

2012 -- S 2534

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LC01596  
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - KINDERGARTEN

Introduced By: Senators Gallo, Paiva Weed, DiPalma, Goodwin, and DeVall

Date Introduced: February 16, 2012

Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

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

3 CHAPTER 99

4 FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN ACCESSIBILITY ACT

5 **16-99-1. Short title.** -- This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Full-Day  
6 Kindergarten Accessibility Act."

7 **16-99-2. Legislative findings.**-- The general assembly hereby finds and declares as  
8 follows:

9 (1) According to the National Center for Education Statistics, children in full-day  
10 kindergarten classes make greater academic gains in both reading and mathematics compared to  
11 those in half-day classes;

12 (2) According to Kids Count RI, full-day kindergarten can contribute to closing academic  
13 achievement gaps between lower and higher income children;

14 (3) According to the National Center for Education Statistics, full-day kindergarten  
15 classes are more likely than half-day classes to instruct students daily in the areas of mathematics,  
16 social studies and science;

17 (4) According to Kids Count RI, children in full-day kindergarten are more likely to be  
18 ready for first grade than those in half-day programs, regardless of family income, parental  
19 education and school characteristics; and

1 (5) While this act does not mandate school districts to operate a full-day kindergarten  
2 program, it provides limited one-time, start-up funding for school districts that move to provide  
3 students with access to full-day kindergarten programs, distributed on a competitive basis.

4 **16-99-3. Full-day kindergarten. --** (a) For the purpose of this chapter, the term “full-day  
5 kindergarten” means a kindergarten program that operates a minimum of five and one-half (5  
6 1/2) hours or three hundred thirty (330) minutes of actual school work, excluding lunch, recess  
7 periods, common planning time, pre- and post-school teacher time, study halls, homeroom  
8 periods, student passing time and any other time that is not actual instructional time.

9 (b) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education has discretion to further  
10 define and approve full-day kindergarten programs consistent with this section.

11 **16-99-4. Eligible school districts; funding. --** (a) A school district shall be eligible to  
12 receive funding pursuant to subsection 16-96-4(b), if:

13 (1) The school district is a public school district; and

14 (2) The school district operates a half-day kindergarten program as of September 1, 2011,  
15 but not a full-day kindergarten, as defined herein, serving more than one-half of the kindergarten  
16 students in the district as determined on a headcount basis.

17 (b) Subject to appropriation, beginning with school year 2013-2014, the commissioner of  
18 elementary and secondary education shall approve up to four (4) eligible public school districts  
19 per year to voluntarily implement a full-day kindergarten program as defined herein. The  
20 mentioned schools shall receive funding to offset a portion of the reasonable one-time, start-  
21 up costs including, but not limited to, desks, books, facility upgrades and any other necessary  
22 expenses associated with each school’s implementation of a full-day kindergarten program.  
23 Funds will be appropriated based upon criteria established by the commissioner of elementary  
24 and secondary education to ensure the quality and sustainability of the full-day kindergarten  
25 programs implemented.

26 (c) If more than four (4) eligible school districts apply in one year, or if the appropriation  
27 does not support four (4) eligible districts, the commissioner of elementary and secondary  
28 education shall determine which districts shall access the available funds for start-up costs. The  
29 commissioner’s decision may consider the ability of the district to house the kindergarten  
30 enrollment, implement a quality full-day program and sustain the program once implemented, and  
31 the decision should maximize the number of students that can enter full-day kindergarten  
32 program for that year.

33 (d) School districts receiving funds pursuant to this chapter must operate only a full-day  
34 program, no half-day programs. The full-day kindergarten program must continue to operate for

1 five (5) years.

2 (e) All funding provided under this section is subject to appropriation.

3 **16-99-5. Reporting. --** The Rhode Island department of elementary and secondary  
4 education shall report to the senate president, speaker of the house, and the governor on the  
5 progress of this initiative on or before May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013, and on an annual basis by May 1<sup>st</sup> of each  
6 year thereafter.

7 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 - KINDERGARTEN

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- 1           This act would provide for the funding of up to four (4) districts for full-day kindergarten.  
2   The commissioner of elementary and secondary education would determine which districts would  
3   receive these funds. The department of elementary and secondary education would report on the  
4   progress of the program annually by May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.  
5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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