

2017 -- H 5976

LC002138

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - ESTABLISHMENT OF CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Introduced By: Representatives Tobon, Cunha, Barros, and Maldonado

Date Introduced: March 22, 2017

Referred To: House Finance

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 77.5

4 DISTRICT-CHARTER COMPACTS

5 **16-77.5-1. Purposes.**

6 (a) The general assembly declares that a primary reason for authorizing charter public
7 schools is to encourage experimentation in methods of delivering educational services by public
8 schools and to determine the educational effectiveness and efficiency achieved through traditional
9 and experimental methods, with the goal of identifying those methods showing the greatest
10 promise for improving the educational outcomes for all public school students.

11 (b) The general assembly finds that public schools generally face certain common
12 problems, such as resource availability and allocation, and that addressing those problems
13 communally would allow community-wide resources to be used more effectively and efficiently.

14 (c) The general assembly finds that cross-fertilization of promising ideas among charter
15 and non-charter public schools may be expected to lead to faster refinement and adoption of the
16 most promising ideas and thus the more rapid improvement of education for students in the
17 state's public schools.

18 **16-77.5-2. District-charter compacts.**

19 The school committee for any public school district, charter public school, or network of

1 charter public schools may enter into a compact with one or more school committees of other
2 districts, charter public schools or networks of charter public schools that, in whole or in part,
3 draw students from the same district. The scope of the compact may cover the areas of interest as
4 the committees subscribing thereto find advisable or convenient.

5 **16-77.5-3. District-charter compact support fund.**

6 There is established the district-charter compact support fund, sometimes referred to as
7 the "fund" or the "compact fund," which shall be used to support the efforts of public school
8 committees to use district-charter compacts to develop and realize improvements in education.
9 The general assembly shall annually appropriate any funds as it deems necessary to implement
10 the purposes of this chapter. The portion of the fund, if any, derived from appropriations by the
11 general assembly and any other portion of the fund derived from other sources without restriction
12 as to use shall be part of the general fund of the state until expended for an approved purpose.

13 **16-77.5-4. Acceptance of grants and gifts into compact fund.**

14 The general treasurer may accept grants, gifts, and bequests into the compact fund, which
15 shall be credited to the general fund of the state as provided by §35-4-6, provided that if any such
16 grant, gift, or bequest be made subject to a restriction that it be held within the compact fund,
17 which restriction was approved in advance by the general treasurer and the director of
18 administration, such grant, gift, or bequest and any identifiable earnings thereon shall remain in
19 the compact fund until used for a purpose conforming to the purposes of this chapter and the
20 terms of the grant, gift, or bequest.

21 **16-77.5-5. Fund grants to compact-subscribing committees.**

22 The board of education, acting through the department of education, may establish a
23 grant process, which may be competitive, for school committees subscribing to district-charter
24 compacts. Grant recipients may use the proceeds to carry out planning for and implementation of
25 initiatives contemplated by the compact. By way of illustration and not limitation, grants may be
26 made to coordinate enrollment procedures, to provide for common professional development
27 activities for teachers, administrators, and staff, and to develop efficient methods of reducing
28 costs, such as providing transportation and serving special needs students. Grants shall be drawn
29 against any available balance in the compact fund.

30 SECTION 2. Section 16-7.1-4 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-7.1 entitled "The Paul
31 W. Crowley Rhode Island Student Investment Initiative [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode
32 Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

33 **16-7.1-4. Annual report by Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.**

34 On or before March 31 of each year, the commissioner of ~~elementary and secondary~~

1 education shall annually publish a report detailing school district and individual school
2 performance consistent with § 16-60-4(22). The report shall arrange the presentation of its
3 information so that performance by different local education agencies may be conveniently
4 compared. This report shall also set annual performance benchmarks. A copy of the report shall
5 also be provided to each town and city council having students within its jurisdiction that attend
6 public schools operated by different local education agencies. Also, the commissioner of
7 ~~elementary and secondary~~ education shall report to the house of representatives and the senate,
8 sitting as the grand committee, no later than March 31 of each year, the status of district and
9 school performance, status of the level of the state's investment in education, and the status of
10 district and school expenditures.

11 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO EDUCATION - ESTABLISHMENT OF CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1 This act would establish district-charter compacts between charter schools and traditional
2 public schools and would establish a compact fund to be supported by appropriations from the
3 general assembly as well as grants, gifts and bequests. Any such funds would be placed in the
4 general fund unless specifically restricted for use by the district-charter for school benefit. Any
5 such restriction would have to be approved in advance by the general treasurer and the director of
6 administration. This act would encourage public school committees to work and cooperate with
7 charter schools in solving common problems.

8 This act would take effect upon passage.

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