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LC02280
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2006

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - REGIONAL COUNTY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

Introduced By: Representatives Kilmartin, Crowley, and Slater

Date Introduced: February 15, 2006

Referred To: House Finance

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" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following sections:

3 **16-2-35. Regional county school superintendents established.** -- (a) Effective July 1,
4 2008, there is hereby established in each county of this state the position of Regional County
5 School Superintendent. Provided, that in Providence County only, there shall be two (2) regional
6 county school superintendents. The initial term for each superintendent shall be for a period of
7 five (5) consecutive years commencing immediately upon July 1, 2008.

8 On or before July 1, 2007, the board of regents for elementary and secondary education
9 shall promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the provisions of
10 this section and section 16-2-35.1 including, but not limited to, the process for accepting
11 applications for the positions of regional county school superintendent, and the process for
12 selecting the nominees for the initial presentment to the school committees. On or before July 1,
13 2008, the board of regents of elementary and secondary education shall prepare a list of three (3)
14 nominees for the initial regional county school superintendent for each county; provided, the
15 board of regents shall present a list of five (5) nominees in Providence County only.

16 The governing school board or committee in each city and town shall vote on the
17 nominees provided by the board of regents. Each such school board or committee shall have one
18 vote towards the selection of the regional county school superintendent. In the event that no
19 candidate receives a majority or plurality of votes, the board of regents shall conduct subsequent

1 votes among the school committees, eliminating the candidate receiving the fewest number of
2 votes in each election, until an individual receives a majority of votes. For subsequent terms, the
3 regional county school superintendent shall be chosen by a vote of the majority of electors in each
4 city or town, which comprises the county.

5 (b) The board of regents shall provide in its budget for appropriate office space and
6 support staff for each regional county school superintendent. Such office space shall include at
7 least one office physically located in the respective county for each superintendent.

8 (c) The provisions of this act shall apply and include regional school boards and
9 committees as well as to individual city and town school boards and committees.

10 (d) As used herein, the term "county" shall include those counties that comprise the state,
11 including the counties of Providence, Kent, Bristol, Washington, and Newport.

12 **16-2-35.1 Contracts of school superintendents.** -- (a) On or before June 15, 2008, every
13 school board or committee in this state shall forward to the board of regents the following:

14 (1) the name of their school or district school superintendent;

15 (2) the date of hire of said superintendent, the date any contract and/or term of
16 employment with said superintendent is set to expire; and

17 (3) a copy of any contract in effect between the board, city, or town, and said
18 superintendent pertaining to employment.

19 (b) Effective. [Effective date of this act] No city, town, school board, or school
20 committee in this state shall enter into or extend a contract of any city or town school
21 superintendent for a term beyond July 1, 2008. Provided, the provisions of this section shall not
22 invalidate the provisions of any contract in effect prior to [effective date of this act], but no such
23 contract shall be extended or rendered. Any school superintendent in said position as of [effective
24 date of this act] shall be permitted to fulfill the balance of any term provided for in his or her
25 contract.

26 (c) Effective July 1, 2008, every school board and committee in this state shall designate
27 a representative to meet on a regular basis with the regional county school superintendent for
28 their respective county.

29 **16-2-36. Purpose of regional county school superintendent.** – (a) The purpose of the
30 regional county school superintendent shall be to assist communities within the state to operate
31 schools on a more efficient and economic basis through the development of regional school
32 districts and to enhance the services of the schools in line with present day needs. In particular, it
33 is the mission of each superintendent to provide constructive oversight in a single county office
34 and to and facilitate the combination of resources in each county.

1 (b) By way of illustration only, and not as a conclusive statement of purpose, the
2 regional county school superintendents selected pursuant to the provisions of this chapter shall
3 work with the school boards, committees, and superintendents in the cities and towns within their
4 county to facilitate the following:

5 (1) To provide education for individuals with disabilities;

6 (2) To provide transportation for all schools in the county;

7 (3) To provide school health services;

8 (4) To provide guidance services;

9 (5) To provide either general supervisory services for all the schools of the area or
10 supervisory services in some special field such as vocational education; and

11 (6) To provide other educational services as the people of the county may determine,
12 subject to approval by the commissioner of elementary and secondary education.

13 **16-2-37. Powers and duties.** – (a) The regional county school superintendents shall
14 assume all of the powers and duties of superintendents as provided for in this chapter, and shall
15 meet on a regular basis with the school boards, committees, and superintendents in the cities and
16 towns within their county. The superintendents shall also meet collectively at least four (4) times
17 in a calendar year to research, review, and make recommendations consistent with the purposes
18 set forth in section 16-2-36.

19 (b) The superintendents shall also conduct feasibility studies concerning the
20 regionalization of the provision of educational services in the county. During the course of these
21 studies, the superintendents shall address the following issues:

22 (1) Will regionalization of superintendents allow the cities or towns to offer a complete K
23 through 12 educational program (in particular, if the town or city currently "tuitions-out" some of
24 its students)?

25 (2) Will regionalization of superintendents allow the school system to offer a more
26 comprehensive and/or diversified program for high school students (i.e., advanced language,
27 mathematics, etc., specialized and/or remedial courses)?

28 (3) Will regionalization, by its size alone, allow savings through "economies of scale"?

29 (4) What effect will regionalization have on transportation costs for the county and
30 transportation times for students?

31 (5) What effect will regionalization have on class size and will that be beneficial or
32 detrimental to the students' classroom performance, socialization skills, and/or participation in
33 school activities?

34 (6) How will "spending per pupil" change with regionalization?

1 (7) Are there weaknesses in the curriculum or programs within a county that can be
2 remedied by regionalization?

3 (8) What effect will existing labor contracts and bargaining agreements have on
4 regionalization efforts?

5 (9) What new or diverse facility requirements will be needed if regionalization occurs
6 and what are the costs of these facilities?

7 (10) What effect will regionalization have on disadvantaged and special populations
8 within the county?

9 (11) Will extracurricular activities and/or the student support services (guidance, library,
10 etc.) be enhanced by regionalization?

11 (12) Will regionalization permit sufficient "local control" for all districts involved to
12 assure parents that they have some influence on the education of their children?

13 (13) Will regionalization take into effect the unique socio-economic and cultural heritage
14 of the participating cities and/or towns?

15 (14) Will regionalization have any effect on the vocational education program?

16 (15) Do comparative studies of regionalization in similar areas show improved school
17 quality?

18 (16) Do the regionalization plans take into effect projected demographic trends?

19 (c) The regional county school superintendents shall report their findings on an annual
20 basis to the governor, to each chamber of the general assembly, and to each city and town within
21 their respective county.

22 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage and any and all provisions of the
23 general or public laws inconsistent with this act are hereby repealed.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO EDUCATION - REGIONAL COUNTY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

1 This act would establish a regional county school superintendent in each county of the
2 state, within the Providence County, for purposes of oversight and facilitating the combination of
3 resources in the county.

4 This act would take effect upon passage and any and all provisions of the general or
5 public laws inconsistent with the act would be repealed.

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