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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND SUPERINTENDENTS

Introduced By: Senator Roger Picard

Date Introduced: February 25, 2015

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

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

4 **16-2-2. City and town schools required -- School year -- Location -- Kindergartens. -**

5 (a) (1) Except as specifically provided in this section, every city or town shall establish and
6 maintain for at least one hundred eighty (180) days annually or the equivalent thereof, exclusive
7 of holidays a sufficient number of schools in convenient places under the control and
8 management of the school committee and under the supervision of the board of regents for
9 elementary and secondary education. In lieu of convenient location the school committee may
10 provide transportation for pupils to and from school in accordance with the provisions of chapter
11 21 of this title. Provided, that a school district may establish a school year which is the equivalent
12 of one hundred eighty (180) days through the use of longer school days in terms of hours [or](#)
13 [pursuant to subsection \(c\) of this section](#), and which may total less than one hundred eighty (180)
14 separate days, so long as through the use of the longer school day, the school district annually
15 provides a minimum of one thousand eighty (1080) school hours in a single school year. This
16 figure is based on a minimum of six (6) hours per school day. For purposes of clarification, the
17 intent herein is to permit school districts to amend their school year to provide for longer school
18 days while reducing the actual number of days in which the school facilities must be fully staffed
19 and maintained, but to insure that in doing so, school districts shall still provide the minimum

1 amount of instruction time contemplated by this section. Nothing herein shall be deemed to limit
2 a school district from exceeding the minimum amounts of days and hours set forth herein.

3 (2) School districts intending to make use of the option provided herein to lengthen
4 school days and shorten the school year shall submit a detailed school day plan and a proposed
5 school calendar to the commissioner of elementary and secondary education for approval. The
6 commissioner shall review the submitted school day plan and the submitted calendar to determine
7 whether the plan and calendar are academically sound and fiscally efficient. The commissioner
8 may grant or deny approval of the plan and/or the calendar.

9 (b) School facilities shall include a sufficient number of kindergartens.

10 (c) A school district may submit a detailed plan at any time to the commissioner of
11 elementary and secondary education for approval that would allow the schools to conduct
12 instruction through virtual education when school has been closed due to inclement weather or
13 other emergency that would count as a school day provided that:

14 (1) The assignments and instruction must be equivalent in effort and rigor to typical class
15 work;

16 (2) At least seventy-five (75%) percent of the students must participate and complete the
17 assignments;

18 (3) The plan must include procedures for participation by students who may not have
19 access to the virtual instruction method utilized;

20 (4) The plan must include a process for monitoring participation and a sample lesson
21 provided through virtual education and a sample lesson provided for students without access;

22 (5) The plan must indicate the school year for which the district is seeking approval and
23 any school district opting to participate in a plan for virtual instruction as provided herein, shall
24 submit a plan to the commissioner of elementary and secondary education for approval on or
25 before August 31 for each school year;

26 (6) The plan complies with any requirements as mandated by the commissioner of
27 elementary and secondary education.

28 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 -- SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND SUPERINTENDENTS

1 This act would provide for the establishment of a virtual education plan by school
2 districts for use during inclement weather, with the approval and consent of the commissioner of
3 elementary and secondary education.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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