget, the council on elementary and secondary education
23 shall implement the priorities established by the board of education of expenditures for
24 elementary and secondary education purposes of state revenues and other public resources made
25 available for the support of public elementary and secondary education among the various
26 education agencies of the state. Nothing contained in this section shall authorize any individual or
27 group of individuals to reallocate resources in a manner other than that prescribed in the budget as
28 appropriations by the general assembly.

29 (6) To maintain a department of elementary and secondary education, to provide for its
30 staffing and organization, and to appoint a commissioner of elementary and secondary education
31 pursuant to § 16-60-6 who shall serve at its pleasure. The commissioner of elementary and
32 secondary education and the department of elementary and secondary education shall have any
33 duties and responsibilities as defined in §§ 16-60-6 and 16-60-7;

34 (7) To establish other educational agencies or subcommittees necessary or desirable for

1 the conduct of any or all aspects of elementary and secondary education and to determine all
2 powers, functions, and composition of any agencies or subcommittees and to dissolve them when
3 their purpose shall have been fulfilled; provided that nothing contained in this subdivision shall
4 be construed to grant the council the power to establish subcommittees or agencies performing
5 the duties and functions of local school committees except as provided in § 16-1-10;

6 (8) To exercise the authority previously vested in the board of regents for education with
7 relation to secondary nonpublic educational institutions within the state under the terms of
8 chapter 40 of this title and other laws affecting nonpublic education in the state, and to cause the
9 department of elementary and secondary education to administer the provisions of that section;

10 (9) To exercise all the functions, powers and duties that previously were vested in the
11 board of regents for education, under the provisions of former § 16-49-4(9), including but not
12 limited to the following specific functions:

13 (i) To approve the basic subjects and courses of study to be taught and instructional
14 standards required to be maintained in the public elementary and secondary schools of the state;

15 (ii) To adopt standards and qualifications for the certification of teachers and to provide
16 for the issuance of certificates, and to establish fees for the certification of teachers. The fees
17 collected for the certification of teachers, along with various education licensing and testing fees,
18 shall be deposited by the council on elementary and secondary education as general revenues.
19 The funds appropriated by the general assembly shall be utilized by the department of elementary
20 and secondary education to establish and support programs that enhance the quality and diversity
21 of the teaching profession. The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall
22 regularly make recommendations to the board about specific programs and projects to be
23 supported by those funds. The commissioner shall oversee the funds, assess the effectiveness of
24 its programs and projects, and make recommendations about the general use and operation of the
25 funds to the board;

26 (iii) To be responsible for the distribution of state school funds;

27 (iv) To determine the necessity of school construction and to approve standards for
28 design and construction of school buildings throughout the state;

29 (v) To set standards for school libraries and school library services;

30 (vi) To make recommendations relative to transportation of pupils to school, school bus
31 routes, time schedules, and other matters relating to pupil transportation;

32 (vii) To enforce the provisions of all laws relating to elementary and secondary
33 education;

34 (viii) To decide and determine appeals from decisions of the commissioner;

- 1 (ix) To prescribe forms for the use of local school committees and local officers when
2 reporting to the department of elementary and secondary education;
- 3 (x) To adopt and require standard accounting procedures for local school districts, except
4 as provided for in subdivision (3) of § 16-24-2; ~~and~~
- 5 (xi) To adopt and require standard uniform operating and capital budgeting procedures
6 for local school districts;
- 7 (xii) To adopt standards for the intrastate transportation of students across municipal
8 boundaries and maximizing the efficiencies of time and cost of each sending district; and
- 9 (xiii) To utilize already existing and available state or quasi-state programs necessary to
10 achieve its goals.
- 11 (10) To establish rules for the approval and accrediting of elementary and secondary
12 schools;
- 13 (11) To recommend to the general assembly changes in the size and number of the school
14 districts within the state; and to make any further and other recommendations to the general
15 assembly as the council on elementary and secondary education may determine to be necessary
16 or desirable, including, but not limited to, proposals for incentives for the coordination of services
17 and facilities of certain school districts and the feasibility of granting taxing authority to local
18 school committees upon their request, and the impact upon the quality of education within that
19 particular community by granting the request. In carrying out this duty, the council on elementary
20 and secondary education shall periodically issue reports in school district organizations for
21 selected regions and school districts;
- 22 (12) To exercise all other powers with relation to the field of elementary and secondary
23 education within this state not specifically granted to any other department, board, or agency, and
24 not incompatible with law, which the council on elementary and secondary education may deem
25 advisable;
- 26 (13) To exercise the authority previously vested in the board of regents for education with
27 relation to adult education as defined in § 16-58-2 [repealed] and to establish definitive goals for
28 and operate a comprehensive delivery system for adult education programs and services,
29 including the counseling and testing of persons interested in obtaining high school equivalency
30 diplomas, the issuance of diplomas, and the maintenance of a permanent record of applications,
31 tests, and equivalency diplomas;
- 32 (14) To promote maximum efficiency and economy in the delivery of elementary and
33 secondary educational services in the state;
- 34 (15) To approve a training program for school committee members to enhance their

1 individual skills and their effectiveness as a corporate body. The training program should include,
2 but not be limited to, the following roles and responsibilities of school committees: strategic
3 planning, human and community relations, and school finance and budgeting;

4 (16) Within ninety (90) days after the end of each fiscal year, the board shall submit an
5 annual report to the governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the president of the
6 senate of its activities during that fiscal year. The report shall provide: an operating statement
7 summarizing meetings or hearings held, subjects addressed, decisions rendered, rules or
8 regulations promulgated, studies conducted, policies and plans developed, approved, or modified,
9 and programs administered or initiated; a consolidated financial statement of all funds received
10 and expended including the source of the funds, a listing of any staff supported by these funds,
11 and a summary of any clerical, administrative or technical support received; a summary of
12 performance during the previous fiscal year including accomplishments, shortcomings and
13 remedies; a synopsis of hearings, complaints, suspensions, or other legal matters related to the
14 authority of the council; a briefing on anticipated activities in the upcoming fiscal year; and
15 findings and recommendations for improvements. The director of the department of
16 administration shall be responsible for the enforcement of the provisions of this subsection;

17 (17) To prepare with the assistance of the commissioner a multi-year plan of priority
18 educational goals and objectives. This plan should recommend policy objectives, implementation
19 strategies, and a timetable for major policy initiatives;

20 (18) Each year the governor shall by writing notify the council on elementary and
21 secondary education concerning broad economic, cultural, and social needs that the education
22 system needs to consider which the council shall address in developing educational plans and
23 programs;

24 (19) Appoint a standing committee that will develop a schedule to systematically review
25 all council policies over a three-year (3) period;

26 (20) To prepare, with the assistance of the commissioner, a statement of regulatory
27 policy. This policy should set forth the goals and objectives of state regulations which are
28 expressed in terms of what educational inputs and outputs the board expects regulations to
29 address;

30 (21)(i) To prepare, with the assistance of the commissioner of elementary and secondary
31 education, and to present annually to the general assembly by January 1 a report on school
32 discipline in Rhode Island schools. This report shall include:

33 (A) Expulsions by district, including duration and the reason for each action;

34 (B) Suspensions by district, including duration and the reason for each action;

- 1 (C) Placements to alternative programs for disciplinary reasons;
- 2 (D) Assaults of teachers, students, and school staff by students;
- 3 (E) Incidents involving possession of weapons on school property. For the purpose of this
4 section, a weapon shall be considered any of those weapons described in §§ 11-47-2 and 11-47-
5 42;
- 6 (F) Incidents of the sale of controlled substances by students;
- 7 (G) Incidents of the possession with the intent to sell controlled substances by students;
- 8 (H) Additional demographic information including, but not limited to, the ethnic and
9 racial classifications, age, and gender, as prescribed by the commissioner, of each of the students
10 involved in the incidents, events or actions described in subparagraphs (A) through (G) of this
11 subdivision; and
- 12 (I) A description of the education program provided to each student suspended for over
13 ten (10) consecutive school days in a school year.
- 14 (ii) All school superintendents shall supply the necessary information on forms
15 established by the commissioner of elementary and secondary education to the council on
16 elementary and secondary education to assist in the preparation of the council's report on school
17 discipline.
- 18 (22) To prepare and promulgate a uniform statewide school reporting system which
19 would provide information including, but not limited to, the following:
- 20 (i) Student and teacher attendance rates;
- 21 (ii) Standardized test scores;
- 22 (iii) Demographic profiles;
- 23 (iv) Results of polls of students, parents, and teachers;
- 24 (v) Descriptions of goals, initiatives, and achievements;
- 25 (vi) Best teaching practices;
- 26 (vii) Alternative student assessments;
- 27 (viii) Special programs; and
- 28 (ix) Number of student suspensions and teacher grievances and the amount of parental
29 involvement.
- 30 (23) [Deleted by P.L. 2014, ch. 145, art. 20, § 7].
- 31 (b) The council shall identify the benefit to students regarding the action that is taken in
32 executing its duties.

1 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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RELATING TO EDUCATION -- COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION

1 This act would require the council on elementary and secondary education to adopt
2 standards which take into consideration the time and cost of transporting students across
3 municipal boundaries and to promote maximum efficiency in other programs that impact the
4 education of students.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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