

2021 -- S 0998

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Introduced By: Senator Sandra Cano

Date Introduced: June 30, 2021

Referred To: Placed on Senate Calendar

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-97.1-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-97.1 entitled  
2 "Education Accountability Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-97.1-1. Performances of local education agencies and individual public schools --**  
4 **Evaluation system -- Assessment instruments -- Reports.**

5 (a) The board of education (the "board") shall adopt a system for evaluating, on an annual  
6 basis, the performance of both local education agencies ("LEAs") and individual public schools.  
7 The system shall:

8 (1) Include instruments designed to assess the extent to which schools and LEAs succeed  
9 in improving or fail to improve student performance, as defined by:

10 (i) Student acquisition of the skills, competencies, and knowledge called for by the  
11 academic standards and embodied in the curriculum frameworks established in the areas of  
12 mathematics, English language arts, science and technology, history and social studies, world  
13 languages, and the arts; and

14 (ii) Other gauges of student learning judged by the board to be relevant and meaningful to  
15 students, parents, teachers, administrators, and taxpayers.

16 (2) Be designed both to measure outcomes and results regarding student performance, and  
17 to improve the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction.

18 (3) In its design and application, strike a balance among considerations of accuracy,  
19 fairness, expense, and administration.

- 1 (4) Employ a variety of assessment instruments on either a comprehensive or statistically  
2 valid sampling basis. Such instruments shall:
- 3 (i) Be criterion-referenced, assessing whether students are meeting the academic standards  
4 described in this chapter;
- 5 (ii) As much as is practicable, especially in the case of students whose performance is  
6 difficult to assess using conventional methods, include consideration of work samples, projects,  
7 and portfolios, and shall facilitate authentic and direct gauges of student performance;
- 8 (iii) Provide the means to compare student performance among the various school systems  
9 and communities in the state, and between students in other states and in other nations, especially  
10 those nations that compete with the state for employment and economic opportunities;
- 11 (iv) Be designed to avoid gender, cultural, ethnic, or racial stereotypes; and
- 12 (v) Recognize sensitivity to different learning styles and impediments to learning, which  
13 may include issues related, but not limited to, cultural, financial, emotional, health, and social  
14 factors.
- 15 (5) Take into account, on a nondiscriminatory basis, the cultural and language diversity of  
16 students in the state and the particular circumstances of students with special needs.
- 17 (6) Comply with federal requirements for accommodating children with special needs.
- 18 (7) Allow all potential English-proficient students from language groups in which English  
19 language learner programs are offered opportunities for assessment of their performance in the  
20 language that best allows them to demonstrate educational achievement and mastery of academic  
21 standards and curriculum frameworks.
- 22 (8) Identify individual schools and LEAs that need comprehensive support and  
23 improvement.
- 24 (b) The board shall take all appropriate action to bring about and continue the state's  
25 participation in the assessment activities of the National Assessment of Educational Progress and  
26 in the development of standards and assessments by the New Standards Program.
- 27 (c) In addition, comprehensive diagnostic assessment of individual students shall be  
28 conducted at least in the fourth, eighth, and tenth or eleventh grades. The diagnostic assessments  
29 shall identify academic achievement levels of all students in order to inform teachers, parents,  
30 administrators, and the students themselves, as to individual academic performance.
- 31 (d) The board shall develop procedures for updating, improving, or refining the assessment  
32 system.
- 33 (e) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education (the "commissioner") is  
34 authorized and directed to gather information, including the information specified herein and such

1 other information as the board shall require, for the purposes of evaluating individual public  
2 schools, school districts, and the efficacy and equity of state and federally mandated programs. All  
3 information gathered pursuant to this section shall be filed in the manner and form prescribed by  
4 the department of education (the "department").

5 (f) The board shall establish and maintain a data system to collect information from school  
6 districts for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of district evaluation systems in ensuring  
7 effective teaching and administrative leadership in the public schools. The information shall be  
8 made available in the aggregate to the public; provided, however, that the following information  
9 shall be considered personnel information and shall not be subject to disclosure:

10 (1) Any data or information that school districts, the department, or both, create, send, or  
11 receive in connection with an educator assessment that is evaluative in nature and that may be  
12 linked to an individual educator, including information concerning:

13 (i) An educator's formative assessment or evaluation;

14 (ii) An educator's summative evaluation or performance rating; or

15 (iii) The student learning, growth, and achievement data that may be used as part of an  
16 individual educator's evaluation.

17 (g) Each school district shall maintain individual records on every student and employee.  
18 Each student record shall contain a unique and confidential identification number, basic  
19 demographic information, program and course information, and such other information as the  
20 department shall determine necessary. The records shall conform to parameters established by the  
21 department.

22 (h) For the purposes of improving the performance of school districts, individual public  
23 schools, and the efficacy and equity of state and federal programs, each district shall file with the  
24 commissioner once in each three-year (3) period a comprehensive, three-year (3) district  
25 improvement plan. The plan shall:

26 (1) Be developed and submitted in a manner and form prescribed by the department of  
27 education.

28 (2) To the extent feasible, be designed to fulfill all planning requirements of state and  
29 federal education laws.

30 (3) Include, but not be limited to:

31 (i) An analysis of student and subgroup achievement gaps in core subjects;

32 (ii) Identification of specific improvement objectives;

33 (iii) A description of the strategic initiatives the district will undertake to achieve its  
34 improvement objectives; and

1 (iv) Performance benchmarks and processes for evaluating the effect of district  
2 improvement initiatives.

3 (4) Describe the professional development activities that will support each district  
4 improvement initiative and the teacher induction and mentoring activities that will be undertaken  
5 to support successful implementation of the district's improvement efforts.

6 (i) On an annual basis, not later than September 1 of each year, each district shall prepare  
7 and have available for state review an annual action plan. The district annual action plan shall:

8 (1) Enumerate the specific activities, persons responsible, and timelines for action to be  
9 taken as part of the strategic initiatives set forth in the district's three-year (3) improvement plan;  
10 and

11 (2) Identify the staff and financial resources allocated to support these activities.

12 (j) Annually, the principal of each school shall:

13 (1) In consultation with the school improvement team, adopt student performance goals for  
14 the schools consistent with the school performance goals established by the department of  
15 education pursuant to state and federal law and regulations;

16 (2) Consistent with any educational policies established for the district, assess the needs of  
17 the school in light of those goals; and

18 (3) Formulate a school plan to advance such goals and improve student performance. The  
19 school's plan to support improved student performance shall:

20 (i) Include, but not be limited to, the same components required for the district  
21 improvement plan;

22 (ii) Conform to department and district specifications to ensure that such school  
23 improvement plans meet state and federal law requirements; and

24 (iii) Be submitted to the superintendent who shall review and approve the plan, after  
25 consultation with the school committee, not later than July 1 of the year in which the plan is to be  
26 implemented, according to a plan development and review schedule established by the district  
27 superintendent.

28 (4) Prepare and have available for district and state review by July 1 annually, a report,  
29 based on SurveyWorks or other data collection, which shall provide aggregated graduating student  
30 data on race, ethnicity and gender for the following:

31 (i) The total number of students graduating;

32 (ii) The total number of students graduating who are applying for admission to a college,  
33 university or vocational training program;

34 (iii) The total number of students completing a free application for federal student aid

1 ("FAFSA") form; and

2 (iv) The total number of students who are eligible to fill out and submit a FAFSA form.

3 (5) The department shall include, in SurveyWorks or an equivalent data collection tool,  
4 inquiries to collect the data and information referenced in subsection (j)(4) of this section.

5 (k) The three-year (3) comprehensive district plan, annual district action plan, and annual  
6 school improvement plan shall replace any district and school plans previously required under the  
7 general laws or regulation, that, in the professional opinion of the commissioner, would be most  
8 effectively presented as part of the coordinated district or school plan for improving student  
9 achievement. The department shall identify any additional reports or plans called for by any general  
10 law or regulation that can be incorporated into this single filing in order to reduce paperwork and  
11 eliminate duplication.

12 (l) Each school district in which more than twenty percent (20%) of the students do not  
13 meet grade-level expectations of at least proficient or its equivalent on the Rhode Island  
14 comprehensive assessment system exam ("RICAS") shall submit a RICAS success plan to the  
15 department. The plan shall describe the school district's strategies for helping each student to master  
16 the skills, competencies, and knowledge required for the competency determination. In recognition  
17 of the department's mission as a district support agency, then at the request of the district or in  
18 response to reporting data provided under this subsection, the department shall:

19 (1) Determine the elements that shall be required to be included in such plan. These  
20 elements may include, but are not limited to, the following:

21 (i) A plan to assess each student's strengths, weaknesses, and needs;

22 (ii) A plan to use summer school, after school, and other additional support to provide each  
23 child with the assistance needed; and

24 (iii) A plan for involving the parents of students.

25 (2) Examine each district's plan and determine if it has a reasonable prospect of  
26 significantly reducing the school district's failure rates.

27 (3) Coordinate oversight of the RICAS success plans with existing education review and  
28 oversight functions and with the RICAS grant program.

29 (m) Each school district shall file a report with the department every year by a date and in  
30 a format determined by the board. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

31 (1) An outline of the curriculum and graduation requirements of the district;

32 (2) Pupil/teacher ratios and class size policy and practice;

33 (3) Teacher and administrator evaluation procedures;

34 (4) Statistics, policies, and procedures relative to truancy and dropouts;

1 (5) Statistics, policies, and procedures relative to expulsions and in-school and out-of-  
2 school suspensions;

3 (6) Percent of school-age children attending public schools:

4 (7) Racial composition of teaching and administrative staff;

5 (8) Enrollment and average daily attendance; and

6 (9) The annual budgets and expenditures for both the district and the individual schools in  
7 the district.

8 (n) Each school district shall file a description of the following instructional procedures  
9 and programs with the department every year:

10 (1) Art and music programs;

11 (2) Technology education;

12 (3) Programs for gifted and talented students;

13 (4) Adult education programs;

14 (5) Library and media facilities;

15 (6) Condition of instructional materials, including textbooks, workbooks, audio-visual  
16 materials, and laboratory materials;

17 (7) Types and condition of computers and computer software;

18 (8) Basic skills remediation programs;

19 (9) Drug, tobacco, and alcohol abuse programs;

20 (10) Multi-cultural education training for students and teachers;

21 (11) Global education; and

22 (12) Nutrition and wellness programs.

23 (o) Each school district and charter school shall file an annual report for the current school  
24 year regarding implementation with the department on or before every November 1 in a format  
25 determined by the board. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

26 (1) The number of children receiving services within each disability category;

27 (2) The number of children, by grade level, within each disability category and the costs of  
28 services provided by each such category for such children receiving their education in a publicly  
29 operated day school program;

30 (3) The number of children, by grade level, within each disability category and the costs of  
31 services provided by each category for these children receiving their education in a private day  
32 setting;

33 (4) The number of children, by grade level, within each such disability category and the  
34 costs of services provided by each such category for such children receiving their education in a

1 private residential setting;

2 (5) The number of children who remain in the regular education program full-time; the  
3 number of children who are removed from the regular classroom for up to twenty-five percent  
4 (25%) of the day; the number of children who are removed from the regular classroom between  
5 twenty-five percent (25%) and sixty percent (60%) of the day;

6 (6) The number of children who are placed in substantially separate classrooms on a regular  
7 education school site;

8 (7) The number of children, ages three (3) and four (4) who are educated in integrated and  
9 separate classrooms; and the assignment, by sex, national origin, economic status, and race, of  
10 children by age level, to special education classes and the distribution of children residing in the  
11 district, by sex, national origin, economic status, and race of children by age level; and

12 (8) The number of children, by grade level, receiving special education services who have  
13 limited English proficiency.

14 (p) Each school district and charter school shall furnish in a timely manner such additional  
15 information as the department shall request.

16 (q) Each school district required to provide an English language learners program shall file  
17 the following information with the department annually:

18 (1) The type of English language learners programs provided;

19 (2) With regard to limited English proficient students:

20 (i) The number enrolled in each type of English language learners program;

21 (ii) The number enrolled in English as a second language who are not enrolled in another  
22 English language learners program;

23 (iii) The results of basic skills, curriculum assessment, achievement, and language  
24 proficiency testing, whether administered in English or in the native language;

25 (iv) The absentee, suspension, expulsion, dropout, and promotion rates; and

26 (v) The number of years each limited English proficient student has been enrolled in an  
27 English language learners program;

28 (3) The number of students each year who have enrolled in institutions of higher education  
29 and were formerly enrolled in an English language learners program;

30 (4) The academic progress in regular education of students who have completed an English  
31 language learners program;

32 (5) For each limited English proficient student receiving special education, the number of  
33 years in the school district prior to special education evaluation and the movement in special  
34 education programs by program placement;

1           (6) The number of limited English proficient students enrolled in programs of occupational  
2 or vocational education;

3           (7) The name, national origin, native language, certificates held, language proficiency,  
4 grade levels, and subjects taught by each teacher of an English language learners program, bilingual  
5 aides or paraprofessionals, bilingual guidance or adjustment counselors, and bilingual school  
6 psychologists;

7           (8) The per-pupil expenditures for each full-time equivalent student enrolled in an English  
8 language learners program;

9           (9) The sources and amounts of all funds expended on students enrolled in English  
10 language learners programs, broken down by local, state, and federal sources, and whether any such  
11 funds expended supplanted, rather than supplemented, the local school district obligation;

12           (10) The participation of parents through parent advisory councils;

13           (11) Whether there were any complaints filed with any federal or state court or  
14 administrative agency, since the program's inception, concerning the compliance with federal or  
15 state minimum legal requirements, the disposition of the complaint, and the monitoring and  
16 evaluation of any such agreement or court order relative to the complaint; and

17           (12) This information shall be filed in the form of the total for the school district as well as  
18 categorized by school, grade, and language.

19           (r) The commissioner annually shall analyze and publish data reported by school districts  
20 under this section regarding English language learners programs and limited English proficient  
21 students. Publication shall include, but need not be limited to, availability on the department's  
22 website. The commissioner shall submit annually a report to the committees of jurisdiction for  
23 education in the house of representatives and senate on this data on a statewide and school district  
24 basis including, but not limited to, by language group and type of English language learners  
25 programs.

26           (s) For the purposes of this chapter, "local education agencies" shall include all of the  
27 following within the state of Rhode Island:

- 28           (1) Public school districts;
- 29           (2) Regional school districts;
- 30           (3) State-operated schools;
- 31           (4) Regional collaborative schools; and
- 32           (5) Charter schools and mayoral academies.



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SECTION 2. This act shall take effect on June 30, 2022.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

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- 1           This act would require the principal at each school to provide an annual report on the  
2 number of graduating students and the number applying for admission to college or vocational  
3 training. The report would also include the total number of students completing a free application  
4 for federal student aid ("FAFSA") form and the total number of students eligible to fill out and  
5 submit a FAFSA form, and would provide data on the race, ethnicity, and gender of the students.  
6           This act would take effect on June 30, 2022.

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