

2015 -- S 1028

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION

Introduced By: Senators Gallo, and Goodwin

Date Introduced: June 25, 2015

Referred To: Placed on Senate Calendar

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-24-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-24 entitled "Children
2 With Disabilities [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is
3 hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-24-1. Duty of school committee to provide special education.** -- (a) In any city or
5 town where there is a child with a disability within the age range as designated by the regulations
6 of the state board of regents for elementary and secondary education, who is functionally limited
7 to such an extent that normal educational growth and development is prevented, the school
8 committee of the city or town where the child resides shall provide the type of special education
9 that will best satisfy the needs of the child with a disability, as recommended and approved by the
10 state board of regents for elementary and secondary education in accordance with its regulations
11 governing the education of children with disabilities.

12 (b) Notwithstanding any other federal or state law or regulation, the school committee
13 where a parentally placed child who has or develops a disability in private school resides, shall
14 provide the child with the same free and appropriate education as it provides to children in public
15 schools. These children shall have the same rights and remedies in the regulations of the board of
16 regents for elementary and secondary education governing the education of children with
17 disabilities as children in public school relative to initially determining eligibility, implementation
18 and/or any other rights and remedies relative to any special education services the child may be
19 eligible or receive from the public school district.

1 (c) For the purpose of this statute, a parentally placed child who has or develops a
2 disability in private school is defined as a child enrolled or placed in a private school by the
3 unilateral decision of his or her parents and without consultation of the public school district, who
4 either has, or at some point while at the private school is diagnosed with a learning disability.
5 Parents who unilaterally enroll their child in a private school are required to pay the tuition costs
6 related to the child's education that are unrelated to the child's disability, and the public school
7 district where the child resides is responsible for payment of the services related to the child's
8 disability as developed and determined in the child's individual education plan.

9 (d) For the purpose of this statute, a free and appropriate education is defined as special
10 education services and related services that:

11 (1) Are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without
12 charge;

13 (2) Meet all of the standards and requirements of the state of Rhode Island department of
14 education and requirements of the regulations of the board of regents for elementary and
15 secondary education governing the education of children with disabilities, which shall include
16 initial evaluation and determination procedures;

17 (3) Include preschool, elementary school or secondary school education in the state; and

18 (4) Are provided in conformity with an individualized education program that meets the
19 requirements of the regulations of the board of regents for elementary and secondary education
20 governing the education of children with disabilities.

21 (e) In those cases that an individual education plan has been adopted for a child and the
22 child moves to another town or city, the plan shall remain in effect until a new plan is adopted for
23 the child in the new town or city.

24 (f) A child with a disability as referenced in subsection (a) of this section shall have
25 available to him or her any benefits provided by this section up to his or her twenty-first birthday.
26 Provided, in the event such a child with a disability is enrolled in a post-secondary or transitional
27 educational program as part of the services provided to the child by the school committee or local
28 education agency (LEA), and such child reaches twenty-one (21) years of age during a school or
29 program year, then the school committee's or LEA's obligation to pay for the post-secondary or
30 transitional program shall continue through to the conclusion of the school or program's academic
31 year.

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
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- 1 This act would make clear that a disabled child would have all statutory rights available
- 2 to them until their twenty-first birthday or until completion of the program or school year in
- 3 which they were enrolled before their twenty-first birthday, whichever occurs later.
- 4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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