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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT

Introduced By: Senators DiPalma, Gallo, Pearson, Cano, and Quezada

Date Introduced: January 21, 2020

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-97-1.2 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-97 entitled "The  
2 Rhode Island Board of Education Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-97-1.2. Powers and duties of the board of education.**

4 The board of education shall have the following powers and duties:

5 (a) To develop and adopt a strategic plan defining broad goals and objectives for  
6 education in the state. These goals and objectives shall be expressed in terms of the future  
7 educational attainment of the population, quality of life and economy of Rhode Island, including  
8 but not limited to what children, men and women should know and be able to do as a result of  
9 their educational experience and the contributions of education to meeting the workforce and  
10 economic development needs of Rhode Island. The board shall approve the strategic plans for  
11 elementary and secondary education and postsecondary education in terms of the alignment of  
12 these strategic plans with the overall strategic plan of the board of education. The board shall  
13 continuously evaluate the efforts of the council on elementary and secondary education and the  
14 council on postsecondary education to implement the strategic plans and shall review the results  
15 of education in the light of these objectives;

16 (b) To prepare and maintain a five (5) year strategic funding plan for all levels of  
17 education in Rhode Island. The board shall determine priorities of expenditures for public  
18 education purposes of state revenues and other public resources made available for the support of  
19 public education and direct the council on elementary and secondary education and the council on

1 postsecondary education to implement those priorities when developing the annual budget for  
2 elementary and secondary education and higher education. The councils shall present their annual  
3 budgets to the board for its review and approval. Nothing contained in this subdivision shall  
4 authorize the board to alter the allocation of grants or aid otherwise provided by law;

5 (c) To develop and submit to the general assembly for approval a performance funding  
6 formula for public higher education that furthers the purposes of the board and ensures that all  
7 students may achieve educational excellence;

8 (d) To develop policies that maximize the potential of collaboration from elementary and  
9 secondary education through higher education systems and that improve efficiencies at all levels  
10 of the education system through improved coordination of activities;

11 (e) To embrace the legislative findings regarding virtual education established by § 16-  
12 22.1-2 of the general laws and adopt goals and policies that address these findings and to  
13 encourage the council on elementary and secondary education and the council for postsecondary  
14 education to develop and or improve virtual learning experiences for Rhode Island students;

15 (f) To approve the appointment of a commissioner of elementary and secondary  
16 education.

17 (g) To approve the appointment of a commissioner of postsecondary education.

18 (h) To conduct a training course for newly appointed and qualified board members within  
19 six (6) months of their qualification. The course shall be developed by the chairperson of the  
20 board, approved by the board, and conducted by the chairperson of the board. The board may  
21 approve the use of any board or staff members or other individuals to assist with training. The  
22 training course shall include instruction in the following areas: the provisions of chapters 42-46,  
23 36-14, and 38-2; and the board's own rules.

24 (i) To develop and implement a five (5) year STEM strategic plan defining goals and  
25 objectives for improving student performance in science, technology, engineering, and math  
26 (STEM) and for increasing the number of postsecondary degrees awarded in STEM fields on or  
27 before February 1, 2021. The plan shall:

28 (1) Be developed, in consultation with employers, advocates, stakeholders,  
29 representatives from the department of elementary and secondary education, office of the  
30 postsecondary commissioner, University of Rhode Island (URI), Rhode Island College (RIC), the  
31 Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), and private institutions of higher education;

32 (2) Define goals for overall student performance on state assessments in grades three (3)  
33 through twelve (12) and for student performance by subcategories, including, but not limited to,  
34 socioeconomic status, gender, students with disabilities, race, and ethnicity;

1           (3) Define goals for the increase of students receiving postsecondary degrees in STEM,  
2 including those underrepresented students by socioeconomic status, gender, students with  
3 disabilities, race, and ethnicity; and

4           (4) Address teacher shortages and implement a timeline for strategies to increase STEM  
5 teachers in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education system.

6           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 -- THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT

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1           This act would require the board of education to develop and implement a five (5) year  
2 strategic plan to improve student performance in science, technology, engineering, and math  
3 (STEM) and increase the number of postsecondary degrees awarded in STEM fields on or before  
4 February 1, 2021.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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