

2021 -- H 5936

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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 -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS -- TRAUMA
INFORMED SCHOOLS ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Ranglin-Vassell, Kislak, Barros, Biah, and Henries

Date Introduced: February 25, 2021

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-21 of the General Laws entitled "Health and Safety of Pupils" is
2 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **16-21-37. Trauma informed schools act.**

4 The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall:

5 (1) Establish and implement trauma-informed practices within all elementary and
6 secondary education schools throughout the state, that:

7 (i) Promote a shared understanding among teachers, teacher's assistants, school leaders,
8 paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and other staff that:

9 (A) Traumatic experiences are common among students;

10 (B) Trauma can impact student learning, behavior, and relationships in school;

11 (C) Traumatic experiences do not inherently undermine the capabilities of students to reach
12 high expectations in academics and life;

13 (D) School-wide learning environments, where all students and adults feel safe, welcomed,
14 and supported, can enable students to succeed despite traumatic experiences; and

15 (E) Services, supports, and programs provided to meet individual student needs should be
16 trauma-informed, where appropriate, and increase student connection to the school-wide learning
17 environment.

18 (ii) Adopt disciplinary procedures and practices that:

- 1 (A) Accompany disciplinary actions with holistic assessments and positive behavioral
2 interventions and supports to address the underlying causes of student behavior, including trauma;
3 (B) Avoid harsh, punitive, or exclusionary disciplinary practices;
4 (C) Utilize evidence-based restorative practices that build a culture of trust; and
5 (D) Do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual
6 orientation or gender identity), disability, English proficiency status, migrant status, or age.
7 (iii) Implement activities that engage teachers, teacher’s assistants, school leaders,
8 paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and other staff, in a process of
9 school-based planning to:
10 (A) Promote a school-wide culture of acceptance;
11 (B) Help all students feel safe and connected to the school community;
12 (C) Support all students to form positive relationships with adults and peers, understand
13 and manage emotions, achieve success academically and in extracurricular areas, and experience
14 physical and psychological health and well-being;
15 (D) Promote teamwork and effective communication among all staff and shared
16 responsibility for every student;
17 (E) Integrate evidence-based practices that build social-emotional skills into rigorous
18 academic instruction; and
19 (F) Recognize and prevent adult implicit bias.

20 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 -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS -- TRAUMA
INFORMED SCHOOLS ACT

- 1 This act would establish the implementation of trauma-informed practices in schools
- 2 throughout the state.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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