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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - CURRICULUM

Introduced By: Senators Gallo, Ruggerio, Goodwin, McCaffrey, and Algieri

Date Introduced: May 08, 2019

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-22 of the General Laws entitled "Curriculum [See Title 16
2 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended by adding thereto
3 the following sections:

4 **16-22-30. Statewide academic standards.**

5 (a) The council on elementary and secondary education (the "council") shall direct the
6 commissioner of elementary and secondary education (the "commissioner") to institute a process
7 to develop statewide academic standards for the core subjects of mathematics, English language
8 arts, science and technology, history and social studies, world languages, and the arts. This
9 process shall:

10 (1) Be open and consultative;

11 (2) Include, but need not be limited to, a culturally and racially diverse group of
12 classroom teachers and students; and

13 (3) Include, but need not be limited to, reviewing and revising current standards, as well
14 as adopting new ones, if deemed appropriate.

15 (b) The commissioner shall develop the statewide academic standards pursuant to this
16 section by no later than December 31, 2019, and again as required by the council's procedures set
17 forth in subsection (f) of this section. The standards shall:

18 (1) Cover grades prekindergarten through grade twelve (PK-12);

19 (2) Clearly set forth the skills, competencies, and knowledge expected to be demonstrated

1 by all students at the conclusion of individual grades or grade spans:

2 (3) Be formulated so as to set high expectations for student performance;

3 (4) Provide clear and specific examples that embody and reflect these high expectations;

4 (5) Be constructed with due regard to the established research and recommendations of

5 national organizations, to the best of similar efforts in other states, and to the level of skills,

6 competencies, and knowledge possessed by typical students in the most educationally-advanced

7 nations. The skills, competencies, and knowledge set forth in the standards shall define the

8 performance outcomes expected of both students directly entering the workforce and of students

9 pursuing higher education. In addition, the skills, competencies, and knowledge set forth in the

10 standards shall inform the design and implementation of the Rhode Island comprehensive

11 assessment system ("RICAS") in mathematics, English language arts, and science and

12 technology. The RICAS shall align with federal law, be in place for no fewer than ten (10) years,

13 and facilitate comparisons of students of other states and nations;

14 (6) Be designed to instill respect for the cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity of this state,

15 and for the contributions made by diverse cultural, ethnic, and racial groups to the life of this

16 state;

17 (7) Be designed to avoid perpetuating gender, cultural, ethnic, or racial stereotypes;

18 (8) Reflect sensitivity to different learning styles;

19 (9) Reflect sensitivity to impediments to learning, which may include issues related to,

20 but not limited to, cultural, financial, emotional, health, and social factors; and

21 (10) Be in a form readily comprehensible by the general public.

22 (c) This section shall not require the abandonment of any standards already in place, so

23 long as the commissioner determines that said standards meet the statewide goals contained

24 herein.

25 (d) The commissioner shall submit a copy of the standards to the council for approval at

26 least sixty (60) days prior to the standards taking effect.

27 (e) Upon approval, the council shall make the standards available to the public.

28 (f) The council shall develop procedures for updating, improving, or refining standards

29 pursuant to this section by no later than September 1, 2021. The procedures shall include a

30 requirement that the council review and evaluate the standards regularly to ensure that the high

31 quality of the standards is maintained. The review cycle shall begin in 2025, with subsequent

32 reviews taking place in 2029, 2033, and every four (4) years thereafter.

33 (g) On or before December 1, 2020, and annually thereafter on or before December 1, the

34 commissioner shall report to the governor, president of the senate, and the speaker of the house,

1 regarding the standards developed and reviewed pursuant to this section.

2 **16-22-31. Curriculum frameworks.**

3 (a)(1) The council on elementary and secondary education (the "council") shall direct the
4 commissioner of elementary and secondary education (the "commissioner") to institute a process
5 to develop curriculum frameworks for mathematics, English language arts, science and
6 technology, history and social studies, world languages, and the arts. This process shall:

7 (i) Be open and consultative;

8 (ii) Include, but need not be limited to, a culturally and racially diverse group of
9 classroom teachers and students; and

10 (iii) Include, but need not be limited to, reviewing and revising current frameworks, as
11 well as developing new ones, if deemed appropriate.

12 (2) The process may include, but need not be limited to, community groups, cultural
13 organizations, parents, teacher preparation programs, and leading college and university figures in
14 both subject matter disciplines and pedagogy.

15 (b) The commissioner shall develop the curriculum frameworks pursuant to this section
16 by no later than September 1, 2021, and again as required by the council's procedures set forth in
17 subsection (e) of this section. The curriculum frameworks developed by the commissioner shall:

18 (1) Present broad, research-based pedagogical approaches and strategies to assist
19 students develop the skills, competencies, and knowledge called for by the statewide standards
20 provided in § 16-22-30;

21 (2) Provide sufficient detail to guide and inform processes for the education, professional
22 development, certification, and evaluation of both active and aspiring teachers and administrators;

23 (3) Provide sufficient detail to guide the implementation of student assessment
24 instruments;

25 (4) Be constructed to guide and assist teachers, administrators, publishers, software
26 developers, and other interested parties in the development and selection of curricula, textbooks,
27 technology, and other instructional materials, and in the design of pedagogical approaches and
28 strategies for use in elementary, secondary, and career and technical schools;

29 (5) Be aligned with the state's commitment to college and career readiness;

30 (6) Encourage demanding real-world application, multi-disciplinary problem solving,
31 integration of academic and career and technical education curriculum, project-based learning,
32 performance assessment, team teaching, and alignment of classroom instruction with work-based
33 learning opportunities;

34 (7) Promote better alignment with postsecondary curriculum and instruction, including,

1 but not limited to, the expansion and/or use of dual enrollment and dual credit opportunities for
2 high school students that help them with the postsecondary transition, persistence, and attainment
3 of a credential;

4 (8) Encourage capstone projects and associated performance assessments that provide
5 students the opportunity to demonstrate holistic proficiency with respect to research, cross-
6 disciplinary problem solving, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and oral defense;

7 (9) Present specific, pedagogical approaches and strategies to meet the academic and
8 non-academic needs of English learner, economically disadvantaged, special education, and
9 academically advanced students;

10 (10) Be designed to avoid perpetuating gender, cultural, ethnic, or racial stereotypes;

11 (11) Reflect sensitivity to different learning styles;

12 (12) Reflect sensitivity to impediments to learning, which may include issues related to,
13 but not limited to, cultural, financial, emotional, health, and social factors; and

14 (13) Be in a form readily comprehensible by the general public.

15 (c) The commissioner shall submit a copy of the frameworks to the council for approval
16 at least sixty (60) days prior to the frameworks taking effect.

17 (d) Upon approval, the council shall make the frameworks available to the public.

18 (e) The council shall develop procedures for updating, improving, or refining curriculum
19 frameworks pursuant to this section by no later than September 1, 2021. The procedures shall
20 include a requirement that the council review and evaluate the frameworks regularly to ensure
21 that the high quality of the frameworks is maintained. The review cycle shall begin in 2025, with
22 subsequent reviews taking place in 2029, 2033, and every four (4) years thereafter.

23 (f) On or before December 1, 2020, and annually thereafter on or before December 1, the
24 commissioner shall report to the governor, president of the senate, and the speaker of the house,
25 regarding the curriculum frameworks developed and reviewed pursuant to this section.

26 **16-22-32. High quality curriculum and materials.**

27 (a)(1) The council on elementary and secondary education (the "council") shall direct the
28 commissioner of elementary and secondary education (the "commissioner") to institute a process
29 for reviewing and identifying curriculum and materials for mathematics, English language arts,
30 and science and technology that meet the following requirements:

31 (i) Is aligned with the academic standards provided in § 16-22-30;

32 (ii) Is aligned with the curriculum frameworks provided in § 16-22-31;

33 (iii) Is aligned with the RICAS, or any other test that is adopted as a statewide
34 standardized test; and

1 (iv) Is of high quality.

2 (2) The commissioner shall identify at least five (5) examples each of curricula for
3 mathematics and English language arts pursuant to this section by no later than January 1, 2021,
4 for science and technology pursuant to this section by no later than January 1, 2022, and again as
5 required by the council's procedures set forth in subsection (a)(8) of this section. Once identified,
6 the curricula shall be made available to the public, subject to copyright considerations.

7 (3) The commissioner shall direct all local education agencies ("LEAs") to select one of
8 the identified high-quality curricula and materials by the time of their next adoption cycle, but in
9 any case, no later than June 30, 2022 for mathematics and English language arts, and by no later
10 than June 30, 2023 for science and technology. LEAs shall select curriculum and materials that
11 are responsive to the LEA's cultural and linguistic needs, and support culturally responsive
12 practices. LEAs shall implement the high-quality curricula and materials at the start of the school
13 year that immediately follows the selection. If an LEA is unable to implement the high-quality
14 curricula and materials fully due to financial hardship, the commissioner may grant the LEA an
15 extension of time, provided that the LEA demonstrates continued efforts to complete the
16 implementation.

17 (4) The commissioner shall institute a waiver process for LEAs that would like to use a
18 curriculum other than any identified by the commissioner pursuant to this section. Part of that
19 process may include, but is not limited to, asking the LEA to:

20 (i) Develop local curriculum goals;

21 (ii) Communicate the rationale for selecting the proposed curriculum over any of the
22 curricula identified by the commissioner; and

23 (iii) Engage a third-party reviewer that has a proven track record of curriculum audits to
24 review the proposed curriculum to ensure it aligns with state standards, establishes the scope and
25 sequence of instruction, is of high quality, is culturally relevant, and to discuss any other strengths
26 and weaknesses.

27 (5) Waiver determinations made pursuant to subsection (a)(4) of this section shall be
28 appealable to the board of education.

29 (6) Any LEA that has at least seventy-five percent (75%) of its students meeting
30 expectations on state assessments and also has no student subgroup identified for targeted
31 assistance under Rhode Island's accountability process may select and use curricula and materials
32 other than any identified by the commissioner pursuant to this section for that subject area, only;
33 provided, however, that if the LEA no longer has at least seventy-five percent (75%) of its
34 students meeting expectations on state assessments, or if any student subgroup is identified for

1 targeted assistance under Rhode Island’s accountability process, the LEA must select and
2 implement one of the curricula identified by the commissioner pursuant to this section.

3 (7) LEAs shall develop and execute a curriculum implementation plan that includes
4 professional development to ensure that all teachers and administrators are prepared to implement
5 the new curriculum with the necessary skill and knowledge.

6 (8) The council shall develop procedures for updating the identification of curricula and
7 materials pursuant to this section by no later than September 1, 2021. The procedures shall
8 include a requirement that the council review and evaluate the identified curricula and materials
9 regularly to ensure that the high quality of the curricula and materials is maintained. The review
10 cycle shall begin in 2025, with subsequent reviews taking place in 2029, 2033, and every four (4)
11 years thereafter.

12 (b) On or before December 1, 2020, and annually thereafter on or before December 1, the
13 commissioner shall report to the governor, president of the senate, and the speaker of the house,
14 regarding the progress toward fulfilling the requirements of this section, including, but not limited
15 to, the high-quality curricula and materials identified, selected, and implemented by LEAs
16 pursuant to this section.

17 (c) The state shall establish a professional development fund to provide professional
18 learning to LEAs that elect to use prioritized curricula and materials in mathematics and English
19 language arts as identified by the commissioner.

20 (d) For the purposes of this section, “local education agencies” (“LEAs”) shall include all
21 of the following within the state of Rhode Island:

- 22 (1) Public school districts;
- 23 (2) Regional school districts;
- 24 (3) State-operated schools;
- 25 (4) Regional collaborative schools; and
- 26 (5) Charter schools.

27 **16-22-33. Curriculum implementation accountability.**

28 (a) Once local education agencies ("LEAs") select high-quality curriculum and materials
29 pursuant to § 16-22-32, the department of elementary and secondary education (the "department")
30 shall identify an LEA assistance partner from within the department to provide any and all
31 support requested by the LEA or individual schools within the LEA regarding access to,
32 implementation of, and professional development for the curriculum and materials.

33 (b) The LEA assistance partner shall meet with teachers, principals, administrators, or
34 other school officials of the LEA to which they are assigned at a school within the LEA on a

1 regular basis, which shall be no less frequently than every three (3) months, to discuss the
2 progress toward implementing the curriculum and materials effectively. Areas of discussion may
3 include, but are not limited to:

- 4 (i) Barriers to learning and plans to eliminate said barriers;
- 5 (ii) Best practices regarding pedagogical techniques given the diversity of the student
6 population being served;
- 7 (iii) Where to locate additional professional development resources; and
- 8 (iv) Implementation strategies that have been successful to share with other LEAs that are
9 using the same curriculum and materials.

10 (c) The LEA assistance partner shall tour all schools within its assigned LEA with at least
11 one teacher and the principal or assistant principal:

- 12 (i) To observe challenges teachers are facing while implementing the curriculum and
13 materials;
- 14 (ii) To discuss with the teacher and principal or assistant principal ideas to help resolve
15 those challenges; and
- 16 (iii) To answer any questions regarding the curriculum or implementation thereof.

17 (d) The LEA assistance partner shall have follow-up meetings at schools within their
18 assigned LEA as often as requested by an individual school or the entire LEA to ensure all
19 educators are comfortable implementing the curriculum effectively.

20 (e) The LEA assistance partner shall report to the department no less frequently than
21 every three (3) months regarding the status of curriculum implementation at the schools within
22 their assigned LEA.

23 (f) The commissioner is hereby authorized to promulgate rules and regulations necessary
24 to implement the provisions of this section.

25 (g) For the purposes of this section, “local education agencies” (“LEAs”) shall include all
26 of the following within the state of Rhode Island:

- 27 (1) Public school districts;
- 28 (2) Regional school districts;
- 29 (3) State-operated schools;
- 30 (4) Regional collaborative schools; and
- 31 (5) Charter schools.

32 SECTION 2. 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 - CURRICULUM

1 This act would require the commissioner of elementary and secondary education to
2 develop statewide academic standards and curriculum frameworks for the core subjects of
3 mathematics, English language arts, and science and technology. This act would also require the
4 commissioner to identify at least five (5) examples of high-quality curriculum and materials for
5 each of the core subjects, after which local education agencies ("LEAs") would be required to
6 select and implement one for each of the core subjects. Once LEAs select a high-quality
7 curriculum and materials, the department of elementary and secondary education ("department")
8 would identify an LEA assistance partner from within the department to provide any and all
9 support regarding access to, implementation of, and professional development for the curriculum
10 and materials.

11 This act would take effect upon passage.

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