

2013 -- S 0496

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LC01582
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2013

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - CURRICULUM

Introduced By: Senators Doyle, Cool Rumsey, Pearson, Lombardi, and Gallo

Date Introduced: February 28, 2013

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Legislative findings and intent. The legislature finds and declares that child
2 sexual abuse, estimated to affect up to one in four (4) girls and up to one in six (6) boys, poses a
3 grave threat to the health and safety of young people and its damaging effects can last a lifetime.

4 The legislature also finds and declares that child sexual exploitation, including the use of
5 children in pornography and prostitution, and child abduction poses a similar threat to the health
6 and safety of young people, and puts child victims at grave risk of death or severe bodily harm.

7 The legislature also finds and declares that the incidence of child sexual abuse, child
8 sexual exploitation and child abduction can be reduced by raising awareness among young
9 children of common dangers and warning signs, empowering children to better protect
10 themselves from sexual predators and teaching children how to obtain any necessary assistance or
11 services.

12 Therefore, it is hereby declared to be the public policy and in the public interest of this
13 state to establish a comprehensive program to provide an age-appropriate course of instruction in
14 the prevention of child abduction, child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse.

15 SECTION 2. Chapter 16-22 of the General Laws entitled "Curriculum" is hereby
16 amended by adding thereto the following section:

17 **16-22-26. Age appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness education. -- (a)**
18 Short title. This section shall be known and may be cited as "Erin Merryn's Law."

19 (b) Courses of study in prevention of child abduction, child sexual exploitation, and child

1 sexual abuse.

2 (1) All pupils in grades kindergarten through eight (8) in all public schools in the state
3 shall receive instruction designed to prevent the abduction, exploitation or sexual abuse of
4 children. Such instruction shall be provided by or under the direct supervision of regular
5 classroom teachers; provided, however, that such instruction may be provided by any other
6 agency, public or private.

7 (2) The department of elementary and secondary education shall develop and prescribe an
8 age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education program. The
9 commissioner shall provide technical assistance to assist in the development of curricula for such
10 courses of study which shall be age appropriate and developed according to the needs and
11 abilities of pupils at successive grade levels in order to provide awareness skills, information,
12 self-confidence and support to aid in the prevention of child abduction, child sexual exploitation,
13 and child sexual abuse.

14 (c) Incorporation of courses by school committees. The school committees of the several
15 cities, towns, and school districts shall provide for the incorporation of the course in training in
16 existing health education courses.

17 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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- 1 This act would provide for courses of study for pupils in grades kindergarten through 8 to
- 2 prevent child abduction, child sexual exploitation, and abuse.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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