

2026 -- H 7480

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LC003207

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE CHILDREN'S CARDIAC SAFETY ACT

Introduced By: Representative Lauren H. Carson

Date Introduced: February 04, 2026

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended by
2 adding thereto the following chapter:

CHAPTER 91.2

THE CHILDREN'S CARDIAC SAFETY ACT

16-91.2-1. Title.

This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "The Children's Cardiac Safety Act".

16-91.2-2. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings,

9 unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

10 (1) "Commissioner" or "education commissioner" means the commissioner of elementary
11 and secondary education as described in §16-60-6.

12 (2) "Healthcare professional" means a physician, advanced practice nurse, or physician
13 assistant.

14 (3) "School district" includes all traditional public schools as well as charter public schools
15 and mayoral academies.

16-91.2-3. Annual examinations.

17 A registered, licensed, and certified healthcare professional who performs an annual
18 physical examination of a child nineteen (19) years of age or younger shall include a cardiovascular
19 prescreening that follows nationally recognized, evidence-based guidelines recommended by

1 organizations focused on cardiovascular care in pediatric populations. Key pre-screening elements
2 shall include a targeted personal history and family history and focused physical examination to
3 detect or raise suspicion for cardiovascular disease. The healthcare professional who performs the
4 annual physical examination shall refer the child with positive findings to a cardiologist for further
5 evaluation and testing.

6 **16-91.2-4. Guidance provided.**

7 (a) The department of elementary and secondary education and the department of health
8 shall collaborate and work in conjunction and set forth guidance to both public and private schools
9 and require that prior to the participation of any student enrolled in grades kindergarten through
10 twelve (12) on a school or community organization sponsored interscholastic or intramural athletic
11 team or squad, the student shall have a physical examination to detect or raise suspicion of
12 cardiovascular disease and submit a preparticipation physical evaluation form certified by the
13 examining healthcare provider attesting to completion of the examination.

14 (b) This physical examination shall be conducted within twelve (12) months prior to the
15 first day of official practice in an athletic season and shall be conducted by a registered, licensed,
16 and certified healthcare professional. The physical examination may be done as part of the student
17 athlete's annual well-child visit.

18 (c) A school committee or board of education of a public school district and the governing
19 board or chief school administrator of a nonpublic school shall not permit a student enrolled in
20 grades kindergarten through twelve (12) to participate on a school or community-based
21 organization sponsored interscholastic or intramural athletic team or squad unless the student has
22 completed the examination provided in subsection (a) of this section and submitted a
23 preparticipation physical evaluation form.

24 **16-91.2-5. Single form.**

25 The department of health shall create a single form to be utilized in all preparticipation
26 physical evaluations statewide.

27 **16-91.2-6. Practitioner education.**

28 The state departments of elementary and secondary education and health, in collaboration
29 with the Rhode Island chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Rhode Island Academy
30 of Family Physicians, the American Heart Association, and the Rhode Island Chapter of the
31 American College of Cardiology, shall establish policies, programs, training, and/or continuing
32 education to increase the assessment skills of those healthcare practitioners who perform well-child
33 physical examinations and preparticipation physical evaluations.

34 **16-91.2-7. Annual report.**

1 The department of health shall compile and publish on its website an annual report
2 containing the total number of preparticipation physical exams that were completed and the number
3 of referrals that were made to a cardiologist. This report shall also analyze the outcomes of this data
4 and include any recommendations for changes.

5 **16-91.2-8. Pamphlet prepared.**

6 (a) The education commissioner, in consultation with the director of the department of
7 health, the American Heart Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, shall develop a
8 pamphlet that provides information about diseases that can cause sudden cardiac arrest to children
9 and their parents. The pamphlet shall include an explanation of sudden cardiac arrest, its incidence,
10 a description of early warning signs, and an overview of the options that are privately available to
11 screen for cardiac conditions that may lead to sudden cardiac arrest, including a statement about
12 the limitations of these options.

13 (b) The commissioner shall distribute the pamphlet, at no charge, to all school districts in
14 the state. The commissioner shall update the pamphlet as necessary and shall make additional
15 copies available to non-public schools upon request.

16 (c) Beginning in the 2027-2028 school year, each school district shall annually distribute
17 this pamphlet to the parents or guardians of students participating in school sports as part of the
18 student's completion of athletic permission forms. A student and their parent or guardian shall
19 certify in writing that they received and reviewed the pamphlet.

20 **16-91.2-9. Consistency with other chapters.**

21 The provisions of this chapter are intended to support, expand upon, and be consistent with
22 the provisions of chapter 91.1 of title 16 ("the sudden cardiac arrest prevention act"). To the extent
23 there are any express conflicts between these chapters that cannot be resolved, the provisions of
24 this chapter 91.2 of title 16 shall supersede any conflicting provisions in chapter 91.1 of title 16

25 **16-91.2-10. Rules and regulations.**

26 The education commissioner in consultation with the director of the department of health
27 shall promulgate rules and regulations to effectuate the provisions of this chapter, pursuant to
28 chapter 35 of title 42 ("administrative procedures").

29 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2027.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- THE CHILDREN'S CARDIAC SAFETY ACT

- 1 This act would establish "The Children's Cardiac Safety Act" and provide for annual
- 2 cardiovascular screening of children ages nineteen and under. This act would also require that
- 3 student athletes submit a preparticipation form before engaging in athletic sports.
- 4 This act would take effect on January 1, 2027.

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