

2017 -- H 5660

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- STATE DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION [SEE TITLE 16 CHAPTER 97 - THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD
OF EDUCATION ACT -- DUTIES OF COMMISSIONER]

Introduced By: Representatives Williams, Amore, Messier, Maldonado, and McNamara

Date Introduced: March 01, 2017

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-1-5 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-1 entitled "State
2 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island
3 Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-1-5. Duties of commissioner of elementary and secondary education.**

5 It shall be the duty of the commissioner of elementary and secondary education:

- 6 (1) To carry out the policies and program formulated by the board of regents for
7 elementary and secondary education.
- 8 (2) To evaluate credentials of applicants for certificates, to verify that the certification of
9 teachers is in accordance with law and established standards, and to issue certificates at the
10 direction of the board.
- 11 (3) To certify the approval of accredited schools.
- 12 (4) To recommend to the board an outline of the subjects and courses of study and the
13 instructional standards for elementary and secondary schools.
- 14 (5) To approve the distribution of state school funds in accordance with law and the
15 regulations of the board.
- 16 (6) To verify that school sites and school building plans are in accordance with law and
17 regulations.
- 18 (7) To exercise supervision over school libraries and library services.

1 (8) To certify that school bus routes and schedules and all contracts for pupil
2 transportation conform with provisions of law and the rules and regulations of the board.

3 (9) To require the observance of all laws relating to schools and education.

4 (10) To interpret school law and to decide such controversies as may be appealed to the
5 commissioner from decisions of local school committees.

6 (11) To prepare and recommend standard forms for the use of local schools.

7 (12) (i) To prepare, with the assistance of the department of administration, manuals of
8 uniform budgetary and standard financial records and procedures for local school officers. The
9 board of regents shall adopt uniform local school budgeting procedures no later than July 1, 1989,
10 and those procedures should include, at a minimum, the following:

11 (A) Provision for uniform classification of revenues and expenditures;

12 (B) Requirements of detailed expenditure estimates and a table of organization including
13 the proposed staffing of each school;

14 (C) Estimates of receipts and expenditures for the last two (2) completed fiscal years, the
15 current and ensuing fiscal years; and

16 (ii) To carry out the purpose of this subsection a sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000)
17 not otherwise appropriated shall be included in the appropriation made to support the department
18 of elementary and secondary education.

19 (13) To receive general supervision from the board of regents for elementary and
20 secondary education and to appoint the several officers and employees of the department subject
21 to the provisions of the State Merit System Act, chapters 3 and 4 of title 36.

22 (14) To establish health education, alcohol and substance abuse programs for students in
23 grades kindergarten (K) through twelve (12), in accordance with § 35-4-18. The program will
24 consist of the following: A mandated state health education, alcohol and substance abuse,
25 curriculum for grades kindergarten (K) through twelve (12), a mandated assessment program in
26 the areas of health, fitness, alcohol and substance abuse, and an in-service training program which
27 will be developed specifically for the implementation of the mandated curriculum.

28 (15) (i) To appoint a three (3) member committee for the purpose of choosing a "teacher
29 of the year" among teachers in public school grades kindergarten (K) through twelve (12). The
30 "teacher of the year" shall receive an award of one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

31 (ii) It is the intent of the general assembly that the funds necessary to carry out the
32 provisions of this subdivision shall be provided within the annual appropriations act.

33 (16) To prepare and promulgate regulations to ensure that students in public schools are
34 not permitted to use cellular telephones or similar devices during the school day unless such

1 [devices are required for use in connection with a particular assignment or as an approved part of](#)
2 [the curriculum.](#)

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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RELATING TO EDUCATION -- STATE DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION [SEE TITLE 16 CHAPTER 97 - THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD
OF EDUCATION ACT -- DUTIES OF COMMISSIONER]

1 This act would direct the commissioner of elementary and secondary education to issue
2 regulations restricting cell phone use by students in the public schools during the school day
3 unless they are being used in connection with an assignment or curriculum.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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