

2024 -- H 7560

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LC004856  
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- SHEILA C. "SKIP" NOWELL ACADEMY

Introduced By: Representatives McNamara, Donovan, Roberts, Kislak, Giraldo, Voas,  
and Ackerman

Date Introduced: February 09, 2024

Referred To: House Education

(Dept. of Education (RIDE))

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended by  
2 adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 114

4 SHEILA C. "SKIP" NOWELL ACADEMY

5 **16-114-1. Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Academy.**

6 Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, the Sheila C.  
7 "Skip" Nowell Academy (hereinafter the "academy") is hereby reconstituted and created as a public  
8 school and local educational agency authorized to operate pursuant to this chapter. The academy  
9 shall, upon the approval of the council for elementary and secondary education, cease operating as  
10 an independent charter school under chapter 77.3 of title 16.

11 **16-114-2. Purpose and mission.**

12 (a) The purpose of this chapter and the mission of the Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Academy  
13 is:

14 (1) To primarily support students at risk of school failure, with a special focus on the  
15 diverse needs of pregnant and parenting teens, to create an environment for their individual growth,  
16 and to cultivate their social and emotional development;

17 (2) To additionally provide an alternative learning environment for disconnected and at-  
18 risk students, and for students who have recently arrived in the country, desiring to complete their  
19 academic careers in a setting that offers comprehensive support services, accelerated academic

1 curriculum, leadership development, and life skills that will enable them to become resilient, self-  
2 sufficient adults; and

3 (3) To offer a rigorous and relevant standards-driven, experiential learning community, and  
4 to provide college and career preparatory education based on guided, project-based core  
5 curriculum, that is aligned to the state's high-quality curricular standards.

6 **16-114-3. Accountability.**

7 The academy shall be subject to educational accountability and financial standards and  
8 reporting requirements promulgated in accordance with chapter 35 of title 42 ("administrative  
9 procedures") by the department of elementary and secondary education.

10 **16-114-4. Board of Trustees.**

11 The academy shall be governed by a board of trustees that shall have the powers and duties  
12 of a school committee. The board of trustees of the academy on the date of passage of this  
13 legislation shall constitute the founding board of trustees of the academy. The council on  
14 elementary and secondary education shall thereafter appoint the members of the board of trustees  
15 from nominations made by the commissioner of elementary and secondary education. The  
16 chairperson of the board of trustees shall also be selected in this manner. The council on elementary  
17 and secondary education shall determine the qualifications and terms of office of members of the  
18 board of trustees.

19 **16-114-5. Construction with other laws.**

20 Notwithstanding the provisions of this chapter or any law to the contrary, the academy shall  
21 be subject to applicable federal and state law. All students and prospective students of the academy  
22 shall have all the same rights under applicable federal and state law as students and prospective  
23 students at other public schools.

24 **16-114-6. Admission and enrollment.**

25 The academy may receive direct applications from resident students in any school district  
26 and may receive referrals for resident students in any school district consistent with the purpose of  
27 this chapter and the mission of the academy. The academy shall enroll resident students up to  
28 twenty-two (22) years of age and consistent with the purpose of this chapter and the mission of the  
29 academy. Students attaining twenty-two (22) years of age in their senior year shall continue to  
30 remain eligible for enrollment through their date of graduation or the end of the academic year,  
31 whichever is later.

32 **16-114-7. School Funding.**

33 Students attending the academy shall do so on a full-time basis with the costs of their  
34 education being shared by the state and the district of residence as set forth under § 16-7.2-5.

1 Notwithstanding the provisions of any law to the contrary, the district of residence shall be  
2 responsible for its share of school funding as provided herein for all district residents attending the  
3 academy who meet the enrollment requirements set forth in § 16-114-6. The academy shall be  
4 eligible to receive state or federal aid, grants, Medicaid revenue, and any other state or federal  
5 revenue as a local educational agency according to applicable federal and state law.

6 SECTION 2. 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 -- SHEILA C. "SKIP" NOWELL ACADEMY

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- 1           This act would reconstitute the "Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Academy" and provide for
- 2 changes to the operating structure establishing a cooperative agreement among school districts.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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