

2018 -- S 2503

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2018

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SENATE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION TO CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATION REFORM ACT (MERA) OF 1993, AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE RHODE ISLAND'S OVERALL EDUCATION STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE

Introduced By: Senators Pearson, Satchell, Gallo, Lombardi, and Picard

Date Introduced: March 01, 2018

Referred To: Senate Education

1           WHEREAS, The Massachusetts Education Reform Act (MERA) of 1993 established a  
2 detailed and ambitious agenda and framework under which public education in Massachusetts  
3 would operate. Over the ensuing two and a half decades, the standards-based reform effort has  
4 been an overwhelming success for the Commonwealth; and

5           WHEREAS, The reform led to major increases in the amount of state aid that flowed to  
6 schools, established high standards, and required more accountability across the entire education  
7 system; and

8           WHEREAS, Under reform guidelines, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and  
9 Secondary Education employs five overarching core strategies to advance the goal of success for  
10 all students:

- 11           1. Strengthen standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessments;
- 12           2. Promote educator development;
- 13           3. Support social-emotional learning, health, and safety;
- 14           4. Turn around the lowest performing districts and schools; and
- 15           5. Use technology and data to support student learning; and

16           WHEREAS, Currently, reforms support educators in a process of self-improvement and  
17 performance review; help districts strengthen their curriculum and instruction; deliver  
18 technologically sophisticated tools to help educators and administrators leverage data they

1 routinely collect; and identify and intervene in schools that are struggling the most to serve their  
2 students well; and

3 WHEREAS, In addition, reform efforts led to the adoption of the Common Core State  
4 Standards, the development and administration of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment  
5 System (MCAS); and

6 WHEREAS, The 2010 Achievement Gap Act more clearly outlined accountability  
7 provisions that flowed from the original Act's broad framework and powers, and pursued a  
8 realistic set of expectations for state oversight of school and district turnaround efforts and  
9 significantly reflected and delineated the role of charter schools within the evolution of the  
10 education system; and

11 WHEREAS, In June of 2011, The Model System was implemented, and provided a  
12 comprehensive educator evaluation system; and

13 WHEREAS, The Massachusetts Education Reform Act (MERA) of 1993 has made  
14 Massachusetts a national leader in public education, and the state's continuing analysis and  
15 resultant provisions are providing students with a competitive advantage that Rhode Island  
16 students deserve; now, therefore be it

17 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
18 hereby respectfully requests the Rhode Island Board of Education to conduct a comprehensive  
19 review of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act (MERA) of 1993, and subsequent Acts and  
20 reform measures, to determine and recommend measures to promote the adoption of ways in  
21 which this state's resources can be most effectively utilized to improve Rhode Island's overall  
22 education standards and governance; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby requests the Rhode Island Board of Education to  
24 report back to the Senate on or before December 1, 2018; and

25 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
26 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Honorable Gina Raimondo, Governor of the  
27 State of Rhode Island, Barbara S. Cottam, Chair of the Rhode Island Board of Education, and  
28 Ken Wagner, Commissioner of the Rhode Island Department of Education.

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