

2025 -- H 5423

LC001120

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Introduced By: Representatives Noret, Casimiro, Read, Shallcross Smith, Serpa, O'Brien, Biah, and Finkelman

Date Introduced: February 12, 2025

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-21-33.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-21 entitled "Health  
2 and Safety of Pupils" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-21-33.1. ~~Automatic external defibrillators~~ Automated external defibrillators and**  
4 **cardiac emergency response plans.**

5 ~~(a) Legislative findings:~~

6 ~~(1) Approximately three hundred twenty five thousand (325,000) Americans suffer sudden~~  
7 ~~cardiac arrest ("SCA") each year and more than ninety five percent (95%) of them die before~~  
8 ~~reaching the hospital;~~

9 ~~(2) In the population of Rhode Island, an estimated one thousand (1,000) residents will die~~  
10 ~~of cardiac arrest every year;~~

11 ~~(3) No official statistics have been gathered about SCA in children, however experts~~  
12 ~~estimate about three hundred (300) deaths because of SCA every year for people under the age of~~  
13 ~~twenty one (21) or about one tenth of one percent (.001%);~~

14 ~~(4) This means that at least one person under the age of twenty one (21) years, most likely~~  
15 ~~a student, will die due to athletics related SCA every year in Rhode Island;~~

16 ~~(5) If defibrillation is performed within five (5) to seven (7) minutes, chances of survival~~  
17 ~~are increased by forty nine percent (49%). Every minute that goes by without defibrillation reduces~~  
18 ~~the chance of survival by seven percent (7%) to ten percent (10%);~~

19 ~~(6) Automated external defibrillators (AEDs) are extremely accurate computerized devices~~

1 ~~that can be operated by the average person;~~

2 ~~(7) AEDs are inexpensive and grants for AEDs are mostly given to nonprofit organizations,~~  
3 ~~such as schools; and~~

4 ~~(8) AEDs can be acquired through grants from various organizations or through~~  
5 ~~government agencies.~~

6 (a) Definitions. As used in this section, the following words shall have the following  
7 meanings:

8 (1) “Athletic emergency action plan (AEAP)” means written guidelines and templates for  
9 documentation of emergency planning to help prepare individuals for a catastrophic injury situation  
10 within sports.

11 (2) “Automated external defibrillator (AED)” means a lightweight, portable device that  
12 delivers an electric shock through the chest to the heart. The shock can potentially stop an irregular  
13 heartbeat (arrhythmia) and allow a normal rhythm to resume following sudden cardiac arrest.

14 (3) “Cardiac emergency response plan (CERP)” means a written document that establishes  
15 the specific steps to reduce death from cardiac arrest in any setting – be it a school, community  
16 organization, workplace, or sports facility.

17 (4) “Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA)” means when the heart malfunctions and stops beating  
18 unexpectedly. If not treated within minutes, it quickly leads to death.

19 (b) All high schools, ~~and~~ middle schools, and elementary schools, whether they are public  
20 or privately run, shall provide and maintain on-site functional automated external defibrillators  
21 (AEDs) in ~~quantities and types, deemed by the commissioner of education, in consultation with the~~  
22 ~~director of health~~, accordance with the guidelines set by the American Heart Association or an  
23 organization focused on emergency cardiovascular care, and as outlined in subsections (c) and (d)  
24 of this section, to be adequate to ensure ready and appropriate access for use during emergencies.  
25 Whenever school facilities are used for school-sponsored or school-approved curricular or  
26 extracurricular activities, and whenever a school-sponsored athletic contest is held at any location,  
27 the school officials and administrators responsible for such school facility or athletic contest shall  
28 ensure the presence of at least one person who is properly trained in CPR and the operation and use  
29 of an AED. Such training may be conducted by qualified personnel, including, but not limited to,  
30 municipal fire and police department employees.

31 (c) Establishing cardiac emergency response plans in schools.

32 (1) Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year for high schools and middle schools and in the  
33 2027-2028 school year for elementary schools, each school shall develop a cardiac emergency  
34 response plan (CERP) that addresses the appropriate use of school personnel to respond to incidents

1 involving an individual experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency  
2 while on school grounds.

3 (2) School officials shall work directly with local emergency medical service (EMS)  
4 providers to integrate the CERP into the community's EMS responder protocols. Each plan shall  
5 integrate evidence-based core elements, such as those recommended by the American Heart  
6 Association or other nationally recognized recommendations or core elements.

7 (3) The CERP shall integrate, at a minimum, the following core elements:

8 (i) Establishing a voluntary cardiac emergency response team;

9 (ii) Activating the team in response to a SCA;

10 (iii) Implementing AED placement and routine maintenance within the school according  
11 to the manufacturer's operational guidelines;

12 (iv) Disseminating the plan throughout the school campus;

13 (v) Maintaining training in CPR/AED use for the cardiac emergency response team;

14 (vi) Practicing using drills annually;

15 (vii) Integrating local EMS with the plan;

16 (viii) Ongoing and annual review and evaluation of the plan.

17 (4) Appropriate AED placement shall be determined by the CERP in accordance with  
18 guidelines set by the American Heart Association or an organization focused on emergency  
19 cardiovascular care. An AED should be identified with appropriate signage and be on-site and made  
20 available in an unlocked location on school property that is able to be placed on a person  
21 experiencing SCA within three (3) minutes.

22 (5) Appropriate school staff shall be trained in first-aid, CPR, and AED use that follow  
23 evidence-based guidelines set forth by the American Heart Association. Staff trained shall be  
24 determined by the CERP including, but not limited to, licensed coaches, school nurses, and athletic  
25 trainers.

26 (d) Establishing cardiac emergency response plans or athletic emergency action plans for  
27 high school and middle school athletic events and facilities.

28 (1) Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, each high school and middle school with an  
29 athletic department or organized athletic program shall develop a cardiac emergency response plan  
30 (CERP) in accordance with recommendations or core elements set forth by either the American  
31 Heart Association or an athletic emergency action plan (AEAP) following nationally recognized  
32 recommendations or core elements that address the appropriate use of school personnel to respond  
33 to incidents involving an individual experiencing cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening  
34 emergency while attending or participating in an athletic practice or event while on school grounds

1 that are venue specific and rehearsed annually.

2 (2) An automated external defibrillator shall be clearly marked and easily accessible in an  
3 unlocked location at each school athletic venue and event. The AED shall be accessible during the  
4 school day and any school-sponsored athletic event or team practice in which pupils of the school  
5 are participating. An AED should be placed on a person experiencing SCA within three (3) minutes.

6 (3) AEDs shall be tested and maintained according to the manufacturer's operational  
7 guidelines and notification is provided to the appropriate first aid, ambulance, or rescue squad or  
8 other appropriate emergency medical services provider regarding the AED, the type acquired, and  
9 its location.

10 (4) All coaches shall obtain and maintain training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first  
11 aid, and the use of the automated external defibrillator. Certification in CPR and AED use shall be  
12 consistent with national evidence-based emergency cardiovascular care guidelines.

13 (e) Funding for cardiac emergency response plans and athletic emergency action plans.

14 (1) The state shall appropriate for the fiscal year 2026 the sum of two hundred thousand  
15 dollars (\$200,000) to the department of health to implement this section.

16 (2) Funding shall be used for activities and equipment that further promote CERP/AEAP  
17 preparedness in schools including, but not limited to, the purchase of AEDs and AED maintenance  
18 (pads and battery replacement), the purchase of CPR training manikins, or CPR/AED training for  
19 faculty and staff.

20 (3) Funding priority shall be given to high-needs schools where at least fifty percent (50%)  
21 of children are eligible to receive free and reduced priced meals or the school participates in the  
22 community eligibility provision. High-needs schools may also be defined by Title 1 status.

23 (4) A local and regional board of education may accept gifts, grants, and donations,  
24 including in-kind donations designated for the purchase of an AED that meets the standards  
25 established by the United States Food and Drug Administration and for the costs incurred to inspect  
26 and maintain such device and train staff in the use of such device.

27 (f) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education, in collaboration with the  
28 director of the department of health, may adopt regulations to implement this chapter.

29 (g) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education, in collaboration with the  
30 director of the department of health, shall establish a process to monitor compliance with this  
31 chapter.

32 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 repeal the legislative findings in this section. It would also require  
2 elementary, middle and high schools to provide and maintain on-site functional automated external  
3 defibrillators (AEDs) in accordance with guidelines by the American Heart Association or an  
4 organization focused on emergency cardiovascular care.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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