

2016 -- H 7557

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - ESTABLISHMENT OF CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Introduced By: Representatives Tobon, Barros, Shekarchi, Marshall, and O'Brien

Date Introduced: February 11, 2016

Referred To: House 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 77.5**

4 **DISTRICT-CHARTER COMPACTS**

5 **16-77.5-1. Purposes.** – (a) The general assembly declares that a primary reason for
6 authorizing charter public schools is to encourage experimentation in methods of delivering
7 educational services by public schools and to determine the educational effectiveness and
8 efficiency achieved through traditional and experimental methods, with the goal of identifying
9 those methods showing the greatest promise for improving the educational outcomes for all
10 public school students.

11 (b) The general assembly finds that public schools generally face certain common
12 problems, such as resource availability and allocation, and that addressing those problems
13 communally would allow community-wide resources to be used more effectively and efficiently.

14 (c) The general assembly finds that cross-fertilization of promising ideas among charter
15 and non-charter public schools may be expected to lead to faster refinement and adoption of the
16 most promising ideas and thus the more rapid improvement of education for students in the
17 state's public schools.

18 **16-77.5-2. District-charter compacts.** – The school committee for any public school
19 district, charter public school, or network of charter public schools may enter into a compact with

1 one or more school committees of other districts, charter public schools or networks of charter
2 public schools that, in whole or in part, draw students from the same district. The scope of the
3 compact may cover the areas of interest as the committees subscribing thereto find advisable or
4 convenient.

5 **16-77.5-3. District-charter compact support fund.** – There is established the district-
6 charter compact support fund, sometimes referred to as the "fund" or the "compact fund," which
7 shall be used to support the efforts of public school committees to use district-charter compacts to
8 develop and realize improvements in education. The general assembly shall annually appropriate
9 any funds as it deems necessary to implement the purposes of this chapter. The portion of the
10 fund, if any, derived from appropriations by the general assembly and any other portion of the
11 fund derived from other sources without restriction as to use shall be part of the general fund of
12 the state until expended for an approved purpose.

13 **16-77.5-4. Acceptance of grants and gifts into compact fund.** – The general treasurer
14 may accept grants, gifts, and bequests into the compact fund, which shall be credited to the
15 general fund of the state as provided by §35-4-6, provided that if any such grant, gift, or bequest
16 be made subject to a restriction that it be held within the compact fund, which restriction was
17 approved in advance by the general treasurer and the director of administration, such grant, gift,
18 or bequest and any identifiable earnings thereon shall remain in the compact fund until used for a
19 purpose conforming to the purposes of this chapter and the terms of the grant, gift, or bequest.

20 **16-77.5-5. Fund grants to compact-subscribing committees.** – The board of education,
21 acting through the department of education, may establish a grant process, which may be
22 competitive, for school committees subscribing to district-charter compacts. Grant recipients may
23 use the proceeds to carry out planning for and implementation of initiatives contemplated by the
24 compact. By way of illustration and not limitation, grants may be made to coordinate enrollment
25 procedures, to provide for common professional development activities for teachers,
26 administrators, and staff, and to develop efficient methods of reducing costs, such as providing
27 transportation and serving special needs students. Grants shall be drawn against any available
28 balance in the compact fund.

29 SECTION 2. Section 16-7.1-4 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-7.1 entitled "The Paul
30 W.Crowley Rhode Island Student Investment Initiative [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode
31 Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

32 **16-7.1-4. Annual report by Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.**

33 -- On or before March 31 of each year, the commissioner of ~~elementary and secondary~~ education
34 shall annually publish a report detailing school district and individual school performance

1 consistent with § 16-60-4(22). The report shall arrange the presentation of its information so that
2 performance by different local education agencies may be conveniently compared. This report
3 shall also set annual performance benchmarks. A copy of the report shall also be provided to each
4 town and city council having students within its jurisdiction that attend public schools operated
5 by different local education agencies. Also, the commissioner of ~~elementary and secondary~~
6 education shall report to the house of representatives and the senate, sitting as the grand
7 committee, no later than March 31 of each year, the status of district and school performance,
8 status of the level of the state's investment in education, and the status of district and school
9 expenditures.

10 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 establish district-charter compacts between charter schools and traditional
2 public schools and would establish a compact fund to be supported by appropriations from the
3 general assembly as well as grants, gifts and bequests. Any such funds would be placed in the
4 general fund unless specifically restricted for use by the district-charter for school benefit. Any
5 such restriction would have to be approved in advance by the general treasurer and the director of
6 administration. This act would encourage public school committees to work and cooperate with
7 charter schools in solving common problems.

8 This act would take effect upon passage.

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