

2016 -- S 2493

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION

Introduced By: Senators Sosnowski, and Crowley

Date Introduced: February 25, 2016

Referred To: Senate Education

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 "Board of
2 Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island
3 Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

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

5 The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education shall have in addition to those enumerated
6 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
13 elementary and secondary education in the state that have been established by the board of
14 education. These goals and objectives shall be expressed in terms of what men and women should
15 know and be able to do as a result of their educational experience. The council on elementary and
16 secondary education shall continually evaluate the efforts and results of education in the light of
17 these 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 subdivision (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 which shall include, but not be
18 limited to, the budgets of the department of elementary and secondary education, subordinate
19 boards and agencies, and state aid to local school districts. Prior to submitting the budget as
20 required by the budget office instructions and this subsection the council shall present the budget
21 to the board of education for review and approval.

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 which 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 which enhance the quality and
21 diversity of the teaching profession. The commissioner of elementary and secondary education
22 shall 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)(A) To make recommendations relative to transportation of pupils to school, school
31 bus routes, time schedules, and other matters relating to pupil transportation- ;

32 (B) To adopt standards for the intrastate transportation of students across municipal
33 boundaries and maximizing the efficiencies of time and cost of each sending district; and

34 (C) To utilize already existing and available state or quasi-state programs necessary to

1 [achieve its goals.](#)

2 (vii) To enforce the provisions of all laws relating to elementary and secondary
3 education.

4 (viii) To decide and determine appeals from decisions of the commissioner.

5 (ix) To prescribe forms for the use of local school committees and local officers when
6 reporting to the department of elementary and secondary education.

7 (x) To adopt and require standard accounting procedures for local school districts, except
8 as provided for in subdivision (3) of § 16-24-2.

9 (xi) To adopt and require standard uniform operating and capital budgeting procedures
10 for local school districts.

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
14 school districts within the state; and to make any further and other recommendations to the
15 general assembly as the council on elementary and secondary education may determine to be
16 necessary or desirable, including, but not limited to, proposals for incentives for the coordination
17 of services and facilities of certain school districts and the feasibility of granting taxing authority
18 to local school committees upon their request, and the impact upon the quality of education
19 within that particular community by granting the request. In carrying out this duty, the council on
20 elementary and secondary education shall periodically issue reports in school district
21 organizations for 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
27 with relation to adult education as defined in § 16-58-2 and to establish definitive goals for and
28 operate a comprehensive delivery system for adult education programs and services, including the
29 counseling and testing of persons interested in obtaining high school equivalency diplomas, the
30 issuance of diplomas, and the maintenance of a permanent record of applications, tests, and
31 equivalency diplomas.

32 (14) To promote maximum efficiency and economy in the delivery of elementary and
33 secondary educational services in the state [and those ancillary services and programs that are](#)
34 [equally fundamental to the education of our students.](#)

1 (15) To approve a training program for school committee members to enhance their
2 individual skills and their effectiveness as a corporate body. The training program should include,
3 but not be limited to, the following roles and responsibilities of school committees: strategic
4 planning, human and community relations, and school finance and budgeting.

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

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

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

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

27 (20) To prepare with the assistance of the commissioner a statement of regulatory policy.
28 This policy should set forth the goals and objectives of state regulations which are expressed in
29 terms of what educational inputs and outputs the board expects regulations to 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
4 this section, a weapon shall be considered any of those weapons described in §§ 11-47-2 and 11-
5 47-42.
- 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.
- 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;
- 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 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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RELATING TO EDUCATION -- BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND
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1 This act would require that the council of elementary and secondary education take into
2 consideration the time and cost of transporting students and other programs that impact the
3 education of students.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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