STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- CURRICULUM

Introduced By: Representatives Lombardi, Hull, Walsh, and Fogarty

Date Introduced: January 09, 2020

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 16-22-4 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-22 entitled "Curriculum [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

16-22-4. Instruction in health and physical education.

(a) All children in grades one through twelve (12) attending public schools, or any other schools managed and controlled by the state, except as provided in § 16-100-3(d), shall receive in those schools instruction in health and physical education under rules and regulations the department of elementary and secondary education may prescribe or approve during periods that shall average at least twenty (20) minutes in each school day. No private school or private instruction shall be approved by any school committee for the purposes of chapter 19 of this title as substantially equivalent to that required by law of a child attending a public school in the same city or town unless instruction in health and physical education similar to that required in public schools shall be given. Commencing September 1, 2012, the required health education curriculum shall be based on the health education standards of the Rhode Island health education framework: health literacy for all students as promulgated by the Rhode Island department of education and consistent with the mandated health instructional outcomes therein. Commencing September 1, 2012, the required physical education curriculum shall be based on the physical education standards of the Rhode Island physical education framework: supporting physically active lifestyles through quality physical education as promulgated by the Rhode Island department of
education and consistent with the instructional outcomes therein.

(b) The department of elementary and secondary education shall incorporate, in consultation with the state department of behavioral healthcare, developmental disabilities and hospitals, substance-abuse prevention and suicide prevention into the health education curriculum. For the purpose of this section, "substance-abuse prevention" means the implementation of evidence-based, age-appropriate programs, practices, or curricula related to the use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; “suicide prevention” means the implementation of evidence-based, appropriate programs, practices, or curricula related to mental health awareness and suicide prevention. Further, “substance-abuse prevention” and suicide prevention programs shall specifically include information provided to students that mixing opioids and alcohol can cause accidental death.

(c) The department of education shall promulgate guidelines, rules and regulations for every school district, private school, mayoral academy, and charter school and make available on its website, curriculum materials and such other materials as may assist local and regional school committees, and governing bodies of any private school, mayoral academy, or charter school in developing instructional material on the multiple dimensions of health by including mental health and the relation of physical and mental health so as to enhance student understanding, attitudes and behaviors that promote health, well-being and human dignity. The curriculum material and the guidelines shall be developed by the department of education in consultation with groups and individuals having an interest and expertise in the field of mental health and mental illness treatment.

(d) Every school district shall include in its curriculum for all seventh grade students, a four (4) hour unit of instruction on mental health and the relation of physical and mental health. School districts may utilize materials provided by the department of education and the curriculum shall be provided for the 2021-2022 school year.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.
This act would require the department of education to develop and make available for school use a mental health curriculum. Schools would be required to provide four (4) hours of mental health instruction to seventh grade students.

This act would take effect upon passage.