

2026 -- H 8548

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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 -- TRANSPORTATION OF SCHOOL PUPILS BEYOND CITY
AND TOWN LIMITS

Introduced By: Representatives Knight, Donovan, and Speakman

Date Introduced: May 13, 2026

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-21.1-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-21.1 entitled
2 "Transportation of School Pupils Beyond City and Town Limits [See Title 16 Chapter 97 — The
3 Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-21.1-2. School bus districts established.**

5 (a) There are hereby established school bus districts within the state to provide bus
6 transportation in the interest of public safety, health, and welfare for pupils in grades kindergarten
7 through twelve (12), or in special education programs, who attend public schools, including
8 vocational schools and special education programs provided in accord with regulations of the board
9 of regents for elementary and secondary education, consolidated schools, regional schools
10 established under the provisions of § 16-3-1 et seq., or who participate in cooperative programs as
11 provided by § 16-3.1-1 et seq., and nonpublic nonprofit schools which are consolidated,
12 regionalized, or otherwise established to serve residents of a specific area within the state which
13 schools satisfy the requirements of law for any of the grades of school, kindergarten through twelve
14 (12), as follows:

15 (1) Region I: The towns of Burrillville, North Smithfield, and Cumberland, and the city of
16 Woonsocket;

17 (2) Region II: The county of Kent, except the town of West Greenwich and the towns of
18 Foster, Glocester, and Scituate;

1 (3) Region III: The towns of Lincoln, Smithfield, Johnston, North Providence, Barrington,
2 ~~Warren, and Bristol~~, and the cities of Cranston, Central Falls, East Providence, Pawtucket, and
3 Providence;

4 (4) Region IV: The county of Washington and the towns of Jamestown and West
5 Greenwich;

6 (5) Region V: The towns of Little Compton, Middletown, Portsmouth, Warren, Bristol,
7 and Tiverton, and the city of Newport.

8 (b) A pupil attending a school, including a public school, vocational school, special
9 education program provided in accord with regulations of the board of regents for elementary and
10 secondary education, a regional school established under the provisions of § 16-3-1 et seq., as
11 authorized by § 16-3.1-1 et seq., or a nonpublic nonprofit school for grades kindergarten through
12 twelve (12), consolidated, regionalized, or otherwise established to serve residents of a specific
13 area within the state for any of the grades of schools, kindergarten through twelve (12), in the
14 interest of public safety, health, and welfare, shall be provided with bus transportation to the school
15 or facility which the pupil attends, within the region in which the pupil resides, by the school
16 committee of the city or town within which the pupil resides. The cost of transporting a pupil
17 attending a charter school, the William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School
18 (“Davies”), or the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center (“the Met Center”) within
19 the established region shall be charged to the receiving school at the same grade level transportation
20 per pupil cost of the resident district. Districts may offer transportation to charter schools, Davies,
21 or the Met Center outside the established region in order to facilitate efficiency provided there is
22 not additional cost to the resident district.

23 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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- 1 This act would remove the towns of Warren and Bristol from school bus district Region III
- 2 and place Warren and Bristol in school bus district Region V.
- 3 This act would take effect on July 1, 2026.

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