

2023 -- H 6053

LC001466

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE PAUL W. CROWLEY RHODE ISLAND STUDENT INVESTMENT INITIATIVE

Introduced By: Representatives Sanchez, Morales, Caldwell, Slater, and Boylan

Date Introduced: March 03, 2023

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-7.1-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-7.1 entitled "The Paul
2 W. Crowley Rhode Island Student Investment Initiative [See Title 16 Chapter 97 — The Rhode
3 Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-7.1-2. Accountability for student performance.**

5 (a) The board of regents shall adopt and publish statewide standards of performance and
6 performance benchmarks in core subject areas, to include writing and mathematics (grades four
7 (4), eight (8), and ten (10)). These standards and performance benchmarks shall be ratified by the
8 board and implemented and performance standards and performance benchmarks for reading in
9 two (2) grades shall be added.

10 (b) Districts and schools need to be held accountable for student performance results.
11 Therefore, every school district receiving state education aid under this title shall develop a district
12 strategic plan. The district strategic plan shall: (1) Be based on high academic standards for student
13 performance consistent with the statewide standards and benchmarks; (2) Be the product of a shared
14 communitywide process that defines a vision of what students should know and be able to do; (3)
15 Address the needs of each school in the district; (4) Encourage the development of school-based
16 improvement planning and implementation; (5) Include a process for mentoring of new teachers;
17 (6) Be designed to improve student achievement with emphasis on closing the performance gaps
18 among groups of students, such as the performance gaps correlated with poverty, gender, language

1 background, and disability; (7) Include establishment of student intervention teams to address the
2 instructional needs of diverse learners, include high standards of student behavior designed to
3 create an orderly educational environment with due regard for the rights of students, and an asset
4 protection plan; and (8) Be consistent with Rhode Island's comprehensive education strategy. In
5 order to ensure the most efficient use of resources implementing strategic plans, districts and
6 schools are encouraged to work together as consortia and as part of the regional collaboratives.

7 (c)(1) The strategic plan shall include strategies to improve the performance of students in
8 mathematics, reading, and writing. Each plan must describe a scientific research-based, as
9 described in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Title 1, Part B, § 1208 [20 U.S.C. § 6368],
10 reading instruction to improve the reading skills of all students in the early grades (kindergarten
11 through grade five (5)) that is aligned with the board of regents reading policy. The district must
12 develop, implement, and evaluate a personal literacy program for each student in these grades who
13 is performing below grade level. These strategies shall be based on the adequate yearly progress
14 expected for students and schools. Annual performance targets for determining whether schools
15 and districts have made adequate yearly progress will be set by the commissioner of elementary
16 and secondary education. The general assembly expects these district strategies to increase the
17 number of fourth grade students performing at, or above, the proficient standard in mathematics,
18 reading, and writing in each district and school. The increase shall be established annually in
19 accordance with § 16-7.1-4.

20 (2) The general assembly recognizes the contribution of school counselors to positive
21 educational change; to the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; and to the
22 success of students in three (3) developmental domains: academic, career, and personal/social. It
23 endorses the National Standards for School Counseling Programs as developed by the American
24 School Counselor Association (ASCA). Further, the general assembly encourages every district to
25 implement a K-12 standards-based, comprehensive, developmental school counseling program.
26 The general assembly further encourages every district to provide professional development
27 opportunities for school counselors that focus on best practices in collaborating with business,
28 industry, and other community organizations to create internships and apprenticeships for
29 secondary students.

30 (d) Each strategic plan must indicate the manner in which self-studies will be completed at
31 the school level in accordance with guidelines established by the commissioner. Funds shall be
32 appropriated to the department of elementary and secondary education to assist districts with on-
33 site reviews. Schools to be visited shall be determined by the commissioner.

34 (e) Each strategic plan must indicate the method in which school administrators and staff

1 shall achieve and maintain an orderly educational environment in accordance with due process and
2 with due regard for the rights of students.

3 (f) Each strategic plan shall include the development of inter-agency agreements for the
4 coordination of services among state and local agencies responsible for service to children and
5 families. These agreements shall address the identification and provision of services to pre-school
6 children with disabilities and children and youth with behavioral healthcare needs.

7 (g) All district strategic plans and annual updates shall be submitted to the commissioner
8 of elementary and secondary education no later than May 1 of each year.

9 (h) All strategic plans shall include strategies to decrease obesity and improve the health
10 and wellness of students and employees through nutrition, physical activity, health education, and
11 physical education. Said strategies shall be submitted by May 1st of each year to the Rhode Island
12 department of elementary and secondary education and the Rhode Island department of health.

13 (i) All strategic plans shall include strategies to implement programs and provide additional
14 mental health services for students in schools throughout the state. These strategies shall include
15 increased and guaranteed access to mental health professionals at every school, for all students in
16 each school within the state.

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

19 **16-21-42. Reporting by department of elementary and secondary education.**

20 (a) On or before January 30, 2024, and annually on or before January 30th thereafter, the
21 department of elementary and secondary education (the "department") shall prepare an annual
22 report entitled "statewide school mental health snapshot." This report shall give a summary on the
23 overall status of student mental health in schools throughout the state.

24 (b) This report shall contain data and recommendations on the following:

25 (1) The number of students provided mental health evaluations through the school
26 department;

27 (2) The number of students identified with significant mental health diagnoses;

28 (3) Recommendations on ways to best sustainably fund and deliver improved mental health
29 services and supports to students in schools throughout the state; and

30 (4) Such other information as the department determines should be included in the report.

31 (c) The statewide school mental health snapshot report shall be provided to the governor,
32 the speaker of the house, and the president of the senate.

33 SECTION 3. Section 16-21.3-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-21.3 entitled "The
34 Rhode Island Student Assistance Junior High/Middle School Act" is hereby amended to read as

1 follows:

2 **16-21.3-2. Junior high/middle school student assistance program.**

3 (a) The department of behavioral healthcare, developmental disabilities and hospitals shall
4 be charged with the administration of this chapter and shall contract with appropriate substance
5 abuse prevention/intervention agencies to provide student assistance services in junior high/middle
6 schools. The department shall work in conjunction with the department of elementary and
7 secondary education to collect and make available to school districts sample lessons, tools, and
8 other examples of best practices that can be incorporated into various curricula to promote
9 successful programs that support the instruction required by §16-22-12 on the connection between
10 alcohol and substance abuse, substance use disorders, with mental health issues.

11 (b) Following the first complete year of operation, school systems receiving junior
12 high/middle school student assistance services will be required to contribute twenty percent (20%)
13 of the costs of student assistance counselors to the service provider agency in order to continue the
14 services.

15 SECTION 4. Sections 16-22-12 and 16-22-34 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-22
16 entitled "Curriculum [See Title 16 Chapter 97 — the Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" are
17 hereby amended to read as follows:

18 **16-22-12. Required courses on alcohol and substance abuse.**

19 (a)(1) The school committees of the several cities, towns, and school districts shall provide
20 for the incorporation of mandatory instruction of students in grades one through twelve (12) on the
21 effects of alcohol and substance abuse upon the human system in existing health education or other
22 courses. Courses for high school students shall include, but not be limited to, instruction on the
23 connections between alcohol and substance abuse, substance use disorders, and mental health
24 issues.

25 (2) The department of elementary and secondary education, in conjunction with the
26 department of behavioral healthcare, developmental disabilities, and hospitals, shall collect and
27 make available to districts sample lessons, tools, and other examples of best practices that can be
28 incorporated into various curricula to promote successful programs that support the instruction
29 required by this section.

30 (b) The board of regents for elementary and secondary education shall institute courses of
31 instructions for teachers in the public school system on the effects of alcohol and substance abuse,
32 which may include the lesson, tools, and other examples of best practices referenced in this
33 section.

34 **16-22-34. The basic education program.**

1 (a) For the purposes of this chapter, the “basic education program” means a set of
2 regulations promulgated by the council on elementary and secondary education pursuant to its
3 delegated statutory authority to determine standards for the Rhode Island public education system
4 and the maintenance of local appropriation to support its implementation under Rhode Island
5 general laws.

6 (b) The basic education program (BEP) shall include, but shall not be limited to, the
7 following basic elements:

8 (1) A standard for students who are English language learners; and

9 (2) Any other requirements set forth elsewhere in Rhode Island general laws or
10 departmental regulations.

11 (c) By August 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, the department of elementary and
12 secondary education (the “department”) shall review BEP compliance of each local education
13 agency (LEA) within the state. The department shall:

14 (1) Assess programmatic compliance with the BEP to ensure high-quality education is
15 available to all public school students, regardless of where they reside or which school they attend;

16 (2) Determine the incremental cost to meet the BEP utilizing uniform chart of account
17 (UCOA) data from the LEA and all LEAs statewide;

18 (3) Determine the sufficiency of both the state and the local education aid to the LEA to
19 meet the BEP; and

20 (4) If a deficiency exists in the local education aid to the LEA to meet the BEP, the
21 department shall consult with the department of revenue to issue a joint report to the general
22 assembly on the feasibility of the municipality to raise sufficient funds to meet the BEP standard
23 set in law.

24 (d) The basic education program shall also include and incorporate the instruction required
25 pursuant to § 16-22-12.

26 SECTION 5. 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 PAUL W. CROWLEY RHODE ISLAND STUDENT
INVESTMENT INITIATIVE

1 This act would direct that the basic education program incorporate instruction on the
2 connection between alcohol and substance abuse and substance use disorder, and mental health.
3 This act would also provide that all strategic plans shall include strategies to implement programs
4 and provide additional mental health services for students. These strategies would include
5 increased and guaranteed access to mental health professionals at every school, for all students in
6 each school. The act would also direct the department of elementary and secondary education to
7 prepare an annual report on the overall status of student mental health in schools throughout the
8 state.

9 This act would take effect upon passage.

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