

2021 -- H 5738

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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 -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Introduced By: Representatives Kazarian, Fogarty, Alzate, McEntee, Morales, Potter,
Kislak, Edwards, Barros, and Felix

Date Introduced: February 24, 2021

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-21 of the General Laws entitled "Health and Safety of Pupils" is
2 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **16-21-37. An act requiring water bottle filling stations in new and renovated schools.**

4 (a) The state of Rhode Island finds and declares that:

5 (1) Water plays an important role in maintaining a child's overall health;

6 (2) Drinking water can positively impact children's cognitive performance;

7 (3) Drinking water can improve children's fine motor skills and visual attention, which
8 helps with learning activities, such as reading;

9 (4) Drinking water can help people maintain a healthier weight.

10 (b) The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all newly constructed schools and those
11 schools undergoing major building renovations incorporate adequate water bottle filling stations to
12 increase access to free, easily accessible, safe and good-tasting drinking water on school property.

13 (1) Major renovations shall mean renovations with a total estimated cost of five hundred
14 thousand dollars (\$500,000) or more, or involves the substantial repair, replacement or upgrading
15 of the plumbing system or plumbing fixtures.

16 (c) All newly constructed public school buildings and public school buildings undergoing
17 major renovations, such as additions within the state of Rhode Island shall be equipped with water
18 bottle filling stations consistent with the requirements of this policy.

19 (d) The school committees of each city or town and/or the governing authority overseeing

1 school policies or construction, shall not approve the plans or specifications for a new public school
2 building, any addition or major renovations of an existing public school building unless the plans
3 and specifications provide for the following:

4 (1) A minimum of one water bottle filling station per one hundred (100) people projected
5 to occupy the building upon completion of the proposed construction;

6 (2) A minimum of one water bottle filling station on each floor and on each wing of each
7 school building;

8 (3) A minimum of one water bottle filling station located in or near gymnasiums, cafeterias
9 and other high-traffic areas.

10 (4) Water bottle filling stations may be integrated into drinking fountains;

11 (5) Schools are encouraged to install touchless bottle filling stations for sanitary reasons.

12 (e) A water bottle filling station installed in a public school building must:

13 (1) Dispense clean, cooled, filtered drinking water;

14 (2) Be regularly cleaned to maintain sanitary conditions; and

15 (3) Be maintained on a regular basis to ensure they function properly.

16 (f) Students, teachers, and staff shall be allowed to bring and carry approved water bottles
17 under the following conditions:

18 (1) Water bottles shall be made of material that is not easily breakable;

19 (2) Water bottles shall have a lid to prevent spills;

20 (3) Water bottles shall be used exclusively for water and no other beverage;

21 (4) Water bottles shall be allowed in classrooms, but may be excluded from libraries,
22 computer labs, science labs and other places where it is deemed dangerous to have drinking water;

23 (5) Misuse of water bottles may be subject to disciplinary action.

24 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2022.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

- 1 This act would require all new school buildings and those undergoing major renovations
- 2 or substantial repair or replacement to plumbing systems to install water bottle filling stations.
- 3 This act would take effect on January 1, 2022.

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