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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH
DYSLEXIA, DYSCALCULIA, AND DYSGRAPHIA (SEE TITLE 16 CHAPTER 97 -- THE
RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT)

Introduced By: Representatives Fenton-Fung, Amore, and Quattrocchi

Date Introduced: February 16, 2022

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended by
2 adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 26.2

4 RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH DYSLEXIA, DYSCALCULIA, AND

5 DYSGRAPHIA

6 **16-26.2-1. Short title.**

7 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Rhode Island School for Children
8 with Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, and Dysgraphia".

9 **16-26.2-2. Control by board of education.**

10 The Rhode Island board of education shall have supervision, administration, and control of
11 the school for children with dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia.

12 **16-26.2-3. Board of Trustees.**

13 (a) The powers delegated and authorized in this chapter for the board of education and the
14 department of elementary and secondary education shall be in addition to those previously
15 authorized by any other general or public law.

16 (b) The governance, funding, and programming of the Rhode Island school for children
17 with dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia, shall be in accordance with the rules and regulations
18 formulated by the board of education pursuant to chapter 35 of title 42.

1 (c)(1) The purpose of this chapter is to create the Rhode Island school for children with
2 dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia.

3 (2) The school for children with dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia shall be operated as
4 a local education agency and shall be governed by a board of trustees. With the exception of those
5 powers and duties reserved to the director, the commissioner of elementary and secondary
6 education, and the board of education, the board of trustees shall have the powers and duties of a
7 school committee.

8 (3) The board of education shall appoint the members of the board of trustees from
9 nominations made by the commissioner of elementary and secondary education. The chairperson
10 shall also be selected in this manner. The board of education shall determine the qualifications and
11 terms of office of members of the board of trustees. The board of trustees shall be comprised of
12 nine (9) individuals, not less than five (5) of whom shall be persons who are dyslexic, dyscalculic
13 or dysgraphic. The commissioner may seek input on nominations of persons who are dyslexic,
14 dyscalculic or dysgraphic from organizations whose membership is primarily made up of dyslexic,
15 dyscalculic or dysgraphic individuals, individuals who are dyslexic, dyscalculic or dysgraphic, or
16 organizations whose purpose is advocacy for individuals who are dyslexic, dyscalculic or
17 dysgraphic, as well as from other sources. For purposes of obtaining input from diverse sources
18 regarding suggestions for nominations for the first trustees to be nominated by the commissioner,
19 the commissioner shall convene a public quorum to obtain broad input prior to making the initial
20 nominations for the founding membership on the board of trustees. No person in any way employed
21 by or doing business with the Rhode Island school for children with dyslexia, dyscalculia, and
22 dysgraphia shall serve on the board of trustees.

23 (4) The board of education shall establish strategic directions for the education of dyslexic,
24 dyscalculic, and dysgraphic children in the State of Rhode Island.

25 (5) The board of education shall provide parameters for budget requests, recommend a
26 budget, and participate in budget development.

27 (d)(1) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall recommend
28 parameters for the overall budget requests, recommend a budget, and participate in budget
29 development.

30 (2) The commissioner shall approve the process for selection of a director of the school.

31 (e) The board of trustees shall meet monthly and serve without compensation. Seven (7)
32 members of the board of trustees shall be required to attend teacher appeal meetings pursuant to §
33 16-13-4. The board of trustees shall have broad policymaking authority of the operation of the
34 school consistent with this subsection and the following powers and duties:

- 1 (1) To identify the needs of children with dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia in the State
2 of Rhode Island.
- 3 (2) To develop educational policies to meet the needs of children with dyslexia, dyscalculia
4 and dysgraphia served by the school for children with dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia.
- 5 (3) To appoint a director of the school to serve as its chief executive officer and to approve
6 assistant directors from nominations made by the director.
- 7 (4) To provide policy guidance and participate in budget development.
- 8 (5) To develop staffing policies which ensure that all students are taught by educators of
9 the highest possible quality.
- 10 (f)(1) The director shall serve at the pleasure of the board of trustees with the initial
11 appointment to be for a period of not more than five (5) years; provided, that the term and conditions
12 of employment are subject to the approval of the board of education.
- 13 (2) It is the responsibility of the director to manage and operate the school on a day-to-day
14 basis. The director's responsibilities shall include the following:
- 15 (i) To be responsible for the entire care, supervision, and management of the school for
16 children with dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia.
- 17 (ii) To recommend to the board of education educational policies to meet the needs of the
18 children with dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia, and to implement policies established by the
19 board of trustees.
- 20 (iii) To present nominations to the board of trustees for assistant administrators and to
21 appoint all other school personnel.
- 22 (iv) To provide for the evaluation of all school personnel.
- 23 (v) To establish a school based management approach for decision making for the operation
24 of the school.
- 25 (vi) To report to the board of trustees on a regular basis the financial condition and the
26 operation of the school, and to report annually on the educational progress of the school.
- 27 (vii) To establish appropriate advisory committees as needed to provide guidance and
28 feedback on the operation of the school.
- 29 (viii) To be available to the board of trustees and to attend board of trustees meetings to
30 provide a link between the school and the board of trustees.
- 31 (g) With policy guidance from the board of trustees and extensive involvement of the
32 administrators and faculty of the school, the director shall annually prepare a budget. The board of
33 trustees shall approve the budget and transmit it to the commissioner of elementary and secondary
34 education. The board of education shall provide parameters for the overall budget request. Based

1 on review and recommendations for the commissioner, the board of education shall approve the
2 total budget and incorporate it into its budget request to the governor and to the general assembly.
3 Line item budgeting decisions shall be the responsibility of the director.

4 (h) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to limit or interfere with the rights of teachers
5 and other school employees to bargain collectively pursuant to chapters 9.3 and 9.4 of title 28 or to
6 allow the board of trustees or the director to abrogate any agreement by collective bargaining.
7 Employees at the Rhode Island school for children with dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia shall
8 be state employees.

9 **16-26.2-4. Admission of students.**

10 The board of education may admit any persons in the Rhode Island school for children with
11 dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia as provided in § 16-26.2-5.

12 **16-26.2-5. Persons admissible.**

13 (a) All children of parents, or under the control of guardians or other persons, legal
14 residents of this state, between the ages from birth to twenty-one (21) years, who are dyslexic,
15 dyscalculic or dysgraphic, thus making it impracticable for this student to make progress toward
16 his or her educational goals by attending the public schools may attend the Rhode Island school for
17 children with dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia, without charge, under any rules and regulations
18 as the board of education may establish.

19 (b) Dyslexic, dyscalculic or dysgraphic persons from birth to twenty-one (21) years, who
20 are legal residents of the state, shall be entitled to the privilege of the school without charge, and
21 for any period of time in each individual case as may be deemed appropriate by the board of
22 education. Residents of other states may be admitted upon the payment of any rates of board and
23 tuition as may be fixed by the board.

24 **16-26.2-6. Regional hearing impaired programs.**

25 (a) Each city and town may contract with the Rhode Island school for children with
26 dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia to establish and operate programs for the children who are
27 dyslexic, dyscalculic or dysgraphic.

28 (b) When these programs are operated by the Rhode Island school for children with
29 dyslexia, dyscalculia, or dysgraphia, each participating city or town shall be assessed for the cost
30 of the program in the proportion that their enrollment bears to the total enrollment in the program.
31 The assessments shall be deposited in a restricted receipt account for the purpose of funding
32 expenditures necessary to operate the regional program.

33 **16-26.2-7. Certificates of proficiency.**

34 Any child having attended the school for a time or course prescribed by the board, upon

1 leaving the school, shall be entitled to receive a certificate of his or her proficiency from the board.

2 **16-26.2-8. Annual report to general assembly.**

3 The board of education shall annually in the month of January make a report to the general
4 assembly of the state and condition of the school, and a statement of all expenses incurred for
5 salaries, maintenance, tuition, and other items of current expense, together with an estimate of the
6 amount of money necessary to meet the current expenses of the next year.

7 **16-26.2-9. Execution of chapter -- Rules and regulations.**

8 The board of education shall carry out the provisions of this chapter and shall make any
9 rules and regulations governing the operation of the school that may be required.

10 **16-26.2-10. Other sources of funding.**

11 (a) Districts shall be assessed tuition to cover the costs of educational services that are
12 additional to the dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia education programs that are provided to
13 resident students at the Rhode Island school for children with dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia.

14 (b) Tuition assessed at the school for children with dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia to
15 cover costs of educational services that are additional to the dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia
16 education programs shall be based on a graduated tuition schedule correlating to the varying needs
17 of students. Districts shall receive three (3) times each school year, invoices summarizing the basis
18 for the tuition charged. There shall be deducted from the final aid payment to each school district
19 at the end of the fiscal year any amounts owed to the state for these additional educational services.
20 All tuition paid by districts and any aid deducted for non-payment shall be deposited in a restricted
21 receipt account and shall be exempt from the indirect cost recovery provisions of § 35-4-7.

22 (c) The Rhode Island school for children with dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia is
23 hereby authorized to rent or lease space in its school building. The school shall deposit any revenues
24 from such agreements into a restricted receipt account, to be known as the Rhode Island school for
25 children with dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia rental income account, to be used for the same
26 educational purposes that its state appropriation is used. Any such rental agreements must receive
27 prior approval from the school's board of trustees and by the state properties committee.

28 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 -- RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH
DYSLEXIA, DYSCALCULIA, AND DYSGRAPHIA (SEE TITLE 16 CHAPTER 97 -- THE
RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT)

1 This act would create the Rhode Island school for children with dyslexia, dyscalculia, and
2 dysgraphia, to provide programs and support to those children diagnosed with dyslexia, dyscalculia
3 or dysgraphia, to assist the children to meet their educational goals where it may be otherwise
4 impossible to do so by attending public school. All children between the ages of birth to twenty-
5 one (21) years old, who are residents of the State of Rhode Island and have been diagnosed with
6 dyslexia, dyscalculia or dysgraphia are eligible for admission, free of charge. Residents of other
7 states may be admitted upon payment of any rates of board and tuition as set by the board of
8 trustees. This act would further allow each city or town to contract with the school to establish and
9 operate programs for children within the school district who are dyslexic, dyscalculic or dysgraphic.
10 Each school district shall be assessed a fee to fund the school each year, receiving three (3) invoices
11 per school year summarizing the basis for the tuition charge

12 This act would take effect upon passage.

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