

2021 -- H 5836

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LC001824  
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- REGIONAL VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (SEE TITLE 16  
CHAPTER 97 -- THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT)

Introduced By: Representatives Shanley, McNamara, Shekarchi, Solomon, Bennett,  
Vella-Wilkinson, Barros, and Amore

Date Introduced: February 24, 2021

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Section 16-45-6.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-45 entitled "Regional  
2 Vocational Schools [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby  
3 amended to read as follows:

4           **16-45-6.1. Career and technical education.**

5           (a) The general assembly finds that career and technical education ("CTE") programs that  
6 meet rigorous industry standards and prepare Rhode Island's students to succeed in a wide variety  
7 of employment settings are a critical component of the state's public education system and a  
8 necessary element of the state's economic development. State CTE board-approved programs that  
9 align with industry standards serve this vital need. These programs are to be offered in a system  
10 focused on program quality and delivery efficiency.

11           (b) The general assembly further finds that the proportion of students now enrolled in such  
12 programs is inadequate. ~~Therefore, all Rhode Island school districts shall file a plan with the~~  
13 ~~Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education no later than January 1, 2006 setting forth~~  
14 ~~the means through which no fewer than forty (40) percent of their students enrolled in grades nine~~  
15 ~~(9) through twelve (12) shall be provided the opportunity to enroll in career and technical~~  
16 ~~programming that is certified by the Rhode Island Department of Education as meeting industry~~  
17 ~~standards by September 2007.~~ The general assembly further finds that career and technical  
18 education programs approved by the state CTE board of trustees are best equipped to provide career

1 and technical education to the students of Rhode Island.

2 ~~(e) To facilitate the development of additional career and technical program offerings for~~  
3 ~~Rhode Island students that meet industry standards the department of elementary and secondary~~  
4 ~~education shall, in furtherance of the reports and studies that have been developed since 2000~~  
5 ~~setting forth recommendations for an updated system of career and technical education for the State~~  
6 ~~of Rhode Island, develop a system design that includes site assessments of all current career and~~  
7 ~~technical programs and sets forth standards and procedures for the department of elementary and~~  
8 ~~secondary education to approve programs that are developed in cooperation with business, industry~~  
9 ~~and postsecondary institutions. The department shall also develop a system design for three~~  
10 ~~additional state operated career and technical schools, in addition to the William H. Davies School~~  
11 ~~and the Metropolitan Career and Technical Center, including recommendations for a model for the~~  
12 ~~siting, building costs, operational costs and program design for each such school. The general~~  
13 ~~assembly shall appropriate funds to the department for purposes of their completion of the system~~  
14 ~~design for the statewide program approval process to industry standards and the development of~~  
15 ~~the models, siting and program design of the three additional state operated career and technical~~  
16 ~~schools.~~

17 (1) To advance the economic development of our communities, all students retain the right  
18 to access career and technical education and to attend state CTE board-approved programs in other  
19 districts. This right to attend CTE programs in other districts does not include locally approved  
20 CTE programs and CTE programs that are not approved by the state CTE board. Students may  
21 request access to state CTE board-approved career preparation programs outside their school  
22 district if their home district does not provide a substantially similar or same ("substantially  
23 similar") state approved CTE program. If a discrepancy exists as to whether two (2) state approved  
24 programs are substantially similar, the state CTE board shall use state CTE board program quality  
25 criteria (industry standards/seat time contact hours) and other relevant factors to determine if the  
26 two (2) state CTE board-approved programs are substantially similar programs. The decision of the  
27 CTE board shall be final. Students are guaranteed access to state CTE board-approved career  
28 preparation programs. Students requesting access to state CTE board-approved career preparation  
29 programs outside their established school transportation region may enroll in such programs, but  
30 the resident local education agency shall not be responsible for the costs of the transportation but  
31 shall pay the average of the per-pupil expenditure of the receiving district and sending district when  
32 paying out-of-district tuitions for students in CTE programs.

33 (2) A student's request to enroll in a state CTE board-approved career and technical  
34 program shall not be denied, provided that:

1           (i) The student meets any other criteria required of all students for admission to the program  
2 and the center; and

3           (ii) When there is more than one recognized CTE program in a transportation region the  
4 student is applying to the center which is geographically the closest program to the student's  
5 residence.

6           (d) All state CTE board-approved programs shall align to industry standards or be  
7 associated with a nationally recognized CTE board-approved program.

8           (e) Students enrolled in, accepted to, or attending a state CTE board-approved program  
9 outside of the student's district (the "program of choice") as of January 1, 2022, shall be exempt  
10 from the substantially similar provisions of this statute and may continue to matriculate in grades  
11 nine (9) through twelve (12) in their program of choice so that students and parents who made  
12 educational decisions prior to January 1, 2022, shall retain the rights that were in place when they  
13 made those decisions. If a substantially similar state-approved program is established in a student's  
14 home district after the student has enrolled in a program of choice, the student may continue to  
15 matriculate in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) in the student's program of choice provided the  
16 student remains enrolled in the program. The sending district may request, and shall be provide by  
17 the district with the chosen CTE program, information on students' progress in programs, including  
18 attendance and grades. The provisions of this subsection shall also apply and extend to other  
19 siblings in the family who apply to attend the same program of choice.

20           (g) Career and technical funds allocated under § 16-7.2-6 shall be used solely for the  
21 purpose of funding improvements to state CTE board-approved career and technical education  
22 programs and facilities or for funding related to the establishment of new career and technical  
23 programs in our state.

24           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 -- REGIONAL VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS (SEE TITLE 16  
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1           This act would amend the career and technical education program laws to provide the  
2 process by which students could access career and technical education and attend state CTE board-  
3 approved programs in other districts. The act would also direct the state CTE board to implement  
4 a process based on CTE board-identified criteria for determining whether two (2) state CTE board-  
5 approved programs are substantially similar. This act would further provide that students who have  
6 enrolled in, been accepted to, or are attending a state CTE board-approved program outside of the  
7 student's district as of January 1, 2022, would be able to continue to matriculate grades 9 through  
8 12 in that program.

9           This act would take effect upon passage.

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