

2021 -- H 5825

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE STATEWIDE VIRTUAL EDUCATION ACT [SEE
TITLE 16 CHAPTER 97 -- THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT]

Introduced By: Representatives Vella-Wilkinson, Noret, Azzinaro, and Filippi

Date Introduced: February 24, 2021

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-22.1-5 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-22.1 entitled "The
2 Statewide Virtual Education Act [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education
3 Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-22.1-5. Regulations for virtual learning.**

5 (a) With the direction and approval of the board of regents for elementary and secondary
6 education, the commissioner for elementary and secondary education shall develop and promulgate
7 regulations for Rhode Island school districts and other educational organizations that are using or
8 intend to use virtual courses and other online learning opportunities with K-12 students and adult
9 learners. The regulations shall include:

10 (1) Objective, standard criteria that ensures virtual courses and content for K-12 students
11 are aligned with state content standards, meet or exceed the requirements of the state's basic
12 education program, fulfill high school graduation requirements, and promote articulation with
13 public higher education institutions in the state;

14 (2) Objective, standard criteria for school districts to use to select quality providers of
15 virtual courses and online content, which may include local school districts, not-for-profit and for-
16 profit postsecondary institutions, and other organizations;

17 (3) Objective, standard criteria that ensures teachers of virtual courses and other online
18 learning activities are appropriately trained and qualified and meet certification requirements set

1 forth by the commissioner of education;

2 (4) Objective, standard criteria that ensures that local policies shall not limit student access
3 to quality online learning opportunities;

4 (5) Objective, standard criteria that school districts can use to ensure that all learners in
5 Rhode Island have access to high quality, rigorous, and relevant virtual courses and other online
6 learning activities;

7 (6) Objective, standard procedures that school districts shall use to report and verify the
8 attendance and participation of a student enrolled in a virtual course;

9 (7) Standard accountability provisions that ensure school districts monitor students
10 enrolled in virtual courses and other online learning activities and when appropriate, report on
11 student progress and performance using grade-appropriate and content-appropriate assessments;

12 (8) Objective, standard criteria that ensures that RIDE participates in statewide efforts to
13 support virtual learning education with a focus on student access to quality online learning
14 opportunities and ensuring efficiencies gained by coordinating resources;

15 (9) Any other requirements or limitations for virtual courses in Rhode Island.

16 (b) When making determinations regarding eligibility for virtual learning education, the
17 commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall deem a student whose parent or
18 guardian is being relocated to the state under military orders and is transferred to or is pending
19 transfer to a military installation within the state, a resident of this state and of the applicable local
20 school system, for the entirety of the school year.

21 (c) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, a child of a member of the active military
22 service of the United States who has been assigned to duty elsewhere immediately following
23 assignment to duty in Rhode Island shall be deemed an in-state resident, at the election of the
24 service member, for purposes of virtual learning and attendance at school until the end of the
25 pending school year.

26 (d) The commissioner for elementary and secondary education shall promulgate rules and
27 regulation to effect the purpose of this section.

28 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 -- THE STATEWIDE VIRTUAL EDUCATION ACT [SEE
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1 This act would provide that the commissioner of elementary and secondary education is to
2 promulgate rules and regulations to implement that the students of military personnel transferred
3 to Rhode Island shall be deemed a resident of this state for virtual learning. Additionally, this act
4 provides that a child of a military service member transferred from Rhode Island, may finish the
5 school year by virtual learning.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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