

2021 -- H 5519

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- MANDATORY EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE

Introduced By: Representatives Tobon, Baginski, Alzate, Edwards, Barros, Amore, and Craven

Date Introduced: February 12, 2021

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-22-21 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-22 entitled "Curriculum  
2 [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby repealed.

3 ~~**16-22-21. Community service learning.**~~

4 ~~(a) The legislature recognizes the importance of community service learning as a means of  
5 enhancing life in the community and as a way of enlightening young people about the needs of  
6 others. Whenever young people are led through teaching and example, the likelihood of their  
7 becoming productive citizens in society is increased a thousandfold.~~

8 ~~(b) The department of elementary and secondary education shall encourage the  
9 establishment of community service learning programs in local school districts by developing a  
10 model program and appropriate guidelines for implementation of the model program. Any local  
11 school district may petition the commissioner of education for approval of its community service  
12 learning program, which may be used in partial fulfillment of the requirement for obtaining a high  
13 school diploma. The commissioner shall develop criteria that local school districts may use as a  
14 means of determining and recognizing community service learning activities for credit towards a  
15 high school diploma. Local school districts that elect to establish community service learning  
16 programs pursuant to this section shall submit community service learning program plans for  
17 approval by the commissioner every five (5) years.~~

18 SECTION 2. Chapter 16-22 of the General Laws entitled "Curriculum [See Title 16  
19 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended by adding thereto the

1 following section:

2 **16-22-21.1. Legislative findings – Community service requirements.**

3 (a) The general assembly makes the following findings:

4 (1) Community service:

5 (i) Allows for its participants to be exposed to the needs of others;

6 (ii) Enables students to apply their curriculum content, skills, and behavior taught in their  
7 classroom to their service;

8 (iii) Helps students learn what it means to be a good citizen, to fully appreciate what  
9 government does for its people, and to value themselves as powerful resources critical to the  
10 development of a truly healthful community;

11 (iv) Improves the likelihood that students will become productive citizens;

12 (v) Promotes students' self-esteem and self-worth;

13 (vi) Provides a broad exposure to civic duty, enables the development of individual  
14 capabilities, furthers career connections and the establishment of support networking while helping  
15 the students to become active citizens who promote community needs;

16 (vii) Shall become an integral part of all students' educational experiences; and

17 (viii) Teaches its participants about diversity, helps develop their intellectual understanding  
18 and curiosity, and improves communication skills.

19 (b) As used in this section, "community service" means structured programs and activities  
20 where students perform work/services for the direct benefit of the community, under the auspices  
21 of public and nonprofit organizations. It shall relate as much as is practical to lessons that are being  
22 taught in the classroom. Its focus shall be on instilling civic awareness and values in all participating  
23 students.

24 (c) Students in every grade, from kindergarten to grade twelve (K-12), shall be required to  
25 perform increasing amounts of community service, each school year, as a prerequisite for their  
26 promotion into their next grade.

27 (d) The following is the amount of hours each student must successfully perform in that  
28 school year:

29 (1) Kindergarten            10 hours;

30 (2) Grade 1                    10 hours;

31 (3) Grade 2                    10 hours;

32 (4) Grade 3                    10 hours;

33 (5) Grade 4                    10 hours;

34 (6) Grade 5                    10 hours;

- 1           (7) Grade 6           10 hours;
- 2           (8) Grade 7           10 hours;
- 3           (9) Grade 8           10 hours;
- 4           (10) Grade 9           30 hours;
- 5           (11) Grade 10           40 hours;
- 6           (12) Grade 11           50 hours; and
- 7           (13) Grade 12           50 hours.

8           (e) The department of elementary and secondary education shall establish community  
9 service learning programs for its local school districts which incorporate the mandates of this  
10 section, are grade appropriate, and complement each grade's curriculum and statewide standards.  
11 Each program shall contain preparation, action and reflection components. The programs shall  
12 identify and approve organizations and government entities which provide the students with the  
13 opportunity to perform public service, as well as the types of service that are acceptable.

14           (f) An approval process for each individual student's proposed community service plan  
15 shall be established. These programs shall also include a voluntary portion for students who elect  
16 to receive academic credit for their community service.

17           (g) The department shall promulgate rules and regulations which implement this mandatory  
18 educational community service section.

19           SECTION 3. This act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
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1           This act would require all students in kindergarten to grade twelve (K-12) to perform a  
2   minimum amount of community service each school year and would grant them the option to  
3   perform certain forms of community service for academic credit.

4           This act would take effect on July 1, 2022.

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