

2014 -- H 7292

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LC003957
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - CURRICULUM

Introduced By: Representatives Johnston, O'Brien, Hull, Carnevale, and Messier

Date Introduced: January 30, 2014

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Legislative findings and intent. The legislature finds and declares that child
2 sexual abuse, estimated to affect up to one in four (4) girls and up to one in six (6) boys, poses a
3 grave threat to the health and safety of young people and its damaging effects can last a lifetime.

4 The legislature also finds and declares that child sexual exploitation, including the use of
5 children in pornography and prostitution, and child abduction poses a similar threat to the health
6 and safety of young people and puts child victims at grave risk of death or severe bodily harm.

7 The legislature also finds and declares that the incidence of child sexual abuse, child
8 sexual exploitation, and child abduction can be reduced by raising awareness among young
9 children of common dangers and warning signs, empowering children to better protect
10 themselves from sexual predators and teaching children how to obtain any necessary assistance or
11 services.

12 Therefore, it is hereby declared to be the public policy, and in the public interest, of this
13 state to establish a comprehensive program to provide an age-appropriate course of instruction in
14 the prevention of child abduction, child sexual exploitation, and child sexual abuse.

15 SECTION 2. Chapter 16-22 of the General Laws entitled "Curriculum" is hereby
16 amended by adding thereto the following section:

17 **16-22-26. Age appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness education. -- (a)**
18 Short title. This section shall be known and may be cited as "Erin Merryn's Law."

19 (b) Prevention of child abduction, child sexual exploitation, and child sexual abuse.

1 (1) All pupils in grades kindergarten through eight (8) in all public schools in the state
2 shall receive instruction designed to prevent the abduction, exploitation, or sexual abuse of
3 children. Such instruction shall be provided by, or under the direct supervision of regular
4 classroom teachers; provided, however, that such instruction may be provided by any other
5 agency, public or private.

6 (2) The department of elementary and secondary education shall continue to provide
7 guidance and materials on age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention.
8 The commissioner shall provide technical assistance to assist in the development of curricula that
9 shall be age-appropriate and developed according to the needs and abilities of pupils at successive
10 grade levels in order to provide awareness skills, information, self-confidence, and support to aid
11 in the prevention of child abduction, child sexual exploitation, and child sexual abuse.

12 (c) Action by school committees. The school committees of the several cities, towns, and
13 school districts shall provide for the incorporation of the curricula described herein into existing
14 health education courses.

15 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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- 1 This act would provide for courses of study for pupils in grades kindergarten through 8 to
- 2 prevent child abduction, child sexual exploitation, and abuse.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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