

2026 -- H 7680

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING EDUCATION -- THE EDUCATION EQUITY AND PROPERTY TAX RELIEF
ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Donovan, Speakman, Biah, Diaz, Kislak, Giraldo,
Stewart, Fogarty, Boylan, and Carson

Date Introduced: February 11, 2026

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-7.2-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-7.2 entitled "The
2 Education Equity and Property Tax Relief Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-7.2-6. Categorical programs, state funded expenses.**

4 In addition to the foundation education aid provided pursuant to § 16-7.2-3, the permanent
5 foundation education-aid program shall provide direct state funding for:

6 (a) Excess costs associated with special education students. Excess costs are defined when
7 an individual special education student's cost shall be deemed to be "extraordinary." Extraordinary
8 costs are those educational costs that exceed the state-approved threshold based on an amount
9 above four times the core foundation amount (total of core instruction amount plus student success
10 amount). The department of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds available
11 for distribution among those eligible school districts if the total approved costs for which school
12 districts are seeking reimbursement exceed the amount of funding appropriated in any fiscal year;
13 and the department of elementary and secondary education shall also collect data on those
14 educational costs that exceed the state-approved threshold based on an amount above two (2), three
15 (3), and five (5) times the core foundation amount;

16 (b) Career and technical education costs to help meet initial investment requirements
17 needed to transform existing, or create new, comprehensive, career and technical education
18 programs and career pathways in critical and emerging industries and to help offset the higher-

1 than-average costs associated with facilities, equipment maintenance and repair, and supplies
2 necessary for maintaining the quality of highly specialized programs that are a priority for the state.
3 The department shall develop criteria for the purpose of allocating any and all career and technical
4 education funds as may be determined by the general assembly on an annual basis. The department
5 of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds available for distribution among
6 those eligible school districts if the total approved costs for which school districts are seeking
7 reimbursement exceed the amount of funding available in any fiscal year;

8 (c) Programs to increase access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs
9 [for three \(3\) and four \(4\) year-old children, including the state pre-kindergarten program model](#)
10 [developed pursuant to chapter 87 of this title and the federal Head Start Program 42 U.S.C. § 9801](#)
11 [et seq.](#) The department shall [work with the department of human services' childcare office and](#)
12 [Head Start collaboration office to](#) recommend criteria for the purpose of allocating any and all early
13 childhood [categorical](#) program funds as may be determined by the general assembly;

14 (d) Central Falls, Davies, and the Met Center Stabilization Fund is established to ensure
15 that appropriate funding is available to support their students. Additional support for Central Falls
16 is needed due to concerns regarding the city's capacity to meet the local share of education costs.
17 This fund requires that education aid calculated pursuant to § 16-7.2-3 and funding for costs outside
18 the permanent foundation education-aid formula, including, but not limited to, transportation,
19 facility maintenance, and retiree health benefits shall be shared between the state and the city of
20 Central Falls. The fund shall be annually reviewed to determine the amount of the state and city
21 appropriation. The state's share of this fund may be supported through a reallocation of current
22 state appropriations to the Central Falls school district. At the end of the transition period defined
23 in § 16-7.2-7, the municipality will continue its contribution pursuant to § 16-7-24. Additional
24 support for the Davies and the Met Center is needed due to the costs associated with running a
25 stand-alone high school offering both academic and career and technical coursework. The
26 department shall recommend criteria for the purpose of allocating any and all stabilization funds as
27 may be determined by the general assembly;

28 (e) Excess costs associated with transporting students to out-of-district non-public schools.
29 This fund will provide state funding for the costs associated with transporting students to out-of-
30 district non-public schools, pursuant to chapter 21.1 of this title. The state will assume the costs of
31 non-public out-of-district transportation for those districts participating in the statewide system.
32 The department of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds available for
33 distribution among those eligible school districts if the total approved costs for which school
34 districts are seeking reimbursement exceed the amount of funding available in any fiscal year;

1 (f) Excess costs associated with transporting students within regional school districts. This
2 fund will provide direct state funding for the excess costs associated with transporting students
3 within regional school districts, established pursuant to chapter 3 of this title. This fund requires
4 that the state and regional school district share equally the student transportation costs net any
5 federal sources of revenue for these expenditures. The department of elementary and secondary
6 education shall prorate the funds available for distribution among those eligible school districts if
7 the total approved costs for which school districts are seeking reimbursement exceed the amount
8 of funding available in any fiscal year;

9 (g) Public school districts that are regionalized shall be eligible for a regionalization bonus
10 as set forth below:

11 (1) As used herein, the term “regionalized” shall be deemed to refer to a regional school
12 district established under the provisions of chapter 3 of this title, including the Chariho Regional
13 School district;

14 (2) For those districts that are regionalized as of July 1, 2010, the regionalization bonus
15 shall commence in FY 2012. For those districts that regionalize after July 1, 2010, the
16 regionalization bonus shall commence in the first fiscal year following the establishment of a
17 regionalized school district as set forth in chapter 3 of this title, including the Chariho Regional
18 School District;

19 (3) The regionalization bonus in the first fiscal year shall be two percent (2.0%) of the
20 state’s share of the foundation education aid for the regionalized district as calculated pursuant to
21 §§ 16-7.2-3 and 16-7.2-4 in that fiscal year;

22 (4) The regionalization bonus in the second fiscal year shall be one percent (1.0%) of the
23 state’s share of the foundation education aid for the regionalized district as calculated pursuant to
24 §§ 16-7.2-3 and 16-7.2-4 in that fiscal year;

25 (5) The regionalization bonus shall cease in the third fiscal year;

26 (6) The regionalization bonus for the Chariho regional school district shall be applied to
27 the state share of the permanent foundation education aid for the member towns; and

28 (7) The department of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds available
29 for distribution among those eligible regionalized school districts if the total, approved costs for
30 which regionalized school districts are seeking a regionalization bonus exceed the amount of
31 funding appropriated in any fiscal year;

32 (h) [Deleted by P.L. 2024, ch. 117, art. 8, § 1.]

33 (i) State support for school resource officers. For purposes of this subsection, a school
34 resource officer (SRO) shall be defined as a career law enforcement officer with sworn authority

1 who is deployed by an employing police department or agency in a community-oriented policing
2 assignment to work in collaboration with one or more schools. School resource officers should have
3 completed at least forty (40) hours of specialized training in school policing, administered by an
4 accredited agency, before being assigned. Beginning in FY 2019, for a period of three (3) years,
5 school districts or municipalities that choose to employ school resource officers shall receive direct
6 state support for costs associated with employing such officers at public middle and high schools.
7 Districts or municipalities shall be reimbursed an amount equal to one-half (½) of the cost of
8 salaries and benefits for the qualifying positions. Funding will be provided for school resource
9 officer positions established on or after July 1, 2018, provided that:

10 (1) Each school resource officer shall be assigned to one school:

11 (i) Schools with enrollments below one thousand two hundred (1,200) students shall
12 require one school resource officer;

13 (ii) Schools with enrollments of one thousand two hundred (1,200) or more students shall
14 require two school resource officers;

15 (2) School resource officers hired in excess of the requirement noted above shall not be
16 eligible for reimbursement; and

17 (3) Schools that eliminate existing school resource officer positions and create new
18 positions under this provision shall not be eligible for reimbursement; and

19 (j) Categorical programs defined in subsections (a) through (g) shall be funded pursuant to
20 the transition plan in § 16-7.2-7.

21 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 EDUCATION -- THE EDUCATION EQUITY AND PROPERTY TAX RELIEF
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1 This act would specify that pre-kindergarten programs for three (3) and four (4) year olds
2 be added to programs to increase access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs
3 and that the department of education work with the department of human services to achieve the
4 goal of this chapter.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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