

# 2024 -- H 8103 SUBSTITUTE A

LC005760/SUB A

## STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION-- SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND SUPERINTENDENTS

Introduced By: Representatives Cotter, Casimiro, Handy, and McNamara

Date Introduced: March 27, 2024

Referred To: House Education

(by request)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-2-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-2 entitled "School  
2 Committees and Superintendents [See Title 16 Chapter 97 — The Rhode Island Board of Education  
3 Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-2-2. City and town schools required — School year — Location — Kindergartens.**

5 (a)(1) Except as specifically provided in this section, every city or town shall establish and  
6 maintain for at least one hundred eighty (180) days annually or the equivalent thereof, exclusive of  
7 holidays, a sufficient number of schools in convenient places under the control and management of  
8 the school committee and under the supervision of the Rhode Island Board of Education. In lieu of  
9 a convenient location, the school committee may provide transportation for pupils to and from  
10 school in accordance with the provisions of chapter 21 of this title. Provided, that a school district  
11 may establish a school year that is the equivalent of one hundred eighty (180) days through the use  
12 of longer school days or combination of longer and shorter school days in terms of school hours,  
13 or pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, and that may total less than one hundred eighty (180)  
14 separate days, so long as through the use of ~~the longer school day~~ days or through the use of a  
15 combination of longer and shorter school days, the school district annually provides a minimum of  
16 one thousand eighty (1,080) school hours in a single school year. ~~This figure is based on a minimum~~  
17 ~~of six (6) hours per school day.~~ For purposes of clarification, the intent herein is to permit school  
18 districts ~~to amend their school year to provide for longer school days while reducing the actual~~  
19 ~~number of days in which the school facilities must be fully staffed and maintained~~ flexibility in the

1 delivery of educational services, but to ~~insure~~ ensure that in doing so, school districts shall still  
2 provide ~~the minimum amount of instruction time contemplated by this section~~ one thousand eighty  
3 (1,080) school hours in a single school year and shall still provide any instructional hours minimum  
4 in a single school year. Provided, however, that the flexibility granted herein also applies to a daily  
5 instructional hours minimum otherwise required by the Rhode Island Board of Education or by the  
6 department of elementary and secondary education. Nothing herein shall be deemed to limit a  
7 school district from exceeding the minimum amounts of days and hours set forth herein.

8 (2) School districts intending to make use of the ~~option~~ flexibility provided herein ~~to~~  
9 ~~lengthen school days and shorten the school year~~ shall submit a detailed school day plan and a  
10 proposed school calendar to the commissioner of elementary and secondary education for approval.  
11 The commissioner shall review the submitted school day plan and the submitted calendar to  
12 determine whether the plan and calendar are academically sound and fiscally efficient. The  
13 commissioner ~~may grant or~~ shall not unreasonably deny ~~approval of~~ the plan and/or the calendar.

14 (3) Professional development, including common planning time, is critically important to  
15 provide the best instruction for students, meet legislative requirements and maintain best practices.  
16 For this reason, districts are allowed the flexible use early release days; provided that districts meet  
17 the yearly requirement of one thousand eighty (1,080) school hours.

18 (b) School facilities shall include a sufficient number of kindergartens.

19 (c) On or before December 1, 2017, the department of elementary and secondary education  
20 shall establish a policy that allows a school district to submit a detailed plan, at any time, to the  
21 commissioner of elementary and secondary education that would allow the schools to conduct  
22 instruction through virtual education when the schools have been closed due to inclement weather  
23 or other emergency. The plan for virtual education would be subject to, and require approval by,  
24 the council on elementary and secondary education in order to count as a school day.

25 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-- SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND SUPERINTENDENTS

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1           This act would permit school districts to use release days for professional development;  
2 provided that, instruction time meets the yearly requirement of one thousand eighty (1,080) school  
3 hours.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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