

2023 -- H 6307

LC002822

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE PAUL W. CROWLEY RHODE ISLAND STUDENT
INVESTMENT INITIATIVE

Introduced By: Representatives Sanchez, Morales, J. Lombardi, Stewart, Perez, Cardillo,
Potter, Carson, Cortvriend, and Fellela

Date Introduced: April 21, 2023

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-7.1-5.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-7.1 entitled "The Paul
2 W. Crowley Rhode Island Student Investment Initiative [See Title 16 Chapter 97 — The Rhode
3 Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-7.1-5.1. Intervention and support for the Providence public school district.**

5 **[Expires on July 1, 2024.]**

6 (a) No later than September 1, 2022, and in order to assess the Providence school district
7 across multiple measures of district performance and student success, the commissioner shall
8 update the turnaround action plan released June 23, 2020 (the "turnaround plan"), to include
9 measurable annual goals including, but not limited to, the following:

10 (1) Student attendance and suspension rates;

11 (2) Student safety and discipline;

12 (3) Student promotion, graduation, and dropout rates;

13 (4) Student achievement on the Rhode Island comprehensive assessment system;

14 (5) Progress in areas of academic underperformance;

15 (6) Progress among subgroups of students, including low-income students, English
16 learners, and students receiving special education;

17 (7) Reduction of achievement gaps among different groups of students;

18 (8) Student acquisition and mastery of twenty-first century skills;

1 (9) Development of college readiness, including at the elementary and middle school
2 levels;

3 (10) Parent and family engagement;

4 (11) Building a culture of academic success among students;

5 (12) Building a culture of student support and success among faculty and staff;

6 (13) Recruitment and retention of a qualified, diverse workforce;

7 (14) Staffing ratios and teacher vacancies;

8 (15) Health and safety of facilities; and

9 (16) Developmentally appropriate child assessments, if applicable.

10 (b) Effective March 1, 2023, and for the duration of the turnaround, the Providence school
11 board shall meet at least monthly, and more frequently if necessary, to provide public input of
12 district performance and implementation of turnaround strategies. The Providence school board
13 shall have, at a minimum, the following powers and duties:

14 (1) To review and advise the commissioner on the appointment of senior school district
15 administrators, provided that the Providence school board shall not have the authority to appoint
16 senior school district administrators so long as the turnaround plan is in effect;

17 (2) To advise the commissioner on districtwide policy, provided that the Providence school
18 board shall not have the authority to establish districtwide policy so long as the turnaround plan is
19 in effect;

20 (3) To review progress toward annual performance measures;

21 (4) To receive feedback from stakeholders on the implementation of the turnaround plan;

22 (5) To establish appropriate advisory committees as needed to provide guidance on the
23 implementation of the turnaround plan; and

24 (6) Any other duties delegated to the Providence school board by the commissioner or the
25 council on elementary and secondary education (the "council").

26 (c)(1) The order of reconstitution and control, issued October 15, 2019, shall be authorized
27 for a period of not more than five (5) years from issuance. The commissioner and turnaround
28 superintendent may jointly develop additional components of the turnaround plan and shall jointly
29 develop annual goals for each component of the plan in a manner consistent with this section. The
30 superintendent shall be responsible for meeting the goals of the turnaround plan.

31 (2) The commissioner and superintendent shall provide a written report to the Providence
32 school board at a minimum, on a biannual basis to provide specific information about the progress
33 being made on the implementation of the district's turnaround plan. One of the quarterly reports
34 shall include progress toward annual measures, pursuant to this section.

1 (3) The commissioner shall evaluate the performance of the superintendent on not less than
2 an annual basis. The purpose of such evaluation shall be to assess the implementation of the
3 turnaround plan and determine whether the district has met the annual goals contained in the
4 turnaround plan. The evaluation shall be in writing and submitted to the council and the Providence
5 school board no later than July 1 for the preceding school year.

6 (4) If the commissioner determines that the district has met the annual performance goals
7 stated in the turnaround plan, the evaluation shall be considered sufficient and the implementation
8 of the turnaround plan shall continue.

9 (5) If the commissioner determines that the superintendent has not met one or more goals
10 in the plan and the failure to meet the goals may be corrected through reasonable modification of
11 the plan, the commissioner, after consultation with the Providence school board and with the
12 approval of the council, may amend the turnaround plan.

13 (6) If the commissioner determines that the superintendent has substantially failed to meet
14 multiple goals in the turnaround plan, the commissioner may terminate such superintendent.

15 (d)(1) The council shall adopt regulations providing for:

16 (i) The end of turnaround status; and

17 (ii) The transfer of the operation of a school district from the Rhode Island department of
18 elementary and secondary education to the school committee and municipal control.

19 (2) The regulations shall include provisions to allow a district to retain measures adopted
20 in a turnaround plan for a transitional period if, in the judgment of the commissioner, the measures
21 would contribute to the continued improvement of the district. Such regulations shall also include
22 provisions that clearly identify the conditions under which such a transitional period shall end and
23 the powers granted to the commissioner and council under this section shall cease to apply to the
24 district.

25 (e) If, on the basis of the regulations adopted by the council pursuant to subsection (d) of
26 this section, the Providence school district has not improved sufficiently to remove the district from
27 turnaround status, the commissioner may, after consultation with the Providence school board and
28 with the approval of the council:

29 (1) Determine subsequent annual goals for each component of the turnaround plan with the
30 turnaround superintendent, and renew the turnaround plan for an additional period of not more than
31 three (3) years; and

32 (2) Create a new turnaround plan, consistent with the requirements of this section.

33 (f)(1) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section or of § 16-7.1-5 to the contrary,
34 the Providence school board, the commissioner, the department of elementary and secondary

1 education, the council, and such other parties as may be involved in the closing of schools in
2 Providence, are hereby directed to reverse the decision to close the Alan Shawn Feinstein
3 Elementary School, the Carl G. Lauro Elementary School, and the Gilbert Stuart Middle School,
4 all of which are located in Providence, for the 2023-2024 school year. Any student attending any
5 of those schools who was directed or assigned to another school for the 2023-2024 school year
6 shall be informed of this legislation and shall be given the option to return to the school the student
7 attended during the 2022-2023 school year.

8 (2) For the duration of the turnaround plan, no public school in the Providence school
9 district shall be closed permanently without the commissioner and the department of elementary
10 and secondary education providing notice of the impending closure of the school at least one year
11 in advance of the anticipated date of closure. This notice shall be provided to each student and to
12 the parent, guardian, or responsible adult of any student either attending the school to be closed or
13 who would be attending that school during the year in which the school is scheduled to be closed.
14 Provided, the one year period required for the notice may be reduced if the school closure is
15 approved by both the Providence school board and the council, after a public hearing is held by
16 each entity on the question of whether or not to close the particular school.

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE PAUL W. CROWLEY RHODE ISLAND STUDENT
INVESTMENT INITIATIVE

1 This act would direct the reversal of the decision to close the Alan Shawn Feinstein
2 Elementary School, the Carl G. Lauro Elementary School, and the Gilbert Stuart Middle School in
3 Providence. This act would also provide that for the duration of the turnaround plan, no public
4 school in the Providence school district would be closed permanently without the commissioner
5 and the department of elementary and secondary education providing notice of the impending
6 notice of closure of the school at least one year in advance of the anticipated date of closure.

7 This act would take effect upon passage.

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