

2022 -- H 7168

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- COVID RECOVERY PLANS

Introduced By: Representatives McNamara, Shallcross Smith, Donovan, Kislak, Diaz,
and Noret

Date Introduced: January 26, 2022

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended by
2 adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 22.3

4 COVID RECOVERY PLANS AND STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

5 **16-22.3-1. COVID-19 recovery plan and strategy plans.**

6 (a) The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on Rhode Island students'
7 academic and social emotional outcomes. State assessments have shown a disparity in performance
8 between students in distance learning and in person programs. Student mental health has also been
9 adversely impacted, with documented increases of child mental health related visits. Children in
10 Rhode Island have also experienced increases in food insecurity and family stress based upon
11 difficulty in paying for household expenses. Nationally, there have been drops in enrollment
12 particularly in kindergarten and Pre-K. Accordingly, every school district shall develop a "COVID
13 Recovery Plan and Strategy" (hereinafter "district recovery plans" or "plans") in anticipation of
14 possible federal and state COVID-19 recovery funding, including, but not limited to, additional
15 CARES ACT funding or funding of a similar nature which funding is provided because of the
16 current COVID-19 pandemic.

17 (b) District recovery plans shall be focused on the academic and social-emotional needs of
18 students. The plans shall be based on assessments, research and data analysis. The planning process
19 shall also feature engagement with teachers, families, and community members, with an emphasis

1 on local priorities and needs. Local plans should be prioritized based upon additional state and
2 federal stimulus funding directed to the district.

3 **16-22.3-2. Composition of school district COVID-19 recovery plans.**

4 (a) The general assembly recognizes that the needs and priorities for each district may vary
5 based upon many different factors. Each district, after conducting its due diligence through
6 assessments, research, and data analysis, shall, in their district recovery plan:

7 (1) Identify the local priorities and needs of the students in the particular district;

8 (2) Prepare targets to reach through the district recovery plans; and

9 (3) Identify strategies to reach those targets.

10 (b) District recovery plan strategies and targets may include, but are not limited to, the
11 following:

12 (1) Extended school day strategies, which could include extension of the school day,
13 summer school, recovery classes offered at nontraditional times outside the typical school day, and
14 Saturday academies.

15 (2) Targeted academic intervention, which could include tutoring, expanded credit
16 recovery, software and licenses specifically designed to support academic acceleration, accelerated
17 learning, and expanded support for multi-lingual learners.

18 (3) Expanded access for all students to education programs offered in the district, with a
19 focus on students who have become disengaged in education during the COVID-19 pandemic.
20 These strategies may include Pre-K program recruitment, enriched virtual learning programs, and
21 enrichment opportunities for high school students.

22 (4) Development of a district wide attendance recovery team. This team would identify and
23 provide support services for students and families who have become disengaged from Rhode Island
24 public schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

25 (5) Social emotional supports, which could include increased counseling, mental health
26 support from social workers, psychologist and counselors. The district recovery plan could also
27 include mentoring and intern programs that support student learning.

28 (6) Professional development. Funding may be used for professional development support
29 for teachers, administrators and building support personnel.

30 (c) The district recovery plans shall also include tiered dates by which each target is to be
31 met. These dates may be staggered in stages. This chapter does not set a date by which all targets
32 must be reached; provided, however, it is the intent of the general assembly that the process be
33 expedited and the plans designed to reach and impact as many current and future students as
34 possible.

1 (d) The strategies and targets included in subsection (b) of this section are not exhaustive
2 or exclusive, and do not preclude the setting of other strategies and targets; provided, however, in
3 doing their research, analysis, and due diligence, each district shall at a minimum consider the
4 strategies and targets identified in subsection (b) of this section.

5 (e) In developing and implementing strategies, districts may work in collaboration with
6 other school districts if both districts determine that collaboration would be helpful and useful to
7 the students of the respective districts. Collaboration is not required but is encouraged if it will
8 facilitate improved recovery outcomes for students. Districts may collaborate on all or only a
9 portion of their strategies and targets. In the event of collaboration, the district shall submit a "joint
10 district recovery plan" which outlines the respective roles of each district. Provided, that joint
11 district recovery plans shall consider issues of safety and the possible spread of illness or disease.

12 **16-22.3-3. Department of elementary and secondary education role.**

13 (a) Each district shall submit a draft of its district recovery plan or, if applicable, its joint
14 district recovery plan, to the department of elementary and secondary education (the "department")
15 by August 1, 2022. The department shall review the plans and provide feedback to the districts on
16 the district's recovery plan by August 15, 2022. Each district shall work with the department to
17 establish a completed district recovery plan by September 1, 2022.

18 (b) The department shall assist districts in facilitating collaboration pursuant to § 16-22.3-
19 2, when and if the districts involved request such assistance. The department may also identify and
20 suggest areas where collaboration would be effective, and identify districts which might be able to
21 benefit from collaboration with other districts.

22 **16-22.3-4. Applicability.**

23 The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all public schools and districts, including, but
24 not limited to, traditional public schools, vocational schools, and charter schools. Private schools
25 are not required to, but may, if their governing body and the applicable local school board or
26 committee both decide that the private school and the school district shall participate in a joint
27 district recovery plan.

28 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- COVID RECOVERY PLANS

1 This act would direct all school districts to prepare district recovery plans by September 1,
2 2022 which would include strategies and targets for students, to address losses in student academic
3 and social emotional learning which has occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. District
4 recovery plans would be focused on the needs of students based on assessments, research and data
5 analysis.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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