

2015 -- H 5928

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LC002131
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

A N A C T

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

Introduced By: Representatives O'Brien, Marshall, McKiernan, Carnevale, and Slater

Date Introduced: March 19, 2015

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

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

14 (b) Career and technical education costs to help meet initial investment requirements
15 needed to transform existing or create new comprehensive career and technical education
16 programs and career pathways in critical and emerging industries and to help offset the higher
17 than average costs associated with facilities, equipment maintenance and repair, and supplies
18 necessary for maintaining the quality of highly specialized programs that are a priority for the

1 state. The department shall recommend criteria for the purpose of allocating any and all career
2 and technical education funds as may be determined by the general assembly on an annual basis.
3 The department of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds available for
4 distribution among those eligible school districts if the total approved costs for which school
5 districts are seeking reimbursement exceed the amount of funding available in any fiscal year;

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

9 (d) Central Falls Stabilization Fund is established to assure that appropriate funding is
10 available to support the community, including students from the community that attend the
11 charter schools, Davies, and the Met Center pursuant to § 16-7.2-5, due to concerns regarding the
12 city's capacity to meet the local share of education costs. This fund requires that education aid
13 calculated pursuant to § 16-7.2-3 and funding for costs outside the permanent foundation
14 education aid formula, including but not limited to transportation, facility maintenance, and
15 retiree health benefits shall be shared between the state and the city of Central Falls. The fund
16 shall be annually reviewed to determine the amount of the state and city appropriation. The state's
17 share of this fund may be supported through a reallocation of current state appropriations to the
18 Central Falls school district. At the end of the transition period defined in § 16-7.2-7, the
19 municipality will continue its contribution pursuant to § 16-7-24; and

20 (e) Excess costs associated with transporting students to out of district non-public
21 schools and within regional school districts. (1) This fund will provide state funding for the costs
22 associated with transporting students to out of district non-public schools, pursuant to title 16,
23 Chapter 21.1. The state will assume the costs of non-public out-of-district transportation for those
24 districts participating in the statewide system; and (2) This fund will provide direct state funding
25 for the excess costs associated with transporting students within regional school districts,
26 established pursuant to title 16, chapter 3. This fund requires that the state and regional school
27 district share equally the student transportation costs net any federal sources of revenue for these
28 expenditures. The department of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds
29 available for distribution among those eligible school districts if the total approved costs for
30 which school districts are seeking reimbursement exceed the amount of funding available in any
31 fiscal year.

32 (f) Public school districts that are regionalized shall be eligible for a regionalization
33 bonus as set forth below.

34 (1) As used herein, the term "regionalized" shall be deemed to refer to a regional school

1 district established under the provisions of chapter 16-3 including the Chariho Regional School
2 district.

3 (2) For those districts that are regionalized as of July 1, 2010, the regionalization bonus
4 shall commence in FY 2012. For those districts that regionalize after July 1, 2010, the
5 regionalization bonus shall commence in the first fiscal year following the establishment of a
6 regionalized school district as set forth section 16-3, including the Chariho Regional School
7 District.

8 (3) The regionalization bonus in the first fiscal year shall be two percent (2.0%) of the
9 state's share of the foundation education aid for the regionalized district as calculated pursuant to
10 §§ 16-7.2-3 and 16-7.2-4 in that fiscal year.

11 (4) The regionalization bonus in the second fiscal year shall be one percent (1.0%) of the
12 state's share of the foundation education aid for the regionalized district as calculated pursuant to
13 §§ 16-7.2-3 and 16-7.2-4 in that fiscal year.

14 (5) The regionalization bonus shall cease in the third fiscal year.

15 (6) The regionalization bonus for the Chariho regional school district shall be applied to
16 the state share of the permanent foundation education aid for the member towns.

17 (7) The department of elementary and secondary education shall prorate the funds
18 available for distribution among those eligible regionalized school districts if the total approve
19 costs for which regionalized school districts are seeking a regionalization bonus exceed the
20 amount of funding appropriated in any fiscal year.

21 (g) Categorical programs defined in (a) through (f) shall be funded pursuant to the
22 transition plan in § 16-7.2-7.

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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RELATING TO EDUCATION - THE EDUCATION EQUITY AND PROPERTY TAX RELIEF
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1 This act would amend the definition of the term "extraordinary costs" for the purposes of
2 excess costs associated with special education students. The new definition of extraordinary costs
3 would be educational costs that are over three (3) times the average statewide special education
4 cost.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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