

2016 -- S 2495

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LC004890
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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 - SOCIAL SERVICES

Introduced By: Senators Picard, Crowley, Gallo, Conley, and DiPalma

Date Introduced: February 25, 2016

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. PREAMBLE

2 WHEREAS, Child Opportunity Zones benefit students and operate in urban, suburban
3 and rural communities;

4 WHEREAS, Using a school as a hub for a community, child opportunity zones (COZs)
5 integrate academic, health, and social services to offer a range of support and opportunities that
6 lead to improved school learning;

7 WHEREAS, The COZs address the needs of the whole child, ensuring that they are
8 healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged, and are aligned with the Rhode Island and
9 national whole child initiatives and federal education laws; and

10 WHEREAS, By providing learning opportunities outside of normal school hours,
11 including, but not limited to, before and after school programs and summer programs and evening
12 programs, students and their families can be more engaged in their communities.

13 SECTION 2. Sections 16-73-1 and 16-73-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-73
14 entitled "Education - Social Services [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of
15 Education Act]" are hereby amended to read as follows:

16 **16-73-1. Legislative findings. --** It is found and declared that:

17 (1) All children are capable of success and schools are the centers of vibrant
18 communities. The growing social needs of children directly affect their ability to perform
19 successfully in school because health, emotional, social, and family problems can impede

1 learning.

2 (2) Schools are most effective when families take active roles in the education of
3 children. Community schools are in a unique position to provide the vital links between
4 education, social services, and health care to children and their families.

5 (3) It is important that schools be assisted in fulfilling the critical function of
6 coordinating the delivery of comprehensive social services at or near the site of public schools to
7 address the particular needs of each school community.

8 **16-73-2. Creation of plan.** -- ~~The commissioner of elementary and secondary education,~~
9 ~~under the direction of the board of regents for elementary and secondary education, and in~~
10 ~~cooperation with directors of the departments of health, administration, children, youth, and~~
11 ~~families, mental health, retardation, and hospitals, and the office of higher education (after this~~
12 ~~referred to as the~~ The children's cabinet) shall ~~develop a~~ incorporate into its strategic plan ~~for~~
13 ~~creating~~ "child opportunity zones" as a means to deliver comprehensive and coordinated social
14 services at or near public school sites. ~~, and pursuant to this;~~ The commissioner of elementary and
15 secondary education shall undertake activities including but not limited to the award of
16 ~~demonstration, planning, and training~~ and administration of grants to further the purpose set forth
17 in this chapter.

18 SECTION 3. Chapter 16-73 of the General Laws entitled "Education - Social Services
19 [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended by
20 adding thereto the following sections:

21 **16-73-1.1. Definition.** -- "Child Opportunity Zone" is a site at or near a school that
22 provides: early childhood initiatives; before-school, after-school, and summer enrichment
23 programs; health and mental health services; parent engagement, adult education, workforce
24 development training; or any combination of these programs based upon the students and the
25 community's needs.

26 **16-73-5. Purpose.** -- The purpose of child opportunity zones is to implement programs
27 related to the specific community needs that ultimately increase student performance in school.
28 The child opportunity zone shall provide a means to integrate education, health, and social
29 services into schools and link families to the school and community resources. The child
30 opportunity zone may operate programs, including, but not limited to: early childhood initiatives;
31 before-school, after-school and summer enrichment; family engagement initiatives; adult
32 education and family literacy programs based upon community needs.

33 **16-73-6. Reporting.** -- The department of elementary and secondary education shall
34 provide an annual report by August 1 of each year to the president of the senate and speaker of

1 [the house of representatives regarding the number of children and families served, and](#)
2 [appropriate outcome data for each program operated by a child opportunity zone.](#)

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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1 This act would define and declare the purpose of child opportunity zones and would
2 provide for annual reporting from the commissioner of elementary and secondary education to the
3 general assembly on each zone.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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