

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE COLLEGE AND CAREER SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

Introduced By: Senators Cano, Acosta, DiMario, Gallo, Lawson, Seveney, DiPalma, Kallman, Burke, and Quezada

Date Introduced: March 10, 2022

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-96-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-96 entitled "The College  
2 and Career Success for All Students Act [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of  
3 Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-96-3. Definitions.**

5 As used in this chapter:

6 (1) "Advanced Placement course" means a course sponsored by the college board and  
7 offered for college credit at the high school level.

8 (2) "Advanced Placement teacher" means a teacher of an advanced placement course.

9 (3) "Pre-Advanced Placement" means set professional development resources and services  
10 that equip all middle and high school teachers with the strategies and tools they need to engage  
11 their students in active, high-level learning, thereby ensuring that every middle and high school  
12 student develops the skills, habits of mind, and concepts they need to succeed in advanced  
13 placement courses.

14 (4) "Board of regents" means the board of regents for elementary and secondary education.

15 (5) "FAFSA" means the Free Application for Federal Student Aid that allows eligible  
16 students the opportunity to obtain federal financial aid through the U.S. Department of Education  
17 to assist with the cost of postsecondary education.

18 (6) "Rhode Island alternative financial aid application" means the form that allows eligible

1 students who are not permitted to fill out the FAFSA an opportunity to apply for state financial aid,  
2 regardless of their immigration status, to assist with the cost of postsecondary education.

3 ~~(5)~~(7) "Vertical team" means a group of teachers and educators from different grade levels  
4 in a given discipline who work cooperatively to develop and implement a vertically aligned  
5 program aimed at helping students from diverse backgrounds acquire the academic skills necessary  
6 for success in advanced placement courses and other challenging courses.

7 SECTION 2. Chapter 16-96 of the General Laws entitled "The College and Career Success  
8 for All Students Act" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

9 **16-96-6. College and Career-Ready Requirements.**

10 (a) Beginning with the class of 2023, and except as provided in subsection (b) of this  
11 section, high school seniors in the State of Rhode Island shall do at least one of the following in  
12 order to graduate:

13 (1) Complete a FAFSA and submit it to the U.S. Department of Education; or

14 (2) Complete a Rhode Island alternative financial aid application, offered through the  
15 community college of Rhode Island, and submit it to the office of the postsecondary commissioner.

16 (b) A student may graduate high school without fulfilling the requirements of subsection  
17 (a) of this section only if at least one of the following conditions is met:

18 (1) A written waiver is provided to the student's local education agency certifying that the  
19 student or their parent or legal guardian refuses to complete either of the applications identified in  
20 subsection (a) of this section. The waiver shall be submitted in a manner and form prescribed by  
21 the local education agency and shall be executed by:

22 (i) A parent or legal guardian; or

23 (ii) A student who is legally emancipated; or

24 (iii) A student who has obtained the legal age of majority.

25 (2) A student's local education agency requests and receives a waiver that would exempt  
26 the student from fulfilling the requirements in subsection (a) or (b)(1) of this section. The waiver  
27 shall:

28 (i) Be submitted in a manner and form prescribed by the Rhode Island commissioner of  
29 elementary and secondary education; and

30 (ii) Include an attestation by the local education agency that the student is not able to fulfill  
31 the requirements in subsection (a) or (b)(1) of this section due to extenuating circumstances.

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

EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE COLLEGE AND CAREER SUCCESS FOR ALL  
STUDENTS ACT

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1           This act would require all high school seniors in the state to complete a federal financial  
2 aid application (FAFSA) or a Rhode Island alternative financial aid application, offered through  
3 the community college of Rhode Island in order to graduate high school. Waivers would be  
4 available under certain conditions.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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