

2015 -- S 0144 SUBSTITUTE A

LC000702/SUB A/2

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- FOUNDATION LEVEL SCHOOL SUPPORT

Introduced By: Senators Gallo, Miller, Goodwin, McCaffrey, and Ruggerio

Date Introduced: January 22, 2015

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 16-99-2, 16-99-3 and 16-99-4 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-
2 99 entitled "Full-Day Kindergarten Accessibility Act" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-99-2. Legislative findings. --** The general assembly hereby finds and declares as
4 follows:

5 (1) According to the National Center for Education Statistics, children in full-day
6 kindergarten classes make greater academic gains in both reading and mathematics compared to
7 those in half-day classes;

8 (2) According to Kids Count RI, full-day kindergarten can contribute to closing
9 academic achievement gaps between lower and higher income children;

10 (3) According to the National Center for Education Statistics, full-day kindergarten
11 classes are more likely than half-day classes to instruct students daily in the areas of mathematics,
12 social studies and science; and

13 (4) According to Kids Count RI, children in full-day kindergarten are more likely to be
14 ready for first grade than those in half-day programs, regardless of family income, parental
15 education and school characteristics; ~~and.~~

16 ~~(5) While this act does not mandate school districts to operate a full-day kindergarten~~
17 ~~program, it provides limited one-time, start up funding for school districts that move to provide~~
18 ~~students with access to full-day kindergarten programs, distributed on a competitive basis.~~

19 **16-99-3. Full-day kindergarten. --** (a) For the purpose of this chapter, the term "full-day

1 kindergarten" means a kindergarten program that operates a minimum of five and one-half (5 1/2)
2 hours or three hundred thirty (330) minutes of actual school work, excluding lunch, recess
3 periods, common planning time, pre- and post-school teacher time, study halls, homeroom
4 periods, student passing time and any other time that is not actual instructional time.

5 (b) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education has discretion to further
6 define and approve full-day kindergarten programs consistent with this section, [through the 2015-](#)
7 [2016 school year.](#)

8 [\(c\) Beginning August 2016, each school district must offer full-day kindergarten to every](#)
9 [eligible student to qualify for state education aid provided for in title 16. In fiscal year 2016, the](#)
10 [Rhode Island department of elementary and secondary education shall provide funding to support](#)
11 [transition expenses for all districts that do not offer universal full-day kindergarten programs in](#)
12 [the 2015-2016 school year. This funding shall not exceed the amount of state aid that would](#)
13 [otherwise have been provided to the district for operating a universal full-day kindergarten](#)
14 [program and shall be based upon 2015 enrollment data and funding formula transition rates. For](#)
15 [purposes of the calculation under this section, a district's half-day kindergarten enrollment as of](#)
16 [March 2015 shall be multiplied by two \(2\).](#)

17 **16-99-4. Eligible school districts; funding.** -- (a) A school district shall be eligible to
18 request funding pursuant to § 16-99-4(b), if:

19 (1) The school district is a public school district; and

20 (2) The school district operates a half-day kindergarten program as of September 1,
21 2012, but not a full-day kindergarten, as defined herein, serving more than one-half of the
22 kindergarten students in the district as determined on a headcount basis.

23 (b) Subject to appropriation, beginning with school year 2013-2014, [and through school](#)
24 [year 2014-2015,](#) the commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall rank and approve
25 eligible public school districts that voluntarily implement a full-day kindergarten program as
26 defined herein. The aforementioned school district shall receive funding to offset a portion of the
27 reasonable, one-time start-up costs including, but not limited to, desks, books, facility upgrades,
28 ancillary costs associated with relocation of students, costs associated with the development and
29 implementation of new curriculum, and any other necessary expenses associated with each
30 school's implementation of a full-day kindergarten program. Ranking shall be based upon criteria
31 established by the commissioner of elementary and secondary education to ensure the quality and
32 sustainability of the full-day kindergarten programs implemented.

33 In ranking the school districts' proposals, the commissioner shall consider the quality and
34 sustainability of the program and the average number of children eligible for USDA reimbursable

1 school meals served by the respective district's elementary schools with priority given to school
2 districts with enrollment greater than eight thousand (8,000).

3 If no school district has enrollment greater than eight thousand (8,000), then priority
4 shall be given to school districts with enrollment greater than four thousand (4,000).

5 (c) The commissioner shall fully fund all eligible expenditures of each district in rank
6 order. If a district's proposal cannot be fully funded, the district may either accept the available
7 funding for the project or refuse funding. If funding is refused, the commissioner shall fund the
8 next eligible school district's request based on the aforementioned ranking.

9 (d) School districts receiving funds pursuant to this chapter must operate only a full-day
10 program, no half-day programs. The full-day kindergarten program must continue to operate for
11 five (5) years.

12 (e) All funding provided under this section is subject to appropriation.

13 (f) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (d), school districts that request funding
14 pursuant to this chapter may be allowed to phase-in the implementation of a full-day kindergarten
15 program, provided that the district provides the department of elementary and secondary
16 education with a schedule and plan as to the implementation of such program.

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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1 This act would provide that funding for kindergartens that have been converted from
2 part-time to full-time beginning with the 2015-2016 school year would be fully funded beginning
3 in fiscal year 2016.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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