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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Introduced By: Representatives McNamara, Cotter, Solomon, Potter, Carson, and  
Ackerman

Date Introduced: January 24, 2025

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-97.1-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-97.1 entitled  
2 "Education Accountability Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-97.1-1. Performances of local education agencies and individual public schools —**  
4 **Evaluation system — Assessment instruments — Reports.**

5 (a) The board of education (the "board") shall adopt a system for evaluating, on an annual  
6 basis, the performance of both local education agencies ("LEAs") and individual public schools.

7 The system shall:

8 (1) Include instruments designed to assess the extent to which schools and LEAs succeed  
9 in improving or fail to improve student performance, as defined by:

10 (i) Student acquisition of the skills, competencies, and knowledge called for by the  
11 academic standards and embodied in the curriculum frameworks established in the areas of  
12 mathematics, English language arts, science and technology, history and social studies, world  
13 languages, and the arts; and

14 (ii) Other gauges of student learning judged by the board to be relevant and meaningful to  
15 students, parents, teachers, administrators, and taxpayers.

16 (2) Be designed both to measure outcomes and results regarding student performance, and  
17 to improve the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction.

18 (3) In its design and application, strike a balance among considerations of accuracy,  
19 fairness, expense, and administration.

- 1 (4) Employ a variety of assessment instruments on either a comprehensive or statistically  
2 valid sampling basis. Such instruments shall:
- 3 (i) Be criterion-referenced, assessing whether students are meeting the academic standards  
4 described in this chapter;
- 5 (ii) As much as is practicable, especially in the case of students whose performance is  
6 difficult to assess using conventional methods, include consideration of work samples, projects,  
7 and portfolios, and shall facilitate authentic and direct gauges of student performance;
- 8 (iii) Provide the means to compare student performance among the various school systems  
9 and communities in the state, and between students in other states and in other nations, especially  
10 those nations that compete with the state for employment and economic opportunities;
- 11 (iv) Be designed to avoid gender, cultural, ethnic, or racial stereotypes; and
- 12 (v) Recognize sensitivity to different learning styles and impediments to learning, which  
13 may include issues related, but not limited, to cultural, financial, emotional, health, and social  
14 factors.
- 15 (5) Take into account, on a nondiscriminatory basis, the cultural and language diversity of  
16 students in the state and the particular circumstances of students with special needs.
- 17 (6) Comply with federal requirements for accommodating children with special needs.
- 18 (7) Allow all potential English-proficient students from language groups in which English  
19 language learner programs are offered opportunities for assessment of their performance in the  
20 language that best allows them to demonstrate educational achievement and mastery of academic  
21 standards and curriculum frameworks.
- 22 (8) Identify individual schools and LEAs that need comprehensive support and  
23 improvement.
- 24 [\(9\) Incorporate the department of elementary and secondary education's SurveyWorks](#)  
25 [school climate indicators, or any other such future system used as a replacement or substitute for](#)  
26 [SurveyWorks to measure school climate indicators, disaggregated by LEAs and individual public](#)  
27 [schools.](#)
- 28 (b) The board shall take all appropriate action to bring about and continue the state's  
29 participation in the assessment activities of the National Assessment of Educational Progress and  
30 in the development of standards and assessments by the New Standards Program.
- 31 (c) In addition, comprehensive diagnostic assessment of individual students shall be  
32 conducted at least in the fourth, eighth, and tenth or eleventh grades. The diagnostic assessments  
33 shall identify academic achievement levels of all students in order to inform teachers, parents,  
34 administrators, and the students themselves, as to individual academic performance.

1 (d) The board shall develop procedures for updating, improving, or refining the assessment  
2 system.

3 (e) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education (the “commissioner”) is  
4 authorized and directed to gather information, including the information specified herein and such  
5 other information as the board shall require, for the purposes of evaluating individual public  
6 schools, school districts, and the efficacy and equity of state and federally mandated programs. All  
7 information gathered pursuant to this section shall be filed in the manner and form prescribed by  
8 the department of education (the “department”).

9 (f) The board shall establish and maintain a data system to collect information from school  
10 districts for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of district evaluation systems in ensuring  
11 effective teaching and administrative leadership in the public schools. The information shall be  
12 made available in the aggregate to the public; provided, however, that the following information  
13 shall be considered personnel information and shall not be subject to disclosure:

14 (1) Any data or information that school districts, the department, or both, create, send, or  
15 receive in connection with an educator assessment that is evaluative in nature and that may be  
16 linked to an individual educator, including information concerning:

17 (i) An educator’s formative assessment or evaluation;

18 (ii) An educator’s summative evaluation or performance rating; or

19 (iii) The student learning, growth, and achievement data that may be used as part of an  
20 individual educator’s evaluation.

21 (g) Each school district shall maintain individual records on every student and employee.  
22 Each student record shall contain a unique and confidential identification number, basic  
23 demographic information, program and course information, and such other information as the  
24 department shall determine necessary. The records shall conform to parameters established by the  
25 department.

26 (h) For the purposes of improving the performance of school districts, individual public  
27 schools, and the efficacy and equity of state and federal programs, each district shall file with the  
28 commissioner once in each three-year (3) period a comprehensive, three-year (3) district  
29 improvement plan. The plan shall:

30 (1) Be developed and submitted in a manner and form prescribed by the department of  
31 education.

32 (2) To the extent feasible, be designed to fulfill all planning requirements of state and  
33 federal education laws.

34 (3) Include, but not be limited to:

- 1 (i) An analysis of student and subgroup achievement gaps in core subjects;
- 2 (ii) Identification of specific improvement objectives;
- 3 (iii) A description of the strategic initiatives the district will undertake to achieve its
- 4 improvement objectives; and
- 5 (iv) Performance benchmarks and processes for evaluating the effect of district
- 6 improvement initiatives.
- 7 (4) Describe the professional development activities that will support each district
- 8 improvement initiative and the teacher induction and mentoring activities that will be undertaken
- 9 to support successful implementation of the district's improvement efforts.
- 10 (i) On an annual basis, not later than September 1 of each year, each district shall prepare
- 11 and have available for state review an annual action plan. The district annual action plan shall:
- 12 (1) Enumerate the specific activities, persons responsible, and timelines for action to be
- 13 taken as part of the strategic initiatives set forth in the district's three-year (3) improvement plan;
- 14 and
- 15 (2) Identify the staff and financial resources allocated to support these activities.
- 16 (j) Annually, the principal of each school shall:
- 17 (1) In consultation with the school improvement team, adopt student performance goals for
- 18 the schools consistent with the school performance goals established by the department of
- 19 education pursuant to state and federal law and regulations;
- 20 (2) Consistent with any educational policies established for the district, assess the needs of
- 21 the school in light of those goals;
- 22 (3) Formulate a school plan to advance such goals and improve student performance. The
- 23 school's plan to support improved student performance shall:
- 24 (i) Include, but not be limited to, the same components required for the district
- 25 improvement plan;
- 26 (ii) Conform to department and district specifications to ensure that such school
- 27 improvement plans meet state and federal law requirements; and
- 28 (iii) Be submitted to the superintendent who shall review and approve the plan, after
- 29 consultation with the school committee, not later than July 1 of the year in which the plan is to be
- 30 implemented, according to a plan development and review schedule established by the district
- 31 superintendent; and
- 32 (4)(i) Prepare and have available for district and state review by July 1 annually, a report,
- 33 based on SurveyWorks or other data collection, that shall provide aggregated graduating student
- 34 data on race, ethnicity, and gender for the following:

1 (A) The total number of students graduating;

2 (B) The total number of students graduating who are applying for admission to a college,  
3 university, or vocational training program;

4 (C) The total number of students completing a free application for federal student aid  
5 (“FAFSA”) form; and

6 (D) The total number of students who are eligible to fill out and submit a FAFSA form.

7 (ii) The department shall include, in SurveyWorks or an equivalent data collection tool,  
8 inquiries to collect the data and information referenced in subsection (j)(4)(i) of this section.

9 (k) The three-year (3) comprehensive district plan, annual district action plan, and annual  
10 school improvement plan shall replace any district and school plans previously required under the  
11 general laws or regulation, that, in the professional opinion of the commissioner, would be most  
12 effectively presented as part of the coordinated district or school plan for improving student  
13 achievement. The department shall identify any additional reports or plans called for by any general  
14 law or regulation that can be incorporated into this single filing in order to reduce paperwork and  
15 eliminate duplication.

16 (l) Each school district in which more than twenty percent (20%) of the students do not  
17 meet grade-level expectations of at least proficient or its equivalent on the Rhode Island  
18 comprehensive assessment system exam (“RICAS”) shall submit a RICAS success plan to the  
19 department. The plan shall describe the school district’s strategies for helping each student to  
20 master the skills, competencies, and knowledge required for the competency determination. In  
21 recognition of the department’s mission as a district support agency, then at the request of the  
22 district or in response to reporting data provided under this subsection, the department shall:

23 (1) Determine the elements that shall be required to be included in such plan. These  
24 elements may include, but are not limited to, the following:

25 (i) A plan to assess each student’s strengths, weaknesses, and needs;

26 (ii) A plan to use summer school, after school, and other additional support to provide each  
27 child with the assistance needed; and

28 (iii) A plan for involving the parents of students.

29 (2) Examine each district’s plan and determine if it has a reasonable prospect of  
30 significantly reducing the school district’s failure rates.

31 (3) Coordinate oversight of the RICAS success plans with existing education review and  
32 oversight functions and with the RICAS grant program.

33 (m) Each school district shall file a report with the department every year by a date and in  
34 a format determined by the board. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 1 (1) An outline of the curriculum and graduation requirements of the district;
- 2 (2) Pupil/teacher ratios and class size policy and practice;
- 3 (3) Teacher and administrator evaluation procedures;
- 4 (4) Statistics, policies, and procedures relative to truancy and dropouts;
- 5 (5) Statistics, policies, and procedures relative to expulsions and in-school and out-of-
- 6 school suspensions;
- 7 (6) Percent of school-age children attending public schools;
- 8 (7) Racial composition of teaching and administrative staff;
- 9 (8) Enrollment and average daily attendance; and
- 10 (9) The annual budgets and expenditures for both the district and the individual schools in
- 11 the district.
- 12 (n) Each school district shall file a description of the following instructional procedures
- 13 and programs with the department every year:
- 14 (1) Art and music programs;
- 15 (2) Technology education;
- 16 (3) Programs for gifted and talented students;
- 17 (4) Adult education programs;
- 18 (5) Library and media facilities;
- 19 (6) Condition of instructional materials, including textbooks, workbooks, audio-visual
- 20 materials, and laboratory materials;
- 21 (7) Types and condition of computers and computer software;
- 22 (8) Basic skills remediation programs;
- 23 (9) Drug, tobacco, and alcohol abuse programs;
- 24 (10) Multi-cultural education training for students and teachers;
- 25 (11) Global education; and
- 26 (12) Nutrition and wellness programs.
- 27 (o) Each school district and charter school shall file an annual report for the current school
- 28 year regarding implementation with the department on or before every November 1 in a format
- 29 determined by the board. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
- 30 (1) The number of children receiving services within each disability category;
- 31 (2) The number of children, by grade level, within each disability category and the costs of
- 32 services provided by each such category for such children receiving their education in a publicly
- 33 operated day school program;
- 34 (3) The number of children, by grade level, within each disability category and the costs of

1 services provided by each category for these children receiving their education in a private day  
2 setting;

3 (4) The number of children, by grade level, within each such disability category and the  
4 costs of services provided by each such category for such children receiving their education in a  
5 private residential setting;

6 (5) The number of children who remain in the regular education program full-time; the  
7 number of children who are removed from the regular classroom for up to twenty-five percent  
8 (25%) of the day; the number of children who are removed from the regular classroom between  
9 twenty-five percent (25%) and sixty percent (60%) of the day;

10 (6) The number of children who are placed in substantially separate classrooms on a regular  
11 education school site;

12 (7) The number of children, ages three (3) and four (4) who are educated in integrated and  
13 separate classrooms; and the assignment, by sex, national origin, economic status, and race, of  
14 children by age level, to special education classes and the distribution of children residing in the  
15 district, by sex, national origin, economic status, and race of children by age level; and

16 (8) The number of children, by grade level, receiving special education services who have  
17 limited English proficiency.

18 (p) Each school district and charter school shall furnish in a timely manner such additional  
19 information as the department shall request.

20 (q) Each school district required to provide an English language learners program shall file  
21 the following information with the department annually:

22 (1) The type of English language learners programs provided;

23 (2) With regard to limited English proficient students:

24 (i) The number enrolled in each type of English language learners program;

25 (ii) The number enrolled in English as a second language who are not enrolled in another  
26 English language learners program;

27 (iii) The results of basic skills, curriculum assessment, achievement, and language  
28 proficiency testing, whether administered in English or in the native language;

29 (iv) The absentee, suspension, expulsion, dropout, and promotion rates; and

30 (v) The number of years each limited English proficient student has been enrolled in an  
31 English language learners program;

32 (3) The number of students each year who have enrolled in institutions of higher education  
33 and were formerly enrolled in an English language learners program;

34 (4) The academic progress in regular education of students who have completed an English

1 language learners program;

2 (5) For each limited English proficient student receiving special education, the number of  
3 years in the school district prior to special education evaluation and the movement in special  
4 education programs by program placement;

5 (6) The number of limited English proficient students enrolled in programs of occupational  
6 or vocational education;

7 (7) The name, national origin, native language, certificates held, language proficiency,  
8 grade levels, and subjects taught by each teacher of an English language learners program, bilingual  
9 aides or paraprofessionals, bilingual guidance or adjustment counselors, and bilingual school  
10 psychologists;

11 (8) The per-pupil expenditures for each full-time equivalent student enrolled in an English  
12 language learners program;

13 (9) The sources and amounts of all funds expended on students enrolled in English  
14 language learners programs, broken down by local, state, and federal sources, and whether any such  
15 funds expended supplanted, rather than supplemented, the local school district obligation;

16 (10) The participation of parents through parent advisory councils;

17 (11) Whether there were any complaints filed with any federal or state court or  
18 administrative agency, since the program's inception, concerning the compliance with federal or  
19 state minimum legal requirements, the disposition of the complaint, and the monitoring and  
20 evaluation of any such agreement or court order relative to the complaint; and

21 (12) This information shall be filed in the form of the total for the school district as well as  
22 categorized by school, grade, and language.

23 (r) The commissioner annually shall analyze and publish data reported by school districts  
24 under this section regarding English language learners programs and limited English proficient  
25 students. Publication shall include, but need not be limited to, availability on the department's  
26 website. The commissioner shall submit annually a report to the committees of jurisdiction for  
27 education in the house of representatives and senate on this data on a statewide and school district  
28 basis including, but not limited to, by language group and type of English language learners  
29 programs.

30 (s) For the purposes of this chapter, "local education agencies" shall include all of the  
31 following within the state of Rhode Island:

32 (1) Public school districts;

33 (2) Regional school districts;

34 (3) State-operated schools;



- 1 (4) Regional collaborative schools; and
- 2 (5) Charter schools and mayoral academies.
- 3 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 -- EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

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1           This act would incorporate the department of elementary and secondary education's  
2 SurveyWorks school climate indicators disaggregated by local education agencies ("LEAs") and  
3 individual public schools, or any other such future system used as a replacement or substitute for  
4 SurveyWorks to measure school climate indicators for evaluating the performance of LEAs and  
5 individual public schools.

6           This act would take effect upon passage.

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