

2020 -- S 2106

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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 -- REGIONAL VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS [SEE TITLE 16  
CHAPTER 97 -- THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT]

Introduced By: Senators Satchell, Pearson, McCaffrey, Gallo, and Conley

Date Introduced: January 22, 2020

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Section 16-45-6.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-45 entitled "Regional  
2 Vocational Schools [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is  
3 hereby amended to read as follows:

4           **16-45-6.1. Career and technical education.**

5           (a) The general assembly finds that career and technical education ("CTE") programs that  
6 meet rigorous industry standards and prepare Rhode Island's students to succeed in a wide variety  
7 of employment settings are a critical component of the state's public education system and a  
8 necessary element of the state's economic development. Regional career and technical education  
9 centers and state CTE board-approved programs that align with industry standards serve this vital  
10 need. These programs are to be offered in a system focused on program quality and delivery  
11 efficiency.

12           (b) The general assembly further finds that the proportion of students now enrolled in  
13 such programs is inadequate. Therefore, all Rhode Island school districts shall file a plan with the  
14 Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education no later than January 1, 2006 setting forth  
15 the means through which no fewer than forty (40) percent of their students enrolled in grades nine  
16 (9) through twelve (12) shall be provided the opportunity to enroll in career and technical  
17 programming that is certified by the Rhode Island Department of Education as meeting industry  
18 standards by September 2007. The general assembly further finds that career and technical

1 education programs approved by the state CTE board of trustees and which programs are housed  
2 in regional career and technical education centers and in comprehensive high schools are best  
3 equipped to provide career and technical education to the students of Rhode Island.

4 ~~(c) To facilitate the development of additional career and technical program offerings for~~  
5 ~~Rhode Island students that meet industry standards the department of elementary and secondary~~  
6 ~~education shall, in furtherance of the reports and studies that have been developed since 2000~~  
7 ~~setting forth recommendations for an updated system of career and technical education for the~~  
8 ~~State of Rhode Island, develop a system design that includes site assessments of all current career~~  
9 ~~and technical programs and sets forth standards and procedures for the department of elementary~~  
10 ~~and secondary education to approve programs that are developed in cooperation with business,~~  
11 ~~industry and postsecondary institutions. The department shall also develop a system design for~~  
12 ~~three additional state operated career and technical schools, in addition to the William H. Davies~~  
13 ~~School and the Metropolitan Career and Technical Center, including recommendations for a~~  
14 ~~model for the siting, building costs, operational costs and program design for each such school.~~  
15 ~~The general assembly shall appropriate funds to the department for purposes of their completion~~  
16 ~~of the system design for the statewide program approval process to industry standards and the~~  
17 ~~development of the models, siting and program design of the three additional state operated~~  
18 ~~career and technical schools.~~

19 (1) To advance the economic development of our communities, all students retain the  
20 right to access career and technical education and to attend state CTE board-approved programs  
21 in other districts. This right to attend CTE programs in other districts does not include locally  
22 approved CTE programs and CTE programs that are not approved by the state CTE board.  
23 Students may request access to state CTE board-approved career preparation programs outside  
24 their school district if their home district does not provide a substantially equivalent or same  
25 ("substantially equivalent") state approved CTE program. If a discrepancy exists as to whether  
26 two (2) state approved programs are substantially equivalent, the state CTE board shall use state  
27 CTE board program quality criteria and other relevant factors to determine if the two (2) state  
28 CTE board-approved programs are substantially equivalent programs. Students are guaranteed  
29 access to state CTE board-approved career preparation programs. Students requesting access to  
30 state CTE board-approved career preparation programs outside their established school  
31 transportation region may enroll in such programs, but the resident local education agency shall  
32 not be responsible for the costs of the transportation.

33 (2) A student's request to enroll in a state CTE board-approved career and technical  
34 program at a recognized regional career and technical center (the "center") shall not be denied,

1 provided that:

2 (i) The student meets any other criteria required of all students for admission to the  
3 program and the center; and

4 (ii) The student is applying to the center which is geographically the closest center to the  
5 student's residence.

6 (d) All state CTE board-approved programs shall align to industry standards or be  
7 associated with a nationally recognized CTE board-approved program.

8 (e) On or before January 1, 2021:

9 (1) The state CTE board shall implement a process based on CTE board-identified  
10 criteria for determining whether two (2) state CTE board-approved programs are substantially  
11 equivalent; and

12 (2) The department of education shall establish approval and rating systems based upon  
13 program quality for career and technical education programs. No district shall be required to pay  
14 tuition or provide transportation to a program with a less than satisfactory rating.

15 (f) Students enrolled in, accepted to, or attending a state CTE board-approved program  
16 outside of the student's district (the "program of choice") as of January 1, 2021, shall be exempt  
17 from the substantially equivalent provisions of this statute and may continue to matriculate in  
18 grades nine (9) through twelve (12) in their program of choice so that students and parents who  
19 made educational decisions prior to January 1, 2021, shall retain the rights that were in place  
20 when they made those decisions. If a substantially equivalent state-approved program is  
21 established in a student's home district after the student has enrolled in a program of choice, the  
22 student may continue to matriculate in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) in the student's  
23 program of choice. The provisions of this subsection shall also apply and extend to other siblings  
24 in the family who apply to attend the same program of choice.

25 (g) On or before January 1, 2021, the state CTE board shall implement a process based on  
26 CTE board-identified criteria for determining whether two (2) state CTE board-approved  
27 programs are substantially equivalent.

28 (h) Career and technical funds allocated under § 16-7.2-6 shall be used solely for the  
29 purpose of funding improvements to state CTE board-approved career and technical education  
30 programs and facilities or for funding related to the establishment of new career and technical  
31 programs in our state.

32 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 -- REGIONAL VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS [SEE TITLE 16  
CHAPTER 97 -- THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT]

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1           This act would amend the career and technical education program laws to provide the  
2 process by which students could access career and technical education and attend state CTE  
3 board-approved programs in other districts. The act would also direct the state CTE board to  
4 implement a process based on CTE board-identified criteria for determining whether two (2) state  
5 CTE board-approved programs are substantially equivalent. This act would further provide that  
6 students who have enrolled in, been accepted to, or are attending a state CTE board-approved  
7 program outside of the student's district as of January 1, 2021, would be able to continue to  
8 matriculate grades 9 through 12 in that program.

9           This act would take effect upon passage.

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