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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND SUPERINTENDENTS

Introduced By: Representatives Biah, Read, Speakman, Chippendale, Paplauskas, Potter,  
Cruz, McNamara, J. Lombardi, and Hull

Date Introduced: March 20, 2026

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Chapter 16-2 of the General Laws entitled "School Committees and  
2 Superintendents [See Title 16 Chapter 97 — The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby  
3 amended by adding thereto the following section:

4           **16-2-3.1. School calendar flexibility during declared states of emergency.**

5           (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law, rule, or regulation requiring a minimum  
6 number of school days or instructional hours for public schools in the state, any day or days during  
7 which a public school is closed due to a state of emergency declared by the governor of the State  
8 of Rhode Island shall be deemed excused for purposes of compliance with the minimum school  
9 days calendar requirements.

10          (b) School districts and public schools shall not be required to submit individual waiver  
11 requests to the Rhode Island department of elementary and secondary education for instructional  
12 days missed as a result of a declared state of emergency.

13          (c) Any school day canceled due to a declared state of emergency shall not be required to  
14 be made up by extending the school year, adding additional school days, or otherwise modifying  
15 the approved school calendar.

16          (d) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education may issue general guidance  
17 to school districts regarding emergency closures, but shall not require individual waivers for  
18 closures occurring during the officially declared state of emergency period.

19          (e) The provisions of this section shall apply only to school closures resulting directly from

1 [a natural disaster, severe weather event, public safety emergency, or other emergency conditions](#)  
2 [for which the governor has issued an official state of emergency declaration.](#)

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 -- SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND SUPERINTENDENTS

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1           This act would provide that any schools days a public school is closed due to a declared  
2 state of emergency would be deemed excused for purposes of compliance with minimum school  
3 days calendar requirements.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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