

2016 -- H 7583

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Introduced By: Representatives Handy, Amore, O'Brien, McKiernan, and Carnevale

Date Introduced: February 11, 2016

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

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 21.6

4 INTERNET FILTERING IN SCHOOLS

5 **16-21.6-1. Internet filtering.** -- (a) "Internet filtering measures" means the use of a
6 specific technology or program to block or filter access to websites on the Internet.

7 (b) Each school district shall adopt a written policy addressing the use of Internet filtering
8 measures for computer access in its schools. Any such policy shall:

9 (1) Include the specific categories of websites that are blocked by the Internet filtering
10 measures in use; the basis for including those categories; and the individuals who are responsible
11 for making those decisions;

12 (2) Establish a procedure for teachers to request that a blocked website be unblocked in a
13 timely manner; and

14 (3) Specify the criteria used for overruling a request to allow access to a website that is
15 blocked by the Internet filtering measures, and require that the teacher making such a request be
16 provided particular reasons any time a request is denied.

17 (c) Each school district shall maintain a public record of any requests to allow access to a
18 website that is blocked by the Internet filtering measures, and the response provided, and submit
19 an annual report to the school committee on the number of requests granted and denied to

1 unblock a website.

2 (d) Each school district shall annually review the requests made in the preceding year
3 pursuant to subsection (b)(2) of this section for unblocking websites in order to determine
4 whether the categories and standards contained in the policy adopted pursuant to subsection
5 (b)(1) of this section should be revised.

6 (e) The Rhode Island department of education shall develop a model Internet filtering
7 policy for the guidance of school districts, state schools, charter schools, and mayoral academies.
8 This model plan shall, to the extent consistent with federal law, promote academic freedom in the
9 classroom, and shall be communicated to all school districts in the state and posted on the
10 department website.

11 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 -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

1 This act would mandate each school district to adopt a written policy that addresses the
2 use of Internet filtering measures for computer access in schools. The Rhode Island department of
3 education would be required to develop and post a model for school districts, state schools,
4 charter schools, and mayor academies consistent with federal law on the department's website.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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