

2023 -- H 6506

LC003197

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

JOINT RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Introduced By: Representatives Slater, Corvese, and Diaz

Date Introduced: June 08, 2023

Referred To: House Education

1 WHEREAS, The Providence Public Schools (PPS) comprise the largest school district in
2 the State, with more than 21,000 students and more than 2,000 educators; and

3 WHEREAS, The PPS student body is one of the most diverse in the State, with a student
4 population that is 65 percent Hispanic, 16 percent White, 5 percent Asian, 4 percent Multi-Racial,
5 and 1 percent Native American; and

6 WHEREAS, Nearly one-third of Providence students are English Language Learners, and
7 the majority of Providence students' families speak one of 54 primary languages that is not
8 English; and

9 WHEREAS, Approximately 85 percent of the PPS student body qualifies for free or
10 reduced lunch, the second highest incidence of poverty in Rhode Island public schools as
11 measured by this criterion; and

12 WHEREAS, The socioeconomic diversity of the student body in Providence presents
13 unique challenges and opportunities for the district's professional staff; and

14 WHEREAS, Too few PPS students have been able to obtain academic proficiency for too
15 many years, as measured by the State's and Nation's Report Card assessments; and

16 WHEREAS, Enrollment in PPS has declined as students have transferred out of the
17 district into charter schools, creating displacements and disruptions within the schools and their
18 staff; and

1 WHEREAS, The basic framework under State law governing the delivery of public
2 education, as applied to the Providence Public Schools, has not been significantly modified in
3 many years; and

4 WHEREAS, The quality of the education Providence Public Schools students receive in
5 their schools depends critically upon its professional educators; now, therefore be it

6 RESOLVED, That a special joint legislative commission be and the same is hereby
7 created consisting of nine (9) members: three (3) of whom shall be members of the Senate, not
8 more than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the President of the Senate;
9 three (3) of whom shall be members of the House, not more than two (2) from the same political
10 party, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be the Commissioner of
11 the Rhode Island Department of Education, or designee; and two (2) of whom shall be non-voting
12 ex-officio public members with experience in education to serve in an advisory capacity to the
13 commission, one of whom shall be appointed by the Senate President, and one of whom shall be
14 appointed by the Speaker of the House.

15 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a legislative study
16 commission, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in
17 place of a legislator; provided that, the Senate President/Speaker of the House or the Minority
18 Leader of the political party that is entitled to the appointment consents to the appointment of the
19 member of the general public.

20 The purpose of said commission shall be to:

- 21 1. Review the professional standards and the labor-management relationship for employees
22 of the Providence Public Schools, particularly as defined by State law; and
- 23 2. Develop recommendations that promote a rewarding professional environment and great
24 school-based flexibility and accountability for the district's professional educators.

25 All departments and agencies of the State shall furnish such advice and information,
26 documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or
27 desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution.

28 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall be
29 appointed and meet at the call of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate by July
30 31, 2023, and shall organize and select from among the legislators, two (2) co-Chairpersons.

31 The Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide
32 suitable quarters for said commission; and be it further

33 RESOLVED, That the commission shall develop and submit its recommendations to the
34 General Assembly, no later than January 24, 2024, and said commission shall expire on June 30,

1 2024.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
JOINT RESOLUTION
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PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT
STANDARDS THAT PROVIDE SCHOOL-BASED FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY
FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1 This resolution would create a nine (9) member special joint legislative commission
2 whose purpose it would be to review and provide recommendations for professional and labor-
3 management standards for employees of the Providence Public Schools, and who would report
4 back to the General Assembly no later than January 24, 2024, and whose life would expire on
5 June 30, 2024.

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