

2024 -- S 2515

LC005009

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Introduced By: Senators Cano, Gallo, DiMario, Lauria, Miller, Ujifusa, Quezada, and Bissaillon

Date Introduced: March 01, 2024

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-21 of the General Laws entitled "Health and Safety of Pupils" is  
2 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **16-21-42. Pilot program to promote increases in student attendance through**  
4 **reduction in asthma.**

5 (a) The department of health (the "department"), in conjunction with the department of  
6 elementary and secondary education ("RIDE"), the office of Medicaid within the executive office  
7 of health and human services, and the Rhode Island longitudinal data system (the "RI DataHub"),  
8 collectively referred to herein as the "pilot program team," shall coordinate and oversee a one-year  
9 support, outreach, and data-gathering pilot program (the "pilot program"). The purpose of this pilot  
10 program shall be to provide support, outreach, and gather data regarding the impact of asthma on  
11 students attending public schools, and for the pilot team to study the data and suggest methods to  
12 reduce such absences and address the causes of such incidents of asthma that can be addressed by  
13 the public schools.

14 (b) The pilot program shall:

15 (1) Be an intensive community support program combining outreach, care coordination,  
16 advocacy, academic support, and crisis response with regard to asthma. Frequent contact with youth  
17 and families shall be maintained to provide necessary assistance;

18 (2) Operate during the 2024-2025 school year within two (2) public high schools, and (2)  
19 two public middle schools, with one of each school being in an urban core district and one of each

1 school being in a suburban or rural school district, which districts have been identified as having  
2 or believed to have high rates of student absenteeism related to asthma;

3 (3) Be data driven to monitor the number of students in the school who are absent due  
4 asthma and to learn what can be done to reduce student absences due to asthma, with a particular  
5 focus on chronic absenteeism due to asthma and the conditions within a school building which may  
6 contribute to incidents of asthma; and

7 (4) Utilize and coordinate with community health workers with the department and school  
8 nurse teachers within the public school district.

9 (c) Community health workers shall be assigned to specific schools and coordinate with  
10 the school nurse teachers to collect data and monitor, on a daily basis, student absences within the  
11 school, and identify those absences due or caused by asthma. A point of emphasis shall be chronic  
12 absenteeism. The data shall be reported to the department, who shall review this data and forward  
13 it to the RI DataHub for analysis, with copies of the data being sent to RIDE and the office of  
14 Medicaid.

15 (d) The department shall pursue grants to help pay for the services of the community health  
16 workers within this pilot program.

17 (e) The data shall be collected during the 2024-2025 school year, and this data collection  
18 shall continue through to the end of any extended school year or other summer programs. Data  
19 collection pursuant to this program shall cease as of August 28, 2025.

20 (f) The pilot program team shall analyze and review the data collected. During this review,  
21 the pilot program team may consult with other outside agencies, including, but not limited to, the  
22 Rhode Island lung association, to assess and make determinations and recommendations as to the  
23 impact of asthma on public school attendance and how to address such impact. The pilot program  
24 team shall prepare a report containing its findings and recommendations and file this report with  
25 the office of the governor, the speaker of the house, and the president of the senate, on or before  
26 November 7, 2025.

27 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 -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

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1           This act would authorize a one-year pilot program during the 2024-2025 school year. This  
2 program would involve the department of health, the department of elementary and secondary  
3 education, the state office of Medicaid, and the RI Data Hub. The program would provide outreach  
4 and tracking at two (2) public high schools and two (2) public middle schools to address issues of  
5 asthma and attendance among students. The pilot program team would report findings and  
6 recommendations to the governor and the general assembly by November 7, 2025.

7           This act would take effect upon passage.

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