

2025 -- S 0235 SUBSTITUTE A

LC000798/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAMS

Introduced By: Senators Appollonio, Gallo, Vargas, Bissaillon, Patalano, DiMario, Murray, Euer, Burke, and LaMountain
Date Introduced: February 13, 2025

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-53.1-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-53.1 entitled "Rhode
2 Island School Improvement Team Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:
3 **16-53.1-2. Establishment of school improvement teams.**
4 (a)(1) The school board or school committees of the cities and towns shall establish a
5 school improvement team for each school in the district, and shall develop procedures for the
6 election and appointment of school improvement team members. Each school improvement team
7 shall be composed of the principal and an appropriately balanced number of teachers, education
8 support employees, students, parents, and other business and community citizens who are
9 representative of the ethnic, racial, and economic community served by the school, provided that
10 vocational-technical center and high school school-improvement teams shall include students, and
11 middle and junior high school school-improvement teams may include students. Members
12 representing teachers, education support employees, students, and parents shall be selected by their
13 peer groups at the school in a fair and equitable manner. At the middle and high school levels,
14 where there are designated department heads, those department heads will also be included on the
15 school improvement team. At a minimum, these school improvement teams at this middle and high
16 school level shall include at least one department head from a humanities subject area and at least
17 one department head from one of the science, technology, engineering, or mathematics subject
18 areas.

1 (2) Business and other community members shall be selected by the school according to a
2 procedure established by the school board. The school board shall review the membership
3 composition of each school improvement team. Should the school board determine that the
4 membership elected by the school is not representative of the ethnic, racial, and economic
5 community served by the school, the board shall appoint additional members to achieve proper
6 representation. For the purposes of school improvement teams, the term “teacher” includes
7 classroom teachers, certified student services personnel, and media specialists. For purposes of this
8 subsection, “education support employee” means any person employed by a school who is not
9 defined as instructional or administrative personnel pursuant to law and whose duties require
10 twenty (20) or more hours in each normal working week.

11 (3) The school board or school committees of the cities and towns shall establish a
12 districtwide student safety and behavioral health committee ("SSBHC"). Each committee shall
13 have representation from administration (to be appointed by the superintendent), at least two (2)
14 certified staff (to be appointed by the local collective bargaining agent), and at least two (2) support
15 staff (to be appointed by the local collective bargaining agent), and may also include a school
16 resource officer to be appointed by the superintendent. The school board or school committee shall
17 strive to have staff representation from the elementary, middle, and high school level on the
18 SSBHC. The SSBHC shall be responsible for:

19 (i) Ensuring that the district has a comprehensive policy to provide mental health support
20 to students in need and address student behaviors to minimize disruptions of the learning
21 environment for all students in a non-punitive manner, in line with best practice and student needs;

22 (ii) Ensuring such policies are properly implemented;

23 (iii) Assessing the mental health supports available to students;

24 (iv) Discussing possible improvements to policies and procedures;

25 (v) Making recommendations to the school board or school committee regarding potential
26 policy changes; and

27 (vi) Providing an annual report to the school board or school committee on student safety,
28 mental health, and behaviors, including any recommendations to improve student safety and
29 outcomes in a non-punitive manner while ensuring a stable learning environment for all students.
30 The SSBHC shall work with the school improvement teams to improve student safety and
31 behavioral outcomes at the school building level, but shall not have access to any personally
32 identifiable student information.

33 (b) The school board may establish a district school improvement team representative of
34 the district and composed of teachers, students, parents, and other citizens or a district school

- 1 improvement team which may be comprised of representatives of each school improvement team.
- 2 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
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1 This act would require the school board or committees of cities and towns to establish a
2 safety and behavioral health committee (SSBHC). This act would also lay out the representation
3 requirements and committee responsibilities to ensure a stable learning environment for all
4 students.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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