

2026 -- S 2280 SUBSTITUTE A

LC004050/SUB A/2

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Introduced By: Senators Patalano, Dimitri, Thompson, Ciccone, Tikoian, Gallo,
Famiglietti, LaMountain, Burke, and Murray

Date Introduced: January 23, 2026

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-21 of the General Laws entitled "Health and Safety of Pupils" is
2 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **16-21-24.1. Emergency access provisions of school safety plans.**

4 (a) On July 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, in addition to any applicable requirements of
5 § 16-21-24, every public and private school, certified educational institution, college and university
6 located within the state that employs or enrolls twenty (20) or more staff members and students in
7 the aggregate, shall comply with the provisions of this section.

8 (b) Beginning July 1, 2026, every school and educational institution subject to the
9 provisions of subsection (a) of this section shall develop, maintain and annually thereafter review
10 and update a comprehensive school safety and emergency response plan. No later than August 1 of
11 each calendar year, the plan shall be submitted to the department of education with a copy to the
12 chief of police or the highest ranking officer of the local police department, and a copy to the
13 director of public safety. Every college and university subject to the provisions of subsection (a) of
14 this section shall develop, maintain and annually thereafter review and update a comprehensive
15 school safety and emergency response plan. No later than August 1 of each calendar year, the plan
16 shall be submitted to the chief of police or the highest ranking officer of the local police department.

17 (c)(1) Every comprehensive school safety and emergency response plan developed
18 pursuant to subsection (b) of this section shall include provisions ensuring immediate and
19 unobstructed access to all of the school's or institution's facilities to include buildings, classrooms

1 and grounds by law enforcement personnel and emergency medical personnel in responding to an
2 emergency.

3 (2) The provisions of subsection (c)(1) of this section shall be satisfied by adopting and
4 implementing a plan that schools are required to have a documented and formal process for the
5 implementation of a rapid access program for first responders that enables any law enforcement
6 officer who may reasonably respond to an emergency first, with access to any locked external and
7 internal door locks. This can include immediate access through secure electronic entry systems
8 through the use of key fobs, card access, or secure key boxes that contain external and internal keys
9 and meet the UL 1037 Standard For Antitheft Alarms And Devices or other means approved
10 pursuant to the review required in accordance with the provisions of subsection (d) of this section.

11 (d)(1) The chief of police or designee for every local police department, for every school
12 and institution within the jurisdiction of the police department, shall annually review the plans
13 submitted pursuant to subsection (b) of this section. The chief of police may recommend to school
14 or institution administrators any advisable changes or amendments to the plan. If the chief of police
15 or chief's designee is satisfied with the provisions of the plan, the administrator of the school or
16 institution shall be notified that the plan is approved. Approval of the plan or recommendations for
17 changes or amendments shall be transmitted by the chief of police or designee to school or
18 institution administrators no later than August 15, annually.

19 (2) For every school or institution that is not located within a municipality with a local
20 police department, the plan shall be submitted to and reviewed by the director of public safety or
21 the director's designee and the director or designee shall perform all the requirements of this section
22 required of a local chief of police or designee.

23 (3) If any school or institution rejects or fails to implement any recommendation for
24 changes or amendments provided to an administrator pursuant to this subsection, the local chief of
25 police or designee shall notify the department of education of the rejection or noncompliance by
26 September 1 or as soon thereafter as discovered.

27 (e) The department of education, after consultation with the director of public safety, shall
28 promulgate rules and regulations to implement and enforce compliance with the provisions of this
29 section.

30 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

1 This act would require all schools and educational institutions to develop and implement a
2 school safety plan that would provide for immediate access to school facilities by first responders
3 in an emergency.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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