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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- COOPERATIVE SERVICE AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Introduced By: Representatives J. Lombardi, Hull, and Sanchez

Date Introduced: January 23, 2026

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-3.1-11 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-3.1 entitled
2 "Cooperative Service Among School Districts [See Title 16 Chapter 97 — The Rhode Island Board
3 of Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-3.1-11. Urban collaborative.**

5 (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, the school
6 committees of the cities of Providence, Pawtucket, East Providence, Central Falls and other Rhode
7 Island school districts as may be approved for inclusion by existing member districts in accordance
8 with collaborative bylaws are authorized and empowered to continue and/or initiate cooperative
9 efforts to provide alternate education programs and/or diagnostic services required by law or
10 regulation for students achieving limited success in traditional settings and to do all things
11 necessary including, but not limited to utilization of technology, including television, all on a
12 collaborative basis.

13 (b) The various school committees may assign and delegate to ~~their respective school~~
14 ~~committee chairs or designee or superintendents of schools or designee, acting as a regional~~ the
15 urban collaborative board any duties, responsibilities, and powers that the committees may deem
16 necessary for the conduct, administration, and management of the urban collaborative. The school
17 committee of each member district shall appoint one board member plus one additional board
18 member for every thirty (30) students attending the urban collaborative from the member district.
19 Whenever a vacancy arises on the urban collaborative board, the urban collaborative board may

provide a list of suggested candidates to the school committee of the member district filling the vacancy. Although these suggestions shall be non-binding, and the school committee may select a board member who is not on the list of suggested candidates, the school committee shall give due consideration to the list of suggested candidates the urban collaborative board may provide.

(c)(1) Beginning on July 1, 2013 the urban collaborative shall be funded pursuant to the provisions of § 16-7.2-3. The state share of the permanent foundation education aid shall be paid directly to the urban collaborative pursuant to the provisions of § 16-7.2-7. The local school district shall transfer the difference between the calculated state share of the permanent foundation education aid and the amount calculated pursuant to the provisions of § 16-7.2-7 to the urban collaborative, until the transition of the state share is complete. In addition, the local school district shall pay the local share of education funding to the urban collaborative as outlined in § 16-7.2-5.

(2) The urban collaborative shall be eligible to receive other aids, grants, Medicaid revenue, and any other revenue according to Rhode Island law, as though it were a school district. Federal aid received by the state shall be used to benefit students in the urban collaborative, if the school qualifies for the aid, as though it were a school district.

(d) Nothing in chapter 7.1 of title 16 shall be construed to authorize the department of elementary and secondary education to exercise control over the powers of a school committee pursuant to this section. During the duration of the intervention and support for the Providence public school district pursuant to § 16-7.1-5 including, but not limited to, the assumption of control over budget, program, and/or personnel of individual schools within the Providence public school district:

(1) No decision to terminate Providence's participation in the urban collaborative shall be valid without the approval of the Providence school board. Any such decisions made prior to the effective date of this subsection shall be null and void until approved by the Providence school board.

(2) No decision to withdraw Providence students from the urban collaborative without their consent shall be valid without the approval of the Providence school board.

(3) Any student of the Providence public schools who has been denied matriculation in the urban collaborative by the Providence public school district may apply directly to the urban collaborative for matriculation in the urban collaborative.

(4) The Providence public schools shall not reduce either per pupil or total funding to the urban collaborative below the fiscal year 2025 level, increased by the same percentage as the state total of school aid is increased.

1 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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- 1 This act would amend the composition of the urban collaborative in Providence and would
2 provide that the urban collaborative would be governed by a board of trustees. It would also clarify
3 that the Providence public schools cannot terminate their participation in the urban collaborative
4 during the state takeover of the Providence public schools without the approval of the Providence
5 school board.
6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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