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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - CURRICULUM

Introduced By: Senators Gallo, Ruggerio, Goodwin, McCaffrey, and Algieri

Date Introduced: May 08, 2019

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-22 of the General Laws entitled "Curriculum [See Title 16
2 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended by adding thereto
3 the following sections:

4 **16-22-30. Statewide academic standards.**

5 (a) The council on elementary and secondary education (the "council") shall direct the
6 commissioner of elementary and secondary education (the "commissioner") to institute a process
7 to develop statewide academic standards for the core subjects of mathematics, English language
8 arts, science and technology, history and social studies, world languages, and the arts. This
9 process shall:

10 (1) Be open and consultative;

11 (2) Include, but need not be limited to, a culturally and racially diverse group of
12 classroom teachers and students; and

13 (3) Include, but need not be limited to, reviewing and revising current standards, as well
14 as adopting new ones, if deemed appropriate.

15 (b) The commissioner shall develop the statewide academic standards pursuant to this
16 section by no later than June 30, 2020, and again as required by the council's procedures set forth
17 in subsection (f) of this section. The standards shall:

18 (1) Cover grades prekindergarten through grade twelve (PK-12);

19 (2) Clearly set forth the skills, competencies, and knowledge expected to be demonstrated

1 by all students at the conclusion of individual grades or grade spans;

2 (3) Be formulated so as to set high expectations for student performance;

3 (4) Provide clear and specific examples that embody and reflect these high expectations;

4 (5) Be constructed with due regard to the established research and recommendations of

5 national organizations, to the best of similar efforts in other states, and to the level of skills,

6 competencies, and knowledge possessed by typical students in the most educationally-advanced

7 nations. The skills, competencies, and knowledge set forth in the standards shall define the

8 performance outcomes expected of both students directly entering the workforce and of students

9 pursuing higher education. In addition, the skills, competencies, and knowledge set forth in the

10 standards shall inform the design and implementation of the Rhode Island comprehensive

11 assessment system ("RICAS") in mathematics, English language arts, and science and

12 technology. The RICAS shall align with federal law, be in place for no fewer than ten (10) years,

13 and facilitate comparisons of students of other states and nations;

14 (6) Be designed to instill respect for the cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity of this state,

15 and for the contributions made by diverse cultural, ethnic, and racial groups to the life of this

16 state;

17 (7) Be designed to avoid perpetuating gender, cultural, ethnic, or racial stereotypes;

18 (8) Reflect sensitivity to different learning styles;

19 (9) Reflect sensitivity to impediments to learning, which may include issues related to,

20 but not limited to, cultural, financial, emotional, health, and social factors; and

21 (10) Be in a form readily comprehensible by the general public.

22 (c) This section shall not require the abandonment of any standards already in place, so

23 long as the commissioner determines that said standards meet the statewide goals contained

24 herein.

25 (d) The commissioner shall submit a copy of the standards to the council for approval at

26 least sixty (60) days prior to the standards taking effect.

27 (e) Upon approval, the council shall make the standards available to the public.

28 (f) The council shall develop procedures for updating, improving, or refining standards

29 pursuant to this section by no later than June 30, 2020. The procedures shall include a

30 requirement that the council review and evaluate the standards regularly, but at least every three

31 (3) years, to ensure that the high quality of the standards is maintained.

32 (g) On or before December 1, 2020, and annually thereafter on or before December 1, the

33 commissioner shall report to the governor, president of the senate, and the speaker of the house,

34 regarding the progress toward fulfilling the requirements of this section.

1 **16-22-31. Curriculum frameworks.**

2 (a)(1) The council on elementary and secondary education (the "council") shall direct the
3 commissioner of elementary and secondary education (the "commissioner") to institute a process
4 to develop curriculum frameworks for mathematics, English language arts, science and
5 technology, history and social studies, world languages, and the arts. This process shall:

6 (i) Be open and consultative;

7 (ii) Include, but need not be limited to, a culturally and racially diverse group of
8 classroom teachers and students; and

9 (iii) Include, but need not be limited to, reviewing and revising current frameworks, as
10 well as developing new ones, if deemed appropriate.

11 (2) The process may include, but need not be limited to, community groups, cultural
12 organizations, parents, teacher preparation programs, and leading college and university figures in
13 both subject matter disciplines and pedagogy.

14 (b) The commissioner shall develop the curriculum frameworks pursuant to this section
15 by no later than September 1, 2020, and again as required by the council's procedures set forth in
16 subsection (e) of this section. The curriculum frameworks developed by the commissioner shall:

17 (1) Present broad, research-based pedagogical approaches and strategies to assist
18 students develop the skills, competencies, and knowledge called for by the statewide standards
19 provided in § 16-22-30;

20 (2) Provide sufficient detail to guide and inform processes for the education, professional
21 development, certification, and evaluation of both active and aspiring teachers and administrators;

22 (3) Provide sufficient detail to guide the implementation of student assessment
23 instruments;

24 (4) Be constructed to guide and assist teachers, administrators, publishers, software
25 developers, and other interested parties in the development and selection of curricula, textbooks,
26 technology, and other instructional materials, and in the design of pedagogical approaches and
27 strategies for use in elementary, secondary, and career and technical schools;

28 (5) Be aligned with the state's commitment to college and career readiness;

29 (6) Encourage demanding real-world application, multi-disciplinary problem solving,
30 integration of academic and career and technical education curriculum, project-based learning,
31 performance assessment, team teaching, and alignment of classroom instruction with work-based
32 learning opportunities;

33 (7) Promote better alignment with postsecondary curriculum and instruction, including,
34 but not limited to, the expansion and/or use of dual enrollment and dual credit opportunities for

1 high school students that help them with the postsecondary transition, persistence, and attainment
2 of a credential;

3 (8) Encourage capstone projects and associated performance assessments that provide
4 students the opportunity to demonstrate holistic proficiency with respect to research, cross-
5 disciplinary problem solving, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and oral defense.

6 (9) Present specific, pedagogical approaches and strategies to meet the academic and
7 non-academic needs of English learner, economically disadvantaged, special education, and
8 academically advanced students;

9 (10) Be designed to avoid perpetuating gender, cultural, ethnic, or racial stereotypes;

10 (11) Reflect sensitivity to different learning styles;

11 (12) Reflect sensitivity to impediments to learning, which may include issues related to,
12 but not limited to, cultural, financial, emotional, health, and social factors; and

13 (13) Be in a form readily comprehensible by the general public.

14 (c) The commissioner shall submit a copy of the frameworks to the council for approval
15 at least sixty (60) days prior to the frameworks taking effect.

16 (d) Upon approval, the council shall make the frameworks available to the public.

17 (e) The council shall develop procedures for updating, improving, or refining curriculum
18 frameworks pursuant to this section by no later than September 1, 2020. The procedures shall
19 include a requirement that the council review and evaluate the frameworks regularly, but at least
20 every three (3) years, to ensure that the high quality of the frameworks is maintained.

21 (f) On or before December 1, 2020, and annually thereafter on or before December 1, the
22 commissioner shall report to the governor, president of the senate, and the speaker of the house,
23 regarding the progress toward fulfilling the requirements of this section.

24 **16-22-32. High quality curriculum and materials.**

25 (a)(1) The council on elementary and secondary education (the "council") shall direct the
26 commissioner of elementary and secondary education (the "commissioner") to institute a process
27 for reviewing and identifying curriculum and materials for mathematics, English language arts,
28 science and technology, history and social studies, world languages, and the arts that meet the
29 following requirements:

30 (i) Is aligned with the academic standards provided in § 16-22-30;

31 (ii) Is aligned with the curriculum frameworks provided in § 16-22-31;

32 (iii) Is aligned with the RICAS, or any other test that is adopted as a statewide
33 standardized test; and

34 (iv) Is of high quality.

1 (2) The commissioner shall identify at least five (5) examples each of curricula for
2 mathematics and English language arts pursuant to this section by no later than January 1, 2021,
3 for science and technology, history and social studies, world languages, and the arts pursuant to
4 this section by no later than January 1, 2022, and again as required by the council's procedures set
5 forth in subsection (a)(7) of this section. Once identified, the curricula shall be made available to
6 the public, subject to copyright considerations.

7 (3) The commissioner shall direct all local education agencies ("LEAs") to select among
8 the identified high-quality curricula and materials by the time of their next adoption cycle, but in
9 any case, no later than June 30, 2021 for mathematics and English language arts, and by no later
10 than June 30, 2022 for science and technology, history and social studies, world languages, and
11 the arts. LEAs shall select curriculum and materials that are responsive to the LEA's cultural and
12 linguistic needs, and support culturally responsive practices.

13 (4) The commissioner shall institute a waiver process for LEAs that would like to use a
14 curriculum other than any of the five (5) identified pursuant to this section. Part of that process
15 may include, but is not limited to, asking the LEA to:

16 (i) Develop local curriculum goals;

17 (ii) Form program-review teams, comprised of grade-level groups with representation
18 from all schools, which are facilitated by LEA leadership;

19 (iii) Review indicators for the proposed curriculum such as text complexity and quality,
20 building knowledge with texts, and vocabulary and tasks to ensure alignment with local goals;

21 (iv) Communicate the rationale for selecting the proposed curriculum over any of the five
22 (5) selected by the department;

23 (v) Engage publishers with grade-level teams to review the proposed curriculum and
24 discuss strengths and weaknesses;

25 (vi) Identify other LEAs, whether in state or otherwise, that have implemented the
26 proposed curriculum and discuss, to the extent feasible, assessment results; and

27 (vii) Make recommendations to the LEA leadership regarding the proposed curriculum,
28 after which the leadership shall make the final decision concerning whether to submit a waiver
29 request.

30 (5) Waiver determinations made pursuant to subsection (a)(4) of this section shall be
31 appealable to the board of education.

32 (6) The following are additional circumstances under which an LEA may select and use
33 curriculum and materials other than any of the five (5) identified pursuant to this section:

34 (i) Where an LEA has at least seventy-five percent (75%) of its students meeting

1 expectations on state assessments and has no student subgroup identified for targeted assistance
2 under Rhode Island's accountability process.

3 (ii) Where an individual school has at least seventy-five percent (75%) of its students
4 meeting expectations on state assessments and has no student subgroup identified for targeted
5 assistance under Rhode Island's accountability process; provided that, the individual school
6 obtains approval from its LEA.

7 (6) LEAs shall develop and execute a curriculum implementation plan that includes
8 professional development to ensure that all teachers and administrators are prepared to implement
9 the new curriculum with the necessary skill and knowledge.

10 (7) The council shall develop procedures for updating the identification of curricula and
11 materials pursuant to this section by no later than September 1, 2020. The procedures shall
12 include a requirement that the council review and evaluate the identified curricula and materials
13 regularly, but at least every three (3) years, to ensure that the high quality of the curricula and
14 materials is maintained.

15 (b) On or before December 1, 2020, and annually thereafter on or before December 1, the
16 commissioner shall report to the governor, president of the senate, and the speaker of the house,
17 regarding the progress toward fulfilling the requirements of this section.

18 **16-22-33. Curriculum implementation accountability.**

19 (a) Once local education agencies ("LEAs") select high-quality curriculum and materials
20 pursuant to § 16-22-32, the department of elementary and secondary education (the "department")
21 shall identify an LEA assistance partner from within the department to provide any and all
22 support requested by the LEA or individual schools within the LEA regarding access to,
23 implementation of, and professional development for the curriculum and materials.

24 (b) The LEA assistance partner shall meet with teachers, principals, administrators, or
25 other school officials of the LEA to which they are assigned at a school within the LEA on a
26 regular basis, which shall be no less frequently than every three (3) months, to discuss the
27 progress toward implementing the curriculum and materials effectively. Areas of discussion may
28 include, but are not limited to:

29 (i) Barriers to learning and plans to eliminate said barriers;

30 (ii) Best practices regarding pedagogical techniques given the diversity of the student
31 population being served;

32 (iii) Where to locate additional professional development resources; and

33 (iv) Implementation strategies that have been successful to share with other LEAs that are
34 using the same curriculum and materials.

1 (c) The LEA assistance partner shall tour all schools within its assigned LEA with at least
2 one teacher and the principal or assistant principal:

3 (i) To observe challenges teachers are facing while implementing the curriculum and
4 materials;

5 (ii) To discuss with the teacher and principal or assistant principal ideas to help resolve
6 those challenges; and

7 (iii) To answer any questions regarding the curriculum or implementation thereof.

8 (d) The LEA assistance partner shall have follow-up meetings at schools within their
9 assigned LEA as often as requested by an individual school or the entire LEA to ensure all
10 educators are comfortable implementing the curriculum effectively.

11 (e) The LEA assistance partner shall report to the department no less frequently than
12 every three (3) months regarding the status of curriculum implementation at the schools within
13 their assigned LEA.

14 (g) The commissioner is hereby authorized to promulgate rules and regulations necessary
15 to implement the provisions of this section.

16 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 - CURRICULUM

1 This act would require the commissioner of elementary and secondary education to
2 develop statewide academic standards and curriculum frameworks for the core subjects of
3 mathematics, English language arts, science and technology, history and social studies, world
4 languages, and the arts. This act would also require the commissioner to identify at least five (5)
5 examples of high-quality curriculum and materials for each of the core subjects, after which local
6 education agencies ("LEAs") would be required to select and implement one for each of the core
7 subjects. Once LEAs select a high-quality curriculum and materials, the department of elementary
8 and secondary education ("department") would identify an LEA assistance partner from within
9 the department to provide any and all support regarding access to, implementation of, and
10 professional development for the curriculum and materials.

11 This act would take effect upon passage.

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