

2007 -- H 5351

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2007

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION

Introduced By: Representatives McNamara, Diaz, Crowley, Lewiss, and Savage

Date Introduced: February 07, 2007

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

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

3 CHAPTER 67.1

4 RHODE ISLAND HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT PREVENTION ACT OF 2007

5 **16-67.1-1. Short title.** – This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Rhode  
6 Island High School Dropout Prevention Act of 2007."

7 **16-67.1-2. Targeted dropout prevention program.** – (a) The Rhode Island department  
8 of elementary and secondary education shall work with the school districts that have the lowest  
9 high school graduation rates. The department shall incorporate into its progressive support and  
10 intervention specific dropout prevention strategies, target resources, and gather data that will  
11 include graduation rates and educational outcomes in all Rhode Island schools.

12 (b) The department shall develop specific methods of targeted intervention or identify  
13 appropriate existing methods for school districts that have a dropout rate greater than fifteen  
14 percent (15%) as determined by the department of elementary and secondary education. These  
15 interventions methods may include:

16 (1) Early intervention for students who fail Algebra I or any ninth grade math class and  
17 have insufficient credits to be promoted;

18 (2) Alternative programs designed to reengage dropouts including dual enrollment  
19 courses at the community college level;

- 1           (3) Increased availability of advanced placement courses;
- 2           (4) Offering full course fee waivers for students eligible for free and reduced lunches,
- 3 when enrolled in dual credit courses;
- 4           (5) Flexible programs for older students who are currently not enrolled;
- 5           (6) Comprehensive coaching for middle school students who are below grade level in
- 6 reading and math;
- 7           (7) Teacher advisories and other supports that are designed to specifically address the
- 8 needs of youth most at risk of dropping out of school by providing opportunities to build positive
- 9 connections with peers and teachers and provide assistance with course selection, school
- 10 performance and completion of the portfolio required for graduation. This is especially important
- 11 for youth who have poor attendance, multiple suspensions, or have moved often; and
- 12           (8) Strategies that are specifically designed to improve high school graduation rate of
- 13 teens at highest risk for dropping out, including youth in the foster care system, pregnant and
- 14 parenting youth, English as a second language learners, and teens with special education needs.
- 15           (c) The department shall also gather the following data to ensure that all programs are
- 16 research-based and data-driven and use such data for continuous program improvement:
- 17           (1) The total number of high school suspensions related to truancy;
- 18           (2) Total number of students enrolled in alternative programs;
- 19           (3) Total number of students who have been reenrolled in programs with flexible
- 20 schedules or community college programs;
- 21           (4) Total number of freshmen who have personal literacy plans (PLPs);
- 22           (5) Total number of students who have failed Algebra I or ninth grade math;
- 23           (6) Total number of students who are repeating the ninth grade;
- 24           (7) Total number of students receiving remedial programming in the ninth grade; and
- 25           (8) The percentage of children in the care of DCYF who do not graduate from high
- 26 school.
- 27           (d) In school districts involved in progressive support intervention the department of
- 28 elementary and secondary education shall prepare and submit each year a written report that
- 29 documents:
- 30           (1) The outcomes of the dropout prevention strategies to date, at the school district level;
- 31 and
- 32           (2) How the school district dropout prevention strategies and activities will be modified,
- 33 based on the data.

34           **16-67.1-3. Defining the age and protocol for a student to leave school. – A student**

1 who is seventeen (17) years of age or under is bound by the requirements of the compulsory  
2 school attendance and may not withdraw from school before graduation unless:

3 (a) The student, the student's parent(s) and an administrator agree to the withdrawal;

4 (b) At the exit interview, the student and the student's parent(s) provide written  
5 acknowledgment of the withdrawal that meets the requirements of subsection (4);

6 (c) The school principal provides written consent for the student to withdraw from  
7 school; and

8 (d) The withdrawal is due to:

9 (1) Financial hardship and the individual must be employed to support the individual's  
10 family or a dependent;

11 (2) Illness;

12 (3) By order of a court that has jurisdiction over the student; or

13 (4) By a written acknowledgment of a withdrawal under subsection (b) which must  
14 include a statement that the student and the student's parent(s) understand that withdrawal from  
15 school is likely to reduce the student's future earnings and increase the student's likelihood of  
16 being unemployed in the future.

17 **16-67.1-4. Rhode Island dropout prevention "double-up for college" program. – (a)**

18 The commissioner of the Rhode Island department of elementary and secondary education and  
19 the commissioner of the Rhode Island board of governors for higher education may develop a  
20 plan for a high school "fast track to college" program that offers qualified individuals an  
21 opportunity to earn a high school diploma while earning credits for a certificate program or an  
22 associates degree.

23 (b) To be eligible to earn a high school diploma under this section, an individual must be  
24 either:

25 (1) Nineteen (19) years of age and not currently enrolled in a school; or

26 (2) Seventeen (17) years of age to nineteen (19) years of age and have consent from the  
27 high school that the individual is currently enrolled in. The local school department in which an  
28 individual to whom this subdivision applies resides shall pay the individual's tuition for  
29 developmental courses taken at the institution of higher learning during each year that the student  
30 is included in the school's official enrollment.

31 (c) To complete the requirements for a high school diploma under this section, the  
32 individual must meet the graduation requirements of his or her local educational authority.

33 (d) The department, in collaboration with the board of governors for higher education,  
34 shall report to the Rhode Island general assembly on the feasibility of establishing this program

1 [and the potential cost of a pilot program by January 1, 2008.](#)

2 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

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1           This act would create the "Rhode Island High School Dropout Prevention Act of 2007."  
2    It would be the responsibility of the Rhode Island department of elementary and secondary  
3    education to work in collaboration with the school districts and the department of higher  
4    education to implement strategies to lower the dropout rate.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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