

2026 -- H 7729

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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 TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Introduced By: Representatives Kislak, Tanzi, Cruz, Biah, Alzate, Stewart, Potter,
Shallcross Smith, Fogarty, and Ajello

Date Introduced: February 12, 2026

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Legislative findings and purpose.

2 (1) Seclusions can occur in spaces used for "time out," "calming down," "de-escalation,"
3 "quiet," or "isolation," if the student is alone and not free to leave. Placing children in seclusion
4 causes students to lose extensive instructional time even due to non-crisis behaviors or exhibiting
5 an imminent danger to themselves or others. Additionally, while in seclusion, students would often
6 engage in self-injurious behaviors such as banging their head against the door without staff
7 intervention.

8 (2) It is the policy of the State of Rhode Island to promote safety and prevent harm to all
9 students, staff, and visitors in the public schools and to treat all school students with dignity and
10 respect in the delivery of discipline, seclusion, and use of reasonable force as permitted by law.

11 (3) To accomplish such policy. It is the intention of the legislature to provide school staff
12 with clear guidelines about what constitutes use of reasonable force permissible in Rhode Island
13 schools with the goal of improving student achievement, attendance, promotion and graduation
14 rates by employing positive behavioral interventions to address student behavior in a positive and
15 safe manner while promoting retention of valuable teachers and other school personnel by
16 providing appropriate training in prescribed procedures, which address student behavior in a
17 positive and safe manner.

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

1 **16-21-44. Prohibition of seclusion classrooms.**

2 (a) No student shall be subjected to unlawful seclusion by program personnel, a law
3 enforcement officer, or a school security guard, while attending any public pre-k program,
4 elementary or secondary school in the state. An unlawful seclusion does not include physical
5 escort, a physical prompt to use adaptive devices or mechanical supports, physical restraints or
6 time-outs and shall only apply to isolation in a designated seclusion room.

7 (b) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education (“commissioner”) shall
8 address any complaints alleging a violation of this section to conduct an appropriate investigation.
9 The commissioner shall promulgate the rules and regulations of such investigation and the
10 department of education shall publish, on its website, all notice requirements, forms and
11 instructions as to how to submit a complaint of any alleged violation.

12 SECTION 3. 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

- 1 This act would create a prohibition on the unlawful use of seclusion rooms within any
- 2 public pre-k program, elementary or secondary school in the state.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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