

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - THE EDUCATION EQUITY AND PROPERTY TAX RELIEF ACT

Introduced By: Representative Joseph M. McNamara

Date Introduced: March 04, 2022

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-7.2-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-7.2 entitled "The  
2 Education Equity and Property Tax Relief Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-7.2-6. Categorical programs, state funded expenses.**

4 In addition to the foundation education aid provided pursuant to § 16-7.2-3, the permanent  
5 foundation education-aid program shall provide direct state funding for:

6 (a) Excess costs associated with special education students. Excess costs are defined when  
7 an individual special education student's cost shall be deemed to be "extraordinary." Extraordinary  
8 costs are those educational costs that exceed the state-approved threshold based on an amount  
9 above five times the core foundation amount (total of core-instruction amount plus student success  
10 amount). The department of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds available  
11 for distribution among those eligible school districts if the total approved costs for which school  
12 districts are seeking reimbursement exceed the amount of funding appropriated in any fiscal year;  
13 and the department of elementary and secondary education shall also collect data on those  
14 educational costs that exceed the state-approved threshold based on an amount above two (2), three  
15 (3), and four (4) times the core-foundation amount;

16 (b) Career and technical education costs to help meet initial investment requirements  
17 needed to transform existing, or create new, comprehensive, career and technical education  
18 programs and career pathways in critical and emerging industries and to help offset the higher-

1 than-average costs associated with facilities, equipment maintenance and repair, and supplies  
2 necessary for maintaining the quality of highly specialized programs that are a priority for the state.  
3 The department shall develop criteria for the purpose of allocating any and all career and technical  
4 education funds as may be determined by the general assembly on an annual basis. As the  
5 Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center was designed, enabled, and authorized to:  
6 restructure the system of career and technical schools in Rhode Island for the benefit of the students,  
7 the economy, and the general welfare; provide students with the career preparation they need to  
8 compete and succeed in the world of today and of the future; and provide integrated academic and  
9 vocational curricula, with up-to-date technology and programs, to meet the varying needs of all  
10 students, with strong links to business, industry, postsecondary education, and the community  
11 achieved through partnerships, internships, and job placements, the department shall ensure that  
12 the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center is included in the allocation of these funds,  
13 if any, to support, among other things, the higher-than-average costs related to providing  
14 transportation to student internships sites. The department of elementary and secondary education  
15 shall prorate the funds available for distribution among those eligible school districts if the total  
16 approved costs for which school districts are seeking reimbursement exceed the amount of funding  
17 available in any fiscal year;

18 (c) Programs to increase access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs.  
19 The department shall recommend criteria for the purpose of allocating any and all early childhood  
20 program funds as may be determined by the general assembly;

21 (d) Central Falls, Davies, and the Met Center Stabilization Fund is established to ensure  
22 that appropriate funding is available to support their students. Additional support for Central Falls  
23 is needed due to concerns regarding the city's capacity to meet the local share of education costs.  
24 This fund requires that education aid calculated pursuant to § 16-7.2-3 and funding for costs outside  
25 the permanent foundation education-aid formula, including, but not limited to, transportation,  
26 facility maintenance, and retiree health benefits shall be shared between the state and the city of  
27 Central Falls. The fund shall be annually reviewed to determine the amount of the state and city  
28 appropriation. The state's share of this fund may be supported through a reallocation of current state  
29 appropriations to the Central Falls school district. At the end of the transition period defined in §  
30 16-7.2-7, the municipality will continue its contribution pursuant to § 16-7-24. Additional support  
31 for the Davies and the Met Center is needed due to the costs associated with running a stand-alone  
32 high school offering both academic and career and technical coursework. The department shall  
33 recommend criteria for the purpose of allocating any and all stabilization funds as may be  
34 determined by the general assembly;

1 (e) Excess costs associated with transporting students to out-of-district non- public schools.  
2 This fund will provide state funding for the costs associated with transporting students to out-of-  
3 district non-public schools, pursuant to chapter 21.1 of this title. The state will assume the costs of  
4 non-public out- of-district transportation for those districts participating in the statewide system.  
5 The department of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds available for  
6 distribution among those eligible school districts if the total approved costs for which school  
7 districts are seeking reimbursement exceed the amount of funding available in any fiscal year;

8 (f) Excess costs associated with transporting students within regional school districts. This  
9 fund will provide direct state funding for the excess costs associated with transporting students  
10 within regional school districts, established pursuant to chapter 3 of this title. This fund requires  
11 that the state and regional school district share equally the student transportation costs net any  
12 federal sources of revenue for these expenditures. The department of elementary and secondary  
13 education shall prorate the funds available for distribution among those eligible school districts if  
14 the total approved costs for which school districts are seeking reimbursement exceed the amount  
15 of funding available in any fiscal year;

16 (g) Public school districts that are regionalized shall be eligible for a regionalization bonus  
17 as set forth below:

18 (1) As used herein, the term "regionalized" shall be deemed to refer to a regional school  
19 district established under the provisions of chapter 3 of this title, including the Chariho Regional  
20 School district;

21 (2) For those districts that are regionalized as of July 1, 2010, the regionalization bonus  
22 shall commence in FY 2012. For those districts that regionalize after July 1, 2010, the  
23 regionalization bonus shall commence in the first fiscal year following the establishment of a  
24 regionalized school district as set forth in chapter 3 of this title, including the Chariho Regional  
25 School District;

26 (3) The regionalization bonus in the first fiscal year shall be two percent (2.0%) of the  
27 state's share of the foundation education aid for the regionalized district as calculated pursuant to  
28 §§ 16-7.2-3 and 16-7.2-4 in that fiscal year;

29 (4) The regionalization bonus in the second fiscal year shall be one percent (1.0%) of the  
30 state's share of the foundation education aid for the regionalized district as calculated pursuant to  
31 §§ 16-7.2-3 and 16-7.2-4 in that fiscal year;

32 (5) The regionalization bonus shall cease in the third fiscal year;

33 (6) The regionalization bonus for the Chariho regional school district shall be applied to  
34 the state share of the permanent foundation education aid for the member towns; and

1 (7) The department of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds available  
2 for distribution among those eligible regionalized school districts if the total, approved costs for  
3 which regionalized school districts are seeking a regionalization bonus exceed the amount of  
4 funding appropriated in any fiscal year;

5 (h) Additional state support for English learners (EL). The amount to support EL students  
6 shall be determined by multiplying an EL factor of ten percent (10%) by the core-instruction per-  
7 pupil amount defined in § 16-7.2-3(a)(1) and applying that amount of additional state support to  
8 EL students identified using widely adopted, independent standards and assessments identified by  
9 the commissioner. All categorical funds distributed pursuant to this subsection must be used to  
10 provide high-quality, research-based services to EL students and managed in accordance with  
11 requirements set forth by the commissioner of elementary and secondary education. The  
12 department of elementary and secondary education shall collect performance reports from districts  
13 and approve the use of funds prior to expenditure. The department of elementary and secondary  
14 education shall ensure the funds are aligned to activities that are innovative and expansive and not  
15 utilized for activities the district is currently funding. The department of elementary and secondary  
16 education shall prorate the funds available for distribution among eligible recipients if the total  
17 calculated costs exceed the amount of funding available in any fiscal year;

18 (i) State support for school resource officers. For purposes of this subsection, a school  
19 resource officer (SRO) shall be defined as a career law enforcement officer with sworn authority  
20 who is deployed by an employing police department or agency in a community-oriented policing  
21 assignment to work in collaboration with one or more schools. School resource officers should have  
22 completed at least forty (40) hours of specialized training in school policing, administered by an  
23 accredited agency, before being assigned. Beginning in FY 2019, for a period of three (3) years,  
24 school districts or municipalities that choose to employ school resource officers shall receive direct  
25 state support for costs associated with employing such officers at public middle and high schools.  
26 Districts or municipalities shall be reimbursed an amount equal to one-half (½) of the cost of  
27 salaries and benefits for the qualifying positions. Funding will be provided for school resource  
28 officer positions established on or after July 1, 2018, provided that:

29 (1) Each school resource officer shall be assigned to one school:

30 (i) Schools with enrollments below one thousand twelve hundred (1,200) students shall  
31 require one school resource officer;

32 (ii) Schools with enrollments of one thousand twelve hundred (1,200) or more students  
33 shall require two school resource officers;

34 (2) School resource officers hired in excess of the requirement noted above shall not be

1 eligible for reimbursement; and

2 (3) Schools that eliminate existing school resource officer positions and create new  
3 positions under this provision shall not be eligible for reimbursement; and

4 (j) Categorical programs defined in subsections (a) through (g) shall be funded pursuant to  
5 the transition plan in § 16-7.2-7.

6 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 - THE EDUCATION EQUITY AND PROPERTY TAX RELIEF  
ACT

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1           This act would provide that the department of elementary and secondary education would  
2 ensure that the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center would receive direct state  
3 funding from the permanent foundation education-aid program to assist the Center's in its mission,  
4 and would include funding to address the Center's higher-than-average costs related to providing  
5 transportation to student internships sites.

6           This act would take effect upon passage.

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