

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO H 7729 March 17, 2026

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Legislative findings, purpose and definitions:

- 1) It is the policy of the State of Rhode Island to promote safety and prevent harm to all students, teachers, staff and visitors in the public schools and to treat all students with equal dignity and respect.
- 2) “Seclusion” is the involuntary confinement of a student alone in any room or area. It includes the use of any room or area in which the student is alone and not free to leave (or believes they are not free to leave), regardless of the name given to the room or area.
- 3) Research indicates that the use of "seclusion" leads to physical and mental health harm to students, teachers and those who witness the practice, that it lacks all therapeutic value, does not reduce restraint, promotes self-harm and contributes to the loss of instructional time. It frequently occurs with no transparency or accountability and sometimes involves the use of converted closets equipped with padding to confine children for indefinite amounts of time. It is disproportionately practiced against children with disabilities. It is both harmful and unnecessary and it does not promote safety.
- 4) It is the intention of the legislature to eliminate seclusion as defined, regardless of the name applied to an actual room or policy or practice in any school or district. It is the intention of the legislature to instead promote research-based positive behavioral interventions, including but not limited to adequate staffing and training, in order to prevent crisis situations in schools in the first place and to address those that do arise through research proven de-escalation and other non-violent positive and safe approaches.

SECTION 2. Chapter 16-21 of the General Laws entitled “Health and Safety of Pupils” is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

16-21-44 Prohibition of Seclusion

- (a) **Seclusion is prohibited in all schools in RI from preschool to Grade 12.**
- (b) **The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education will hear all complaints related to violations of this section on an emergency basis (within five days) and without any prior requirement of complaints at the district level. The Commissioner’s jurisdiction applies regardless of whether the child is a general or special education child.**
- (c) **The Commissioner is charged with ensuring that all districts comply with the elimination of seclusion and that adequate staffing and training, consistent with legislative purposes, is provided in every district and school.**
- (d) **The Commissioner of Education will promulgate and/or amend regulations to implement this section.**
- (e) **The Commissioner shall publish on the Department website information for families regarding the prohibition on seclusion and any forms, instructions or guides for bringing a complaint.**

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.