

2017 -- S 0435

LC001666

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

Introduced By: Senators Doyle, Metts, Pearson, and Nesselbush

Date Introduced: March 02, 2017

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-7.2-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-7.2 entitled "The
2 Education Equity and Property Tax Relief Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-7.2-6. Categorical programs, state funded expenses.**

4 In addition to the foundation education aid provided pursuant to § 16-7.2-3, the
5 permanent foundation education-aid program shall provide direct state funding for:

6 (a) Excess costs associated with special education students. Excess costs are defined
7 when an individual special education student's cost shall be deemed to be "extraordinary".
8 Extraordinary costs are those educational costs that exceed the state-approved threshold based on
9 an amount above five times the core foundation amount (total of core-instruction amount plus
10 student success amount). The department of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the
11 funds available for distribution among those eligible school districts if the total approved costs for
12 which school districts are seeking reimbursement exceed the amount of funding appropriated in
13 any fiscal year; and the department of elementary and secondary education shall also collect data
14 on those educational costs that exceed the state-approved threshold based on an amount above
15 four (4) times the core-foundation amount.

16 (b) Career and technical education costs to help meet initial investment requirements
17 needed to transform existing, or create new, comprehensive, career and technical education
18 programs and career pathways in critical and emerging industries and to help offset the higher-
19 than-average costs associated with facilities, equipment maintenance and repair, and supplies

1 necessary for maintaining the quality of highly specialized programs that are a priority for the
2 state. The department shall develop criteria for the purpose of allocating any and all career and
3 technical education funds as may be determined by the general assembly on an annual basis. The
4 department of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds available for
5 distribution among those eligible school districts if the total approved costs for which school
6 districts are seeking reimbursement exceed the amount of funding available in any fiscal year;

7 (c) Programs to increase access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten
8 programs. The department shall recommend criteria for the purpose of allocating any and all early
9 childhood program funds as may be determined by the general assembly;

10 (d) Central Falls, Davies, and the Met Center Stabilization Fund is established to assure
11 that appropriate funding is available to support their students. Additional support for Central Falls
12 is needed due to concerns regarding the city's capacity to meet the local share of education costs.
13 This fund requires that education aid calculated pursuant to § 16-7.2-3 and funding for costs
14 outside the permanent foundation education-aid formula, including, but not limited to,
15 transportation, facility maintenance, and retiree health benefits shall be shared between the state
16 and the city of Central Falls. The fund shall be annually reviewed to determine the amount of the
17 state and city appropriation. The state's share of this fund may be supported through a reallocation
18 of current state appropriations to the Central Falls school district. At the end of the transition
19 period defined in § 16-7.2-7, the municipality will continue its contribution pursuant to § 16-7-24.
20 Additional support for the Davies and the Met Center is needed due to the costs associated with
21 running a stand-alone high school offering both academic and career and technical coursework.
22 The department shall recommend criteria for the purpose of allocating any and all stabilization
23 funds as may be determined by the general assembly; and

24 (e) Excess costs associated with transporting students to out-of-district non-public
25 schools and within regional school districts. (1) This fund will provide state funding for the costs
26 associated with transporting students to out-of-district non-public schools, pursuant to chapter
27 21.1 of title 16. The state will assume the costs of non-public out-of-district transportation for
28 those districts participating in the statewide system; and (2) This fund will provide direct state
29 funding for the excess costs associated with transporting students within regional school districts,
30 established pursuant to chapter 3 of title 16. This fund requires that the state and regional school
31 district share equally the student transportation costs net any federal sources of revenue for these
32 expenditures. The department of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds
33 available for distribution among those eligible school districts if the total approved costs for
34 which school districts are seeking reimbursement exceed the amount of funding available in any

1 fiscal year.

2 (f) Public school districts that are regionalized shall be eligible for a regionalization
3 bonus as set forth below.

4 (1) As used herein, the term "regionalized" shall be deemed to refer to a regional school
5 district established under the provisions of chapter 3 of title 16 including the Chariho Regional
6 School district.

7 (2) For those districts that are regionalized as of July 1, 2010, the regionalization bonus
8 shall commence in FY 2012. For those districts that regionalize after July 1, 2010, the
9 regionalization bonus shall commence in the first fiscal year following the establishment of a
10 regionalized school district as set forth in chapter 3 of title 16, including the Chariho Regional
11 School District.

12 (3) The regionalization bonus in the first fiscal year shall be two percent (2.0%) of the
13 state's share of the foundation education aid for the regionalized district as calculated pursuant to
14 §§ 16-7.2-3 and 16-7.2-4 in that fiscal year.

15 (4) The regionalization bonus in the second fiscal year shall be one percent (1.0%) of the
16 state's share of the foundation education aid for the regionalized district as calculated pursuant to
17 §§ 16-7.2-3 and 16-7.2-4 in that fiscal year.

18 (5) The regionalization bonus shall cease in the third fiscal year.

19 (6) The regionalization bonus for the Chariho regional school district shall be applied to
20 the state share of the permanent foundation education aid for the member towns.

21 (7) The department of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds
22 available for distribution among those eligible regionalized school districts if the total, approved
23 costs for which regionalized school districts are seeking a regionalization bonus exceed the
24 amount of funding appropriated in any fiscal year.

25 (g) Additional state support for English learners (EL). For FY 2017 only, the amount to
26 support EL students shall be determined by multiplying an EL factor of ten percent (10%) by the
27 core-instruction per-pupil amount defined in § 16-7.2-3(a)(1) and applying that amount of
28 additional state support to EL students identified using widely adopted, independent standards
29 and assessments identified by the Commissioner. All categorical funds distributed pursuant to this
30 subsection must be used to provide high-quality, research-based services to EL students and
31 managed in accordance with requirements set forth by the commissioner of elementary and
32 secondary education. The department of elementary and secondary education shall collect
33 performance reports from districts and approve the use of funds prior to expenditure. The
34 department of elementary and secondary education shall ensure the funds are aligned to activities

1 that are innovative and expansive and not utilized for activities the district is currently funding.
2 The department of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds available for
3 distribution among eligible recipients if the total calculated costs exceed the amount of funding
4 available in any fiscal year.

5 (h) Community schools expansion. The foundation education aid shall compensate school
6 districts for a portion of any reasonable and necessary costs associated with hiring a community
7 schools coordinator. The coordinator may be hired to provide services to the entire school district
8 or a school or schools within the public school district. These funds shall not be used to supplant
9 funds already allocated for child opportunity zones established pursuant to chapter 73 of title 16
10 that are in operation on the effective date of this act. The amount for FY 2018 shall be fifty
11 thousand dollars (\$50,000).

12 ~~(H)~~(i) Categorical programs defined in (a) through (f) shall be funded pursuant to the
13 transition plan in § 16-7.2-7.

14 SECTION 2. Section 16-73-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-73 entitled "Education -
15 Social Services [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby
16 amended to read as follows:

17 **16-73-2. Creation of plan.**

18 (a) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education, ~~under the direction of the~~
19 ~~board of regents for elementary and secondary education, and in cooperation with directors of the~~
20 ~~departments of health, administration, children, youth, and families, mental health, retardation,~~
21 ~~and hospitals, and the office of higher education (after this referred to as the children's cabinet)~~
22 shall develop a strategic plan for creating "child opportunity zones" and a Rhode Island
23 community school initiative as a means to deliver comprehensive and coordinated social services
24 at or near public school sites, and pursuant to this, undertake activities including but not limited to
25 the award of demonstration, planning, and training grants.

26 (b) After surveying superintendents, school committee members, union leaders, school
27 administrators and parent representatives of each public school district regarding their knowledge
28 of and interest in community schools, the commissioner shall prepare a plan to expand
29 community school programs to the general assembly no later than January 1, 2018.

30 SECTION 3. 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 -- COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

- 1 This act would require that the commissioner of elementary and secondary education
- 2 develop a strategic plan for creating a Rhode Island community school initiative.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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