

2023 -- H 5739

LC001432

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- CURRICULUM

Introduced By: Representative P. Morgan

Date Introduced: February 21, 2023

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-22 of the General Laws entitled "Curriculum [See Title 16  
2 Chapter 97 - the Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended by adding thereto the  
3 following section:

4 **16-22-39. Respect in education curricula.**

5 (a) All Rhode Island schools and every member of Rhode Island's educational system shall,  
6 not only respect the individual, but also seek to have each person judged and accepted by the content  
7 of their character, not their race, ethnicity, gender, or religion. Schools shall work within the limits  
8 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub. L. 88-352, 78 Stat. 241), to prevent all forms of discrimination.

9 (b) Educators shall not use race and gender stereotypes in any part of the school curricula  
10 or instruction.

11 (c) Students and all school personnel shall not be segregated based on their race, ethnicity,  
12 gender, or religion.

13 (d) Racial slurs or terms that describe race, ethnicity, gender or religion in a pejorative  
14 context or that are used to cast negative opinions, attitudes or views on individuals based upon race,  
15 ethnicity, gender, or religion shall not be presented in our schools.

16 (e) The legislature acknowledges the fundamental truth that all individuals are equal before  
17 the law and have inalienable rights. Accordingly, instructional supporting materials must be  
18 consistent with the principles of individual freedom contained in this section.

19 (f) No individual is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or

1 unconsciously, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex.

2 (g) No race is inherently superior to another race.

3 (h) No individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or  
4 partly on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, disability, or sex.

5 (i) Meritocracy or traits such as a hard work ethic are not racist but fundamental to the right  
6 to pursue happiness and be rewarded for industry.

7 (j) An individual, by virtue of their race or sex, does not bear responsibility for actions  
8 committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex.

9 (k) The focus of educators and every member of the educational system shall be academic  
10 excellence and helping every child maximize their educational potential. Basic educational skills  
11 shall be taught for mastery. Further, all members of the staff of the public schools, subject to the  
12 rules of the Rhode Island department of education and the school committees, shall teach efficiently  
13 and faithfully, using the books and materials required that meet the highest standards for  
14 professionalism and historical accuracy, following the prescribed courses of study, and employing  
15 approved methods of instruction, consisting of the following:

16 (1) Ideological materials, worksheets, homework, texts or assigned reading, and/or  
17 mentored discussions that depict identity groups as oppressors and/or victims shall not be  
18 incorporated within the pedagogy or curricula of schools. Provided, historical, factual events shall  
19 be taught and presented as historical, factual events, as part of a high quality curricula.

20 (2) Historical events and figures shall be discussed by first developing an understanding of  
21 the standards, customs, and traditions in use at the time of the historical event.

22 (3) History, literature, social science, and natural science topics shall be subject to critical  
23 analysis that requires all sides of the topic to be presented and explored.

24 (4) No exclusive focus or centering of curricula on the history, literature, current events, or  
25 cultural contributions of individual identity groups shall be permitted.

26 (5) Books and instructional materials shall not center any race, ethnicity, gender, religion  
27 or viewpoint. Instructors, librarians, and all school personnel who interact with children are  
28 required to use books that balance instruction and promote critical thinking. In all curricula where  
29 ideological material is studied in an educational facility, students shall be exposed to the alternative  
30 perspective to achieve educational balance. Provided, historical, factual events shall be taught and  
31 presented as historical, factual events, as part of a high quality curricula.

32 (6) Ideological or political theories may not be presented as fact. Differences of opinion  
33 shall be accepted and encouraged. Provided, historical, factual events shall be taught and presented  
34 as historical, factual events, as part of a high quality curricula.

1           (7) Schools shall not use the 1619 Project curriculum or any other curricula that pursues a  
2 predominantly ideological and/or activist outcome.

3           (l) Educational staff are prohibited from electioneering, pursuing activism, or advocating  
4 for specific political beliefs or candidates. No visual materials, such as banners, posters or handouts  
5 promoting racial advocacy shall be allowed in a school setting. Values, psychological and medical  
6 counseling, and political activism shall not be taught in classrooms or in any school setting.

7           (m) School personnel who violate the provisions of this section may be disciplined at the  
8 individual school level for the first offense. A second offense shall be referred to the superintendent  
9 and/or school committee for consideration of appropriate action or imposition of discipline. A third  
10 or subsequent offense shall be reported to the federal Office of the Attorney General, Civil Rights  
11 Division under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for any violation of the civil rights of students, parents  
12 and/or colleagues.

13           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 -- CURRICULUM

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- 1           This act would require that both curriculum and teaching practices in Rhode Island schools
- 2   protect and respect the civil rights of all members of the school community.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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