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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION

Introduced By: Senators Lombardi, McCaffrey, Goldin, Archambault, and DiPalma

Date Introduced: February 10, 2016

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-67-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-67 entitled "Rhode  
2 Island Literacy and Dropout Prevention Act [See Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board  
3 of Education Act]" is hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-67-2. The literacy program.** – (a) Activities under this section shall include strategies  
5 to improve the performance of students in mathematics, reading and writing, and to specifically  
6 address issues of dyslexia. Such activities must be founded on a scientific research base, as  
7 described in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, title I, part B, § 1208 (20 U.S.C. § 6368).  
8 Reading instruction to improve the reading skills of all students in the early grades (specifically  
9 kindergarten (K) through to and including grade five (5)) shall be consistent with the ~~board of~~  
10 ~~regents~~ council on elementary and secondary education's reading policy. This legislation requires  
11 that the following ~~five (5)~~ six (6) activities, which comprise the literacy program, be conducted:

12 (1) Screening for all children first entering school. All school districts that provide  
13 elementary education are required to screen all children prior to, or upon, their first entry to  
14 school to determine their level of educational readiness. All children are required to participate in  
15 this screening. Screening shall address the child's educational development and shall be used to  
16 determine whether he or she is educationally disadvantaged in terms of readiness for instruction  
17 in the literacy skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, or mathematics.

18 (2) Literacy focus in instruction in kindergarten through grade three (3) for all students.  
19 All school districts that provide elementary education shall focus their kindergarten through grade

1 three (3) instruction for all students on literacy: reading, writing, speaking, listening, and  
2 mathematics. All instruction shall be geared to helping students achieve the outcomes in literacy  
3 which have been specified by the commissioner of elementary and secondary education. School  
4 districts are encouraged to consider reducing class size to no more than fifteen (15) students as  
5 one means to achieving these outcomes. School districts will be held accountable for student  
6 achievement of the literacy outcomes.

7 (3) (i) Supplementary literacy instruction for educationally disadvantaged students in  
8 grades Kindergarten through twelve (12).

9 (ii) Supplementary literacy (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and mathematics)  
10 instruction may be required for educationally disadvantaged students. The commissioner of  
11 elementary and secondary education shall stipulate for each school district the specific cutoff  
12 points and the grades for required service each year. Services must be provided first to students  
13 who are most educationally disadvantaged. Services shall focus on instruction in reading, writing,  
14 speaking, listening, and mathematics. Program emphasis shall be as follows:

15 (A) Intensive development in literacy. Kindergarten through grade three (3).

16 (B) Early intervention in literacy. Grades four (4) through six (6).

17 (C) Remediation in literacy. Grades seven (7) through eight (8).

18 (D) Intensive remediation in literacy. Grades nine (9) through twelve (12).

19 (iii) School districts will be held accountable for student achievement of the literacy  
20 outcomes.

21 (4) Dropout prevention programs. Programs shall address the academic, social, or  
22 personal needs of potential dropouts. Projects shall be selected at the discretion of the  
23 commissioner of elementary and secondary education.

24 (5) State level program support. Activities shall provide for necessary planning and  
25 administrative functions and for a broadly representative advisory council.

26 (6) Dyslexia-targeted assistance. The literacy program shall also include assistance to  
27 students by providing strategies that formally address dyslexia, when appropriate. In addition, the  
28 department of elementary and secondary education shall offer to school districts, at no cost to the  
29 school district or to participants in the training, professional development services to enhance the  
30 skills of elementary teachers in the use of evidence-based strategies to improve the literacy skills  
31 of students with dyslexia.

32 (b) As used in this section, the term "dyslexia" means a specific and significant  
33 impairment in the development of reading, including, but not limited to, phonemic awareness,  
34 phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension that is not solely accounted for by intellectual

1 [disability, sensory disability or impairment, or lack of appropriate instruction.](#)

2 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

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- 1           This act would add dyslexia-targeted assistance as a required aspect of the literacy
- 2 program for students at the elementary grade level.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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