

2022 -- H 7539

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - CURRICULUM

Introduced By: Representative P Morgan

Date Introduced: February 18, 2022

Referred To: House 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 the
3 following section:

4 **16-22-36. Respect in education curricula.**

5 (a) All Rhode Island schools and every member of Rhode Island's educational system shall,
6 not only respect the individual, but also seek to have each person judged and accepted by the content
7 of their character, not their race, ethnicity, gender, or religion. Schools shall work within the limits
8 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub. L. 88-352, 78 Stat. 241), to prevent all forms of discrimination.

9 (b) Educators shall not use race and gender stereotypes in any part of the school curricula
10 or instruction.

11 (c) Students and all school personnel shall not be segregated based on their race, ethnicity,
12 gender, or religion.

13 (d) Racial slurs or terms that describe race, ethnicity, gender or religion in a pejorative
14 context shall not be presented or used in schools. Examples of prohibited terms include
15 "supremacy," "racial guilt," "racial fragility," and other racial slurs or terms used to cast negative
16 opinions on individuals based upon race, ethnicity, gender, or religion.

17 (e) The legislature acknowledges the fundamental truth that all individuals are equal before
18 the law and have inalienable rights. Accordingly, instructional supporting materials must be
19 consistent with the principles of individual freedom contained in this section.

1 (f) No individual is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or
2 unconsciously, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex.

3 (g) No race is inherently superior to another race.

4 (h) No individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or
5 partly on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, disability, or sex.

6 (i) Meritocracy or traits such as a hard work ethic are not racist but fundamental to the right
7 to pursue happiness and be rewarded for industry.

8 (j) An individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, does not bear responsibility for actions
9 committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex.

10 (k) The focus of educators and every member of the educational system shall be academic
11 excellence and helping every child maximize their educational potential. Basic educational skills
12 shall be taught for mastery. Further, all members of the staff of the public schools, subject to the
13 rules of the Rhode Island department of education and the school committees, shall teach efficiently
14 and faithfully, using the books and materials required that meet the highest standards for
15 professionalism and historical accuracy, following the prescribed courses of study, and employing
16 approved methods of instruction, consisting of the following:

17 (1) Ideological materials, worksheets, homework, texts or assigned reading, and/or
18 mentored discussions that depict identity groups as oppressors and/or victims shall not be
19 incorporated within the pedagogy or curricula of schools. Provided, historical, factual events shall
20 be taught and presented as historical, factual events, as part of a high quality curricula.

21 (2) History shall be taught using the standards, customs, and traditions in use at the time of
22 the historical event.

23 (3) History, literature, social science, and natural science topics shall be subject to critical
24 analysis that requires all sides of the topic to be presented and explored.

25 (4) No exclusive focus or centering of curricula on the history, literature, current events, or
26 cultural contributions of individual identity groups shall be permitted.

27 (5) Books and instructional materials shall not center any race, ethnicity, gender, religion
28 or viewpoint. Instructors, librarians, and all school personnel who interact with children are
29 required to use books that balance instruction and promote critical thinking. In all curricula where
30 ideological material is studied in an educational facility, students shall be exposed to the alternative
31 perspective to achieve educational balance. Provided, historical, factual events shall be taught and
32 presented as historical, factual events, as part of a high quality curricula.

33 (6) Ideological or political theories may not be presented as fact. Differences of opinion
34 shall be accepted and encouraged. Provided, historical, factual events shall be taught and presented

1 as historical, factual events, as part of a high quality curricula.

2 (7) Schools shall not use the 1619 Project curriculum or any other curricula that pursues a
3 predominantly ideological and/or activist outcome.

4 (l) Educational staff are prohibited from electioneering, pursuing activism, or advocating
5 for specific political beliefs or candidates. No visual materials, such as banners, posters or handouts
6 promoting racial advocacy shall be allowed in a school setting. Values, psychological and medical
7 counseling, and political activism shall not be taught in classrooms or in any school setting.

8 (m) The sexualization of children shall not be permitted in educational or extracurricular
9 activities. Sex education shall not explore sexual preference, gender dysphoria, or sexual lifestyles.

10 (n) Health education shall address concepts of community health, consumer health,
11 environmental health, and family life, including mental and emotional health; injury prevention
12 and safety; Internet safety; nutrition; personal health; prevention and control of disease; substance
13 use and abuse; prevention of child sexual abuse, exploitation, and human trafficking. For students
14 in grades eight (8) through twelve (12) health education shall include the concepts of teen dating
15 violence and abuse. This component must include, but is not limited to, the definition of dating
16 violence and abuse, the warning signs of dating violence and abusive behavior, the characteristics
17 of healthy relationships, measures to prevent and stop dating violence and abuse, and community
18 resources available to victims of dating violence and abuse.

19 (o) Children shall be addressed using their common names and the pronouns associated
20 with their biological gender unless parental or guardian permission to do otherwise is obtained.

21 (p) School personnel who violate the provisions of this section may be disciplined at the
22 individual school level for the first offense. A second offense shall be referred to the superintendent
23 and/or school committee for consideration of appropriate action or imposition of discipline. A third
24 or subsequent offense shall be reported to the federal Office of the Attorney General, Civil Rights
25 Division under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for any violation of the civil rights of students, parents
26 and/or colleagues.

27 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO EDUCATION - CURRICULUM

- 1 This act would require that both curriculum and teaching practices in Rhode Island schools
- 2 protect and respect the civil rights of all members of the school community.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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