2017 -- H 6311

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

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A N   A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND SUPERINTENDENTS

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1   SECTION 1. Section 16-2-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-2 entitled "School

2   Committees and Superintendents [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of

3   Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

4   **16-2-2. City and town schools required -- School year -- Location -- Kindergartens.**

5   (a) (1) Except as specifically provided in this section, every city or town shall establish

6   and maintain for at least one hundred eighty (180) days annually or the equivalent thereof,

7   exclusive of holidays a sufficient number of schools in convenient places under the control and

8   management of the school committee and under the supervision of the board of regents for

9   elementary and secondary education. In lieu of convenient location the school committee may

10   provide transportation for pupils to and from school in accordance with the provisions of chapter

11   21 of this title. Provided, that a school district may establish a school year which is the equivalent

12   of one hundred eighty (180) days through the use of longer school days in terms of hours or

13   pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, and which may total less than one hundred eighty (180)

14   separate days, so long as through the use of the longer school day, the school district annually

15   provides a minimum of one thousand eighty (1080) school hours in a single school year. This

16   figure is based on a minimum of six (6) hours per school day. For purposes of clarification, the

17   intent herein is to permit school districts to amend their school year to provide for longer school

18   days while reducing the actual number of days in which the school facilities must be fully staffed

19   and maintained, but to insure that in doing so, school districts shall still provide the minimum

1   amount of instruction time contemplated by this section. Nothing herein shall be deemed to limit

2   a school district from exceeding the minimum amounts of days and hours set forth herein.

3   (2) School districts intending to make use of the option provided herein to lengthen

4   school days and shorten the school year shall submit a detailed school day plan and a proposed

5   school calendar to the commissioner of elementary and secondary education for approval. The

6   commissioner shall review the submitted school day plan and the submitted calendar to determine

7   whether the plan and calendar are academically sound and fiscally efficient. The commissioner

8   may grant or deny approval of the plan and/or the calendar.

9   (b) School facilities shall include a sufficient number of kindergartens.

10   (c) On or before December 1, 2017, the department of elementary and secondary

11   education shall establish a policy that allows a school district to submit a detailed plan, at any

12   time, to the commissioner of elementary and secondary education that would allow the schools to

13   conduct instruction through virtual education when the schools have been closed due to inclement

14   weather or other emergency. The plan for virtual education would be subject to, and require

15   approval by, the council on elementary and secondary education in order to count as a school day.

16   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 - SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND SUPERINTENDENTS

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1   This act would establish a process by which a virtual education plan may be established

2   and used by school districts during inclement weather which would count as a school day,

3   provided that the plan is approved by the council on elementary and secondary education.

4   This act would take effect upon passage.

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