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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

Introduced By: Representatives Kazarian, O'Brien, Messier, Bennett, and Amore

Date Introduced: February 10, 2016

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. This act shall be entitled the "Rhode Island School Social Workers Quality
2 Assessment Act of 2016".

3 SECTION 2. The general assembly adopts the following findings:

4 (1) The Rhode Island general assembly finds school social workers an essential
5 component of the school's educational team with specific expertise in the domains of mental
6 health, social/emotional learning and social services.

7 (2) School Social Workers are professionals who are employed by school districts to
8 enhance the academic mission by providing services that strengthen home/school/community
9 partnerships.

10 (3) Their expertise is working with students and families from a family-strength,
11 empowerment model.

12 (4) They bridge systems by locating and mobilizing community resources that may serve
13 a student and/or family facing challenges.

14 (5) Research indicates that when families' basic needs are met, there is a higher likelihood
15 that the students' will succeed in school (G-14-3.3, Basic Education Plan, 2009, Rhode Island
16 Department of Education).

17 (6) "Mental and social/emotional health issues directly impede students' abilities to learn.
18 Such issues include, but are not limited to, psychiatric disorders, domestic violence, alcohol and
19 drug abuse, child abuse and neglect, as well as various forms of bullying" (G-14-3.2, BEP).

1 (7) The role of the school social worker continues to evolve as it confronts the ever-
2 changing complex needs of schools and the students they serve.

3 (8) The scope of responsibilities and involvement of the practitioner is broad and may
4 vary not only from one district to another but also within each district.

5 SECTION 3. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended
6 by adding thereto the following chapter:

7 CHAPTER 73.1

8 SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS QUALITY ASSESSMENT ACT OF 2016

9 **16-73.1-1. Compilation of data – School social worker duties and responsibilities. --**

10 (a) Accumulated data is needed to identify and assess the workload, duties and responsibilities of
11 school social workers. The 2009 basic education plan drafted by the state department of
12 education:

13 (1) Delegates to the local education agency to ultimate responsibility for the operation of
14 a system of education and support services that is reasonably designed and adequately resourced
15 to achieve compliance with all aspects of the basic education plan;

16 (2) Requires that the local education agency provide a supportive and nurturing school
17 community; and

18 (3) Provide adequate psychological, mental health and social services.

19 (b) The state department of education shall develop a stand and measure which will
20 identify the number of school social workers in the state and the actual nature and scope of work
21 and services that they provide. Specifically, it shall solicit information concerning: prevention and
22 intervention services; compelling services assessments; consultation; parent and community
23 liaison; attempts to reduce violence; referrals and collaborative; promoting adherence to federal
24 mandatory, in which school activities and training. School department shall ascertain and forward
25 to the state department of education the following information:

26 (i) Number of social assessments completed;

27 (ii) Number of family contacts;

28 (iii) Number of staff meetings attended;

29 (iv) Number of community contacts;

30 (v) Number of teacher consultation contacts;

31 (vi) Number of function behavioral assessment's completed;

32 (vii) Number of individual educational plans meetings attended;

33 (viii) Number of individual counseling sessions; and

34 (ix) Number of group counseling sessions.

1 (c) Every school worker shall complete this standard measure for one complete school
2 year.

3 **16-73.1-2. Report. --** The state department of education shall gather all the information
4 concerning the duties and responsibility of school social workers provided to it by local school
5 departments. It shall summarize the information in a report which shall be delivered to the
6 chairpersons of the house of representatives, health education and welfare committee and the
7 senate committee on education in January of 2018.

8 SECTION 4. 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 - SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

1 This act would create a process for the department of education collection and
2 organization of information concerning the workload and scope of the duties and responsibility
3 performed by school social workers.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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