

2026 -- S 2933

=====
LC005532
=====

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

—————
A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- TEACHERS' TENURE

Introduced By: Senators Valverde, DiMario, Famiglietti, Euer, Mack, Gu, McKenney,
Paolino, and Quezada

Date Introduced: March 04, 2026

Referred To: Senate Labor & Gaming

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-13-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-13 entitled "Teachers'
2 Tenure" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-13-3. Probationary period — Tenure after probation.**

4 (a) Three (3) annual contracts within five (5) successive school years shall be considered
5 evidence of satisfactory teaching and shall constitute a probationary period. Teachers who complete
6 the probationary period shall be considered in continuous service and shall not be subject to annual
7 renewal or nonrenewal of their contracts. No tenured teacher in continuous service shall be
8 dismissed except for good and just cause. Whenever a tenured teacher in continuous service is to
9 be dismissed, the notice of the dismissal shall be given to the teacher, in writing, on or before March
10 1 of the school year immediately preceding the school year in which the dismissal is to become
11 effective. If the dismissal is based on fiscal exigency or program reorganization, the notice of
12 dismissal shall be given to the teacher, in writing, on or before June 1 of the school year
13 immediately preceding the school year in which the dismissal is to become effective. If the
14 dismissal is based on gross misconduct by a teacher upon a student, then notice of the dismissal
15 shall not be subject to any deadline nor constrained by any calendar date. The definition of "gross
16 misconduct" within this chapter shall be defined as:

17 (1) Any sexual or romantic relationship, interaction, or communication between a teacher
18 and a student including, but not limited to, sexually provocative statements, requesting details of a
19 student's sexual history, and soliciting a romantic relationship;

1 (2) Any intentional, unwarranted physical force or violence against a student, such as
2 hitting, slapping, pushing, or choking;

3 (3) Behaviors that cross professional boundaries, such as unnecessary or inappropriate
4 touching, private/secretive communication (including digital) with a student, or spending excessive
5 one-on-one time with a student outside of school, often with the intention of grooming;

6 (4) Using discriminatory language, severe bullying, or threatening to cause physical injury
7 to a student; or

8 (5) Involving students in illegal acts, providing students with drugs or alcohol, or engaging
9 in theft from students.

10 The teacher shall be furnished with a complete statement of the cause(s) for the dismissal
11 by the governing body of the school and shall be entitled to a hearing and appeal pursuant to the
12 procedure set forth in § 16-13-4.

13 (b) Nothing contained in this section shall be construed to prohibit, or at any time to have
14 prohibited, a school committee from agreeing, in a collective bargaining agreement, to the
15 arbitration of disputes arising out of the dismissal of a tenured teacher pursuant to subsection (a) of
16 this section.

17 (c) Any teacher employed by a local or regional school committee who has attained tenure
18 in a Rhode Island public school system; who is appointed to an administrative position of principal,
19 assistant principal, vice principal, superintendent, assistant superintendent, director, or other central
20 office personnel in any Rhode Island public school system, including the original school district of
21 employment; or who is hired for an administrative position as a fellow, education specialist, or
22 director by the Rhode Island department of education, shall be granted an unpaid leave of absence,
23 not to exceed three (3) years, in order to be employed in an administrative position of principal,
24 assistant principal, vice principal, superintendent, assistant superintendent, director, or other central
25 office personnel in any Rhode Island school system or the Rhode Island department of education.
26 Said teachers shall, upon completion of their administrative position employment contract, or
27 termination or resignation of the administrative position, be allowed to return to his or her former
28 status as a tenured teacher within the system from which the leave of absence was taken. Such
29 leaves of absence shall not be deemed to be an interruption of service for the purposes of seniority
30 and teacher retirement.

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

=====
LC005532
=====

EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- TEACHERS' TENURE

- 1 This act would allow the dismissal of a teacher after the March 1 deadline if there is gross
- 2 misconduct by a teacher upon a student. This act would allow the notice to be given at any time
- 3 and will not have time constraints.
- 4 This act would take effect upon passage.

=====
LC005532
=====