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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 -- THE EDUCATION EQUITY AND PROPERTY TAX
RELIEF ACT

Introduced By: Senators de la Cruz, and Rogers

Date Introduced: February 13, 2026

Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 16-7.2-4 and 16-7.2-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-7.2 entitled
2 "The Education Equity and Property Tax Relief Act" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-7.2-4. Determination of state's share.**

4 (a) For each district, the state's share of the foundation education aid calculated pursuant
5 to § 16-7.2-3(a) shall use a calculation that considers a district's revenue-generating capacity and
6 concentration of high-need students. The calculation is the square root of the sum of the state share
7 ratio for the community calculation, pursuant to § 16-7-20, squared plus the district's percentage
8 of students in grades PK-6 in poverty status squared, divided by two.

9 If this calculation results in a state share ratio that is less than the state share ratio for the
10 community calculated pursuant to § 16-7-20(a) and that district's poverty status percentage as
11 defined in § 16-7.2-3(a)(2) is greater than fifty percent (50%), the state share ratio shall be equal to
12 the state share ratio for the community calculated pursuant to § 16-7-20(a).

13 (b) For purposes of determining the state's share, school district student data used in this
14 calculation shall include charter school and state school students. These ratios are used in the
15 permanent foundation education aid formula calculation described in § 16-7.2-5.

16 (c) There shall be a poverty loss stabilization fund for districts that experience a decline in
17 the state share ratio calculated pursuant to subsection (a) of this section from the prior year of more
18 than 2.0 percent (2%). The amount shall be equal to fifty percent (50%) of the difference in the

1 amount of permanent foundation education aid received pursuant to § 16-7.2-3 received in the prior
2 year.

3 [\(d\) The department of revenue shall publish a report, in collaboration with local education](#)
4 [agencies, identifying costs borne by districts that are partially funded or unfunded. The report shall](#)
5 [be submitted to the governor for consideration when preparing the final budget proposal for](#)
6 [submission to the general assembly. In addition, the report shall be accessible to the public and](#)
7 [published to the state transparency portal with copies provided to the speaker of the house, and the](#)
8 [senate president as well as all members of the general assembly.](#)

9 **16-7.2-6. Categorical programs, state funded expenses.**

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

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

22 (b) Career and technical education costs to help meet initial investment requirements
23 needed to transform existing, or create new, comprehensive, career and technical education
24 programs and career pathways in critical and emerging industries and to help offset the higher-
25 than-average costs associated with facilities, equipment maintenance and repair, and supplies
26 necessary for maintaining the quality of highly specialized programs that are a priority for the state.
27 The department shall develop criteria for the purpose of allocating any and all career and technical
28 education funds as may be determined by the general assembly on an annual basis. The department
29 of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds available for distribution among
30 those eligible school districts if the total approved costs for which school districts are seeking
31 reimbursement exceed the amount of funding available in any fiscal year;

32 (c) Programs to increase access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs.
33 The department shall recommend criteria for the purpose of allocating any and all early childhood
34 program funds as may be determined by the general assembly;

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

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

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

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

32 (1) As used herein, the term "regionalized" shall be deemed to refer to a regional school
33 district established under the provisions of chapter 3 of this title, including the Chariho Regional
34 School district;

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

6 (3) The regionalization bonus in the first fiscal year shall be two percent (2.0%) of the
7 state's share of the foundation education aid for the regionalized district as calculated pursuant to
8 §§ 16-7.2-3 and 16-7.2-4 in that fiscal year;

9 (4) The regionalization bonus in the second fiscal year shall be one percent (1.0%) of the
10 state's share of the foundation education aid for the regionalized district as calculated pursuant to
11 §§ 16-7.2-3 and 16-7.2-4 in that fiscal year;

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

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

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

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

20 (i) State support for school resource officers. For purposes of this subsection, a school
21 resource officer (SRO) shall be defined as a career law enforcement officer with sworn authority
22 who is deployed by an employing police department or agency in a community-oriented policing
23 assignment to work in collaboration with one or more schools. School resource officers should have
24 completed at least forty (40) hours of specialized training in school policing, administered by an
25 accredited agency, before being assigned. Beginning in FY 2019, for a period of three (3) years,
26 school districts or municipalities that choose to employ school resource officers shall receive direct
27 state support for costs associated with employing such officers at public middle and high schools.
28 Districts or municipalities shall be reimbursed an amount equal to one-half (½) of the cost of
29 salaries and benefits for the qualifying positions. Funding will be provided for school resource
30 officer positions established on or after July 1, 2018, provided that:

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

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

34 (ii) Schools with enrollments of one thousand two hundred (1,200) or more students shall

1 require two school resource officers;

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

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

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

8 (k) Effective July 1, 2026, the state shall assume the cost of the dual enrollment program,
9 established under chapter 100 of this title ("dual enrolment equal opportunity act") including, but
10 not limited to, the community college of Rhode Island running start program, and the New England
11 Institute of Technology early college completion programs at the post-secondary institution.

12 (l) On or before January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter on or before January 1, the
13 department of revenue shall publish a report, in collaboration with local education agencies,
14 identifying costs borne by districts that are partially funded or unfunded. The report shall be
15 submitted to the governor for consideration when preparing the final budget proposal for
16 submission to the general assembly. In addition, the report shall be accessible to all, published to
17 the state transparency portal with copies provided to the speaker of the house, and the senate
18 president as well as all members of the general assembly.

19 SECTION 2. Sections 16-22-30 and 16-22-31 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-22
20 entitled "Curriculum [See Title 16 Chapter 97 — the Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" are
21 hereby amended to read as follows:

22 **16-22-30. Statewide academic standards.**

23 (a) The council on elementary and secondary education (the "council") shall direct the
24 commissioner of elementary and secondary education (the "commissioner") to institute a process
25 to develop statewide academic standards for the core subjects of mathematics, English language
26 arts, science and technology, history and social studies, world languages, and the arts. This process
27 shall:

28 (1) Be open and consultative;

29 (2) Include, but need not be limited to, a culturally and racially diverse group of classroom
30 teachers and students; and

31 (3) Include, but need not be limited to, reviewing and revising current standards, as well as
32 adopting new ones, if deemed appropriate.

33 (b) The commissioner shall develop the statewide academic standards pursuant to this
34 section by no later than December 31, 2019, and again as required by the council's procedures set

1 forth in subsection (f) of this section. The standards shall:

2 (1) Cover grades prekindergarten through grade twelve (PK-12);

3 (2) Clearly set forth the skills, competencies, and knowledge expected to be demonstrated
4 by all students at the conclusion of individual grades or grade spans;

5 (3) Be formulated so as to set high expectations for student performance;

6 (4) Provide clear and specific examples that embody and reflect these high expectations;

7 (5) Be constructed with due regard to the established research and recommendations of
8 national organizations, to the best of similar efforts in other states, and to the level of skills,
9 competencies, and knowledge possessed by typical students in the most educationally-advanced
10 nations. The skills, competencies, and knowledge set forth in the standards shall define the
11 performance outcomes expected of both students directly entering the workforce and of students
12 pursuing higher education. In addition, the skills, competencies, and knowledge set forth in the
13 standards shall inform the design and implementation of the Rhode Island comprehensive
14 assessment system (“RICAS”) in mathematics, English language arts, and science and technology.
15 The RICAS shall align with federal law, be in place for no fewer than ten (10) years, and facilitate
16 comparisons of students of other states and nations;

17 (6) Be designed to instill respect for the cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity of this state,
18 and for the contributions made by diverse cultural, ethnic, and racial groups to the life of this state;

19 (7) Be designed to avoid perpetuating gender, cultural, ethnic, or racial stereotypes;

20 (8) Reflect sensitivity to different learning styles;

21 (9) Reflect sensitivity to impediments to learning, which may include issues related to, but
22 not limited to, cultural, financial, emotional, health, and social factors; and

23 (10) Be in a form readily comprehensible by the general public.

24 (c) This section shall not require the abandonment of any standards already in place, so
25 long as the commissioner determines that these standards meet the statewide goals contained
26 herein.

27 (d) The commissioner shall submit a copy of the standards to the council for approval at
28 least sixty (60) days prior to the standards taking effect.

29 (e) Upon approval, the council shall make the standards available to the public.

30 (f) The council shall develop procedures for updating, improving, or refining standards
31 pursuant to this section by no later than September 1, 2021. The procedures shall include a
32 requirement that the council review and evaluate the standards regularly to ensure that the high
33 quality of the standards is maintained. The review cycle shall begin in 2025, with subsequent
34 reviews taking place in 2029, 2033, and every four (4) years thereafter.

1 (g) On or before December 1, 2020, and annually thereafter on or before December 1, the
2 commissioner shall report to the governor, president of the senate, and the speaker of the house,
3 regarding the standards developed and reviewed pursuant to this section.

4 [\(h\) Effective July 1, 2026, school districts shall be authorized to implement lower-cost](#)
5 [curriculum programs that are substantially similar to programs approved by the Rhode Island](#)
6 [department of education \(RIDE\) pursuant to this section. Educational districts shall have the ability](#)
7 [to petition RIDE to use a lower-cost option.](#)

8 **16-22-31. Curriculum frameworks.**

9 (a)(1) The council on elementary and secondary education (the “council”) shall direct the
10 commissioner of elementary and secondary education (the “commissioner”) to institute a process
11 to develop curriculum frameworks for mathematics, English language arts, science and technology,
12 history and social studies, world languages, and the arts. This process shall:

13 (i) Be open and consultative;

14 (ii) Include, but need not be limited to, a culturally and racially diverse group of classroom
15 teachers and students; and

16 (iii) Include, but need not be limited to, reviewing and revising current frameworks, as well
17 as developing new ones, if deemed appropriate.

18 (2) The process may include, but need not be limited to, community groups, cultural
19 organizations, parents, teacher preparation programs, and leading college and university figures in
20 both subject matter disciplines and pedagogy.

21 (b) The commissioner shall develop the curriculum frameworks pursuant to this section by
22 no later than September 1, 2021, and again as required by the council’s procedures set forth in
23 subsection (e) of this section. The curriculum frameworks developed by the commissioner shall:

24 (1) Present broad, research-based pedagogical approaches and strategies to assist students
25 develop the skills, competencies, and knowledge called for by the statewide standards provided in
26 § 16-22-30;

27 (2) Provide sufficient detail to guide and inform processes for the education, professional
28 development, certification, and evaluation of both active and aspiring teachers and administrators;

29 (3) Provide sufficient detail to guide the implementation of student assessment instruments;

30 (4) Be constructed to guide and assist teachers, administrators, publishers, software
31 developers, and other interested parties in the development and selection of curricula, textbooks,
32 technology, and other instructional materials, and in the design of pedagogical approaches and
33 strategies for use in elementary, secondary, and career and technical schools;

34 (5) Be aligned with the state’s commitment to college and career readiness;

1 (6) Encourage demanding real-world application, multidisciplinary problem solving,
2 integration of academic and career and technical education curriculum, project-based learning,
3 performance assessment, team teaching, and alignment of classroom instruction with work-based
4 learning opportunities;

5 (7) Promote better alignment with postsecondary curriculum and instruction, including, but
6 not limited to, the expansion and/or use of dual enrollment and dual credit opportunities for high
7 school students that help them with the postsecondary transition, persistence, and attainment of a
8 credential;

9 (8) Encourage capstone projects and associated performance assessments that provide
10 students the opportunity to demonstrate holistic proficiency with respect to research, cross-
11 disciplinary problem solving, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and oral defense;

12 (9) Present specific, pedagogical approaches and strategies to meet the academic and
13 nonacademic needs of English learner, economically disadvantaged, special education, and
14 academically advanced students;

15 (10) Be designed to avoid perpetuating gender, cultural, ethnic, or racial stereotypes;

16 (11) Reflect sensitivity to different learning styles;

17 (12) Reflect sensitivity to impediments to learning, which may include issues related to,
18 but not limited to, cultural, financial, emotional, health, and social factors; and

19 (13) Be in a form readily comprehensible by the general public.

20 (c) The commissioner shall submit a copy of the frameworks to the council for approval at
21 least sixty (60) days prior to the frameworks taking effect.

22 (d) Upon approval, the council shall make the frameworks available to the public.

23 (e) The council shall develop procedures for updating, improving, or refining curriculum
24 frameworks pursuant to this section by no later than September 1, 2021. The procedures shall
25 include a requirement that the council review and evaluate the frameworks regularly to ensure that
26 the high quality of the frameworks is maintained. The review cycle shall begin in 2025, with
27 subsequent reviews taking place in 2029, 2033, and every four (4) years thereafter. Provided,
28 effective July 1, 2026, there shall be a pause on purchasing new curricular materials and
29 accompanying professional development required by this section until further action is taken by
30 the general assembly.

31 (f) On or before December 1, 2020, and annually thereafter on or before December 1, the
32 commissioner shall report to the governor, president of the senate, and the speaker of the house,
33 regarding the curriculum frameworks developed and reviewed pursuant to this section.

34 SECTION 3. Section 16-45-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-45 entitled "Regional

1 Vocational Schools [See Title 16 Chapter 97 — The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is
2 hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-45-1. Establishment — Maintenance.**

4 The board of regents for elementary and secondary education is authorized and empowered
5 to establish and maintain regional schools for vocational and technological training and instruction
6 with any equipment, apparatus, books, and supplies that shall be necessary for instruction and for
7 proper maintenance of the schools, and for these purposes the department of elementary and
8 secondary education shall appoint and remove necessary instructors, teachers, and other employees,
9 determine their compensation, fix the standards and terms upon which students shall be received
10 and instructed in and discharged from the schools, and make all rules and regulations necessary for
11 the control, management, and operation of the schools. [Provided further, effective July 1, 2026,](#)
12 [sending districts shall be notified of Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) enrollment timelines](#)
13 [by April 1, and final rosters by June 15, with no changes after that date unless districts mutually](#)
14 [agree, for the following school year.](#)

15 SECTION 4. Section 16-100-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-100 entitled "Dual
16 Enrollment Equal Opportunity Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

17 **16-100-3. Policy implemented.**

18 (a) The board of education shall prescribe by regulation a statewide dual enrollment policy
19 that shall allow students to enroll in courses at postsecondary institutions to satisfy academic credit
20 requirements in both high school and the aforementioned postsecondary institutions. The
21 regulations shall address the postsecondary institution's graduation requirements, if any; the
22 institution's ability to award degrees/certificates in Rhode Island; the minimum course grade to
23 receive credit at the student's secondary school; and any other criteria that the board deems
24 appropriate.

25 (b) The board shall convene a workgroup, including, but not limited to, representatives
26 from the department of elementary and secondary education, the office of the postsecondary
27 commissioner, superintendents, school committees, public higher education institutions, guidance
28 counselors, and teachers. The purpose of the workgroup is to consider and advise the board as to a
29 dual enrollment policy and its possible effect on school funding pursuant to chapter 7.2 of this title;
30 academic supports; transportation; possible shared costs of the education; possible fee schedules;
31 manners in which low-income students could access the program; and possible contracted tuition
32 costs with our public higher education institutions.

33 (c) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, payments to public institutions of higher
34 education for dual and concurrent enrollment shall be limited to no greater than the appropriation

1 contained in the appropriations act. On or before September 30, 2017, the council on postsecondary
2 education shall promulgate rules and regulations enforcing this limitation. [Provided further,](#)
3 [effective July 1, 2026, the state shall fund all costs for dual enrollment programs as a categorical](#)
4 [expense.](#)

5 (d) Students in grade twelve (12) enrolled full-time, as defined by the institution, in a dual
6 enrollment program where the courses are taken on a higher education institution campus shall be
7 exempt from the requirements set forth in § 16-22-4(a).

8 SECTION 5. 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 -- THE EDUCATION EQUITY AND PROPERTY TAX
RELIEF ACT

- 1 This act would amend the current law on education to address unfunded mandates.
- 2 This act would take effect upon passage.

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