

2026 -- H 8428

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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 -- ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Introduced By: Representatives Cortvriend, and McNamara

Date Introduced: April 10, 2026

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-3-3.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-3 entitled "Establishment
2 of Regional School Districts [See Title 16 Chapter 97 — The Rhode Island Board of Education
3 Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-3-3.1. Creation of regional school district planning board.**

5 (a) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall order the creation of a
6 regional school district planning board for the purpose of conducting a study of the feasibility of
7 regionalization, [shared services](#), or other cooperative ventures if any of the following conditions
8 are found to exist:

9 (1) High school enrollments are below or are projected to be less than ~~one hundred (100)~~
10 [one hundred fifty \(150\)](#) per grade;

11 (2) Per pupil spending is sixty-six percent (66%) or less of the statewide average for three

12 (3) consecutive years;

13 (3) The appropriating authority finds that the community does not have the fiscal and
14 economic capacity to provide educational programs consistent with law and regulations, based on
15 factors included but not limited to per pupil assessed valuation, and personal income;

16 (4) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education determines that a school
17 district does not have the capacity to comply with the Basic Education Program (BEP).

18 (b) In ordering the creation of a regional school district planning board the commissioner
19 shall determine which cities or towns will be required to participate.

1 (c) In mandating a regionalization study, the commissioner should make certain that the
2 study address the following questions:

3 (1) Will regionalization [and shared services](#) allow the cities or towns to offer a complete K
4 through 12 educational program (in particular, if the town or city currently “tuitions out” some of
5 its students)?

6 (2) Will regionalization [and shared services](#) allow the school system to offer a more
7 comprehensive and/or diversified program for high school students (i.e., advanced language,
8 mathematics, etc., specialized and/or remedial courses)?

9 (3) Will regionalization [and shared services](#), by its size alone, allow savings through
10 “economies of scale”?

11 (4) What effect will regionalization [and shared services](#) have on transportation costs for the
12 school district and transportation times for students?

13 (5) What effect will regionalization [and shared services](#) have on class size and will that be
14 beneficial or detrimental to the students’ classroom performance, socialization skills, and/or
15 participation in school activities?

16 (6) How will “spending per pupil” change with regionalization [and shared services](#)?

17 (7) Are there weaknesses in the curriculum or programs within a district that can be
18 remedied by regionalization [and shared services](#) with a district with compensating strengths?

19 (8) What effect will existing labor contracts and bargaining agreements have on
20 regionalization [and shared services](#) efforts?

21 (9) What new or diverse facility requirements will be needed if regionalization [and shared](#)
22 [services](#) occurs and what are the costs of these facilities?

23 (10) What effect will regionalization [and shared services](#) have on disadvantaged and
24 special populations within the districts?

25 (11) Will extracurricular activities and/or the student support services (guidance, library,
26 etc.) be enhanced by regionalization [and shared services](#)?

27 (12) Will regionalization [and shared services](#) permit sufficient “local control” for all
28 districts involved to assure parents that they have some influence on the education of their children?

29 (13) Will regionalization [and shared services](#) take into effect the unique socio-economic
30 and cultural heritage of the participating cities and/or towns?

31 (14) Will regionalization [and shared services](#) have any effect on the vocational education
32 program?

33 (15) Do comparative studies of regionalization [and shared services](#) in similar areas show
34 improved school quality? and

1 (16) Do the regionalization [and shared services](#) plans take into effect projected
2 demographic trends?

3 (d) The regional school district planning board shall report its findings within eighteen (18)
4 months of its creation.

5 SECTION 2. Chapter 16-3 of the General Laws entitled "Establishment of Regional School
6 Districts [See Title 16 Chapter 97 — The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby
7 amended by adding thereto the following section:

8 **16-3-3.2. Creation of autonomous school district.**

9 [A district may opt to become an autonomous school district, free from identified](#)
10 [regulations in a manner similarly described in §16-77.2-2. Such a district would not receive state](#)
11 [aid to education.](#)

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 -- ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1 This act would include shared services as one of the considerations in determining whether
2 to authorize the creation of a regional school district and would provide for the creation of an
3 autonomous school district.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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