

# ACCESS **STILL** DENIED

How School Internet Filtering Violates State Law And Hinders  
Academic Freedom

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**ACLU**

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

Rhode Island



# ACCESS STILL DENIED

## How School Internet Filtering Violates State Law And Hinders Academic Freedom

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## Executive Summary

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In 2013, the ACLU of Rhode Island published a report, “*Access Denied: How Internet Filtering in Schools Harms Public Education.*”<sup>1</sup> The report revealed how the use by public schools of Internet filtering software hinders teachers from making use of the Internet to educate students, and hampers students from accessing relevant information in the classroom.

This report looks into how legislation, policy, and technology regarding Internet filtering have changed since then. In May 2017, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) shared with all school districts a model policy for Internet filtering that followed the recent passage of a law on the subject. The law, enacted in 2016, requires every school district to have an Internet filtering policy designed to foster academic freedom. We asked all school districts to provide us with a copy of their policy as well as a list of the websites that their Internet filters block. The results were distressing:

- We found that of the 33 districts that responded, 28 did not have a policy regarding Internet filtering at all (though two were in the midst of adopting one), while of the five that did have filtering policies, three did not fully comply with the 2016 Internet filtering law.
- Just as we had found in 2013, Rhode Island school districts continue to vastly over-filter their networks, going above and beyond what’s required by federal law, and unnecessarily barring students and teachers from accessing sites that can be promoted and shared as educational resources.
- Among the websites that some school districts block, using the same private filtering software that is operated in virtually every district, are ones that are categorized as dealing with such academically relevant topics as sex education, religion, drugs, and terrorism.
- Other categories that one might at first blush think should be filtered likely impede access to much pedagogically appropriate information. Examples include the oft-blocked categories of “drugs” and “alcohol or tobacco content.” Students researching such topics as marijuana legalization, the opioid epidemic or fetal alcohol syndrome could find their research seriously hindered.
- A few districts even go so far as to block sites devoted to such topics as “abortion,” “alternative sexual lifestyles (GLBT),” “hobbies,” “humor,” “dictionary,” “news,” and “political.”
- It is imperative that school districts not complying with the 2016 law act promptly to do so, and the state Department of Education should take all necessary action to ensure compliance. The ACLU will monitor compliance, and seek to ensure that adopted policies not only abide by the very specific procedures required by the statute but also its critical goal of promoting academic freedom.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://riaclu.org/images/uploads/Access\\_Denied-How\\_Internet\\_Filtering\\_in\\_Schools\\_Harms\\_Public\\_Education.pdf](http://riaclu.org/images/uploads/Access_Denied-How_Internet_Filtering_in_Schools_Harms_Public_Education.pdf)

## Background

The First Amendment rights of students are not as expansive as those available to adults, but their right to have access to a wide range of information is clear. In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court established that public schools cannot remove books from libraries “simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those books.”<sup>2</sup>

Students have a legal right to access information at school via the Internet without unreasonable barriers.

As with attempts to censor books, the ACLU believes that students have a legal right to access information at school via the Internet without unreasonable barriers. Under the guise of protecting pupils from digital harm, however, schools across the state regularly block access by students, teachers, and other staff to large sectors of the Internet, with little regard for the value of information online and with serious implications for the free speech rights of users and their access to relevant information in the school setting.

Internet filtering programs block certain categories of websites – or even websites that simply mention specific words. For example, the ACLU’s 2013 report found that more than half of RI’s school districts blocked students from accessing websites that, by the software manufacturer’s definition, “promote partisan historical opinion” or include information about undefined “anti-government groups.” A few school districts blocked websites categorized as “books and literature,” “social opinion,” and “religion.”

The report offered a number of recommendations, including the passage of legislation to address some of the more problematic aspects of the use of Internet filtering in schools. In response, the General Assembly passed legislation in 2016 that addressed many of the concerns highlighted by the report.

The law (R.I.G.L. §16-21.6-1) outlines the responsibility of each school district to have an Internet filtering policy that addresses a variety of key issues:

- The policy must **indicate why a specific category is filtered, and list the individuals or administrators who are in charge of making those decisions.** This provision is important because it allows for transparency and accountability for teachers, students, parents, and administrators.
- The policy must **establish procedures for teachers to request that a site be unblocked and to be given reasons when a request is denied.** This provision is important because, as we found in our 2013 report, teachers sometimes encountered unwarranted problems when they requested that specific sites be unblocked for educational purposes, such as waiting long periods of time or simply being denied access without specific reasons. Among the blocked sites documented in the ACLU’s 2013 report that teachers reported contending with were the websites of PBS Kids and National Stop Bullying Day, a video clip of the Nutcracker ballet, and a website on global warming.

<sup>2</sup> *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26, et al. v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982).

- The law mandates that the **school district maintain a public record of any requests for unblocking sites as well as the response**. These records are to be collected in an annual report for submission to the school committee so that they can use the data to determine whether the list of blocked categories and standards for blocking should be revised.
- Finally, the 2016 legislation **required the RI Department of Education to develop a model policy for the school districts to use and follow**. Importantly, the law requires the policy to promote academic freedom in the classroom. During April of this year, the ACLU met with RIDE to discuss and work on a model policy that complied with the law, and RIDE shared the result with school districts in May 2017. The RIDE policy is attached as Appendix B.

In September 2017, the ACLU sent Access to Public Records Act requests to all school districts in Rhode Island, asking them to provide a copy of their policy for Internet filtering as well as a list of the filtered websites in their network. This report breaks down our findings, concerns, and recommendations.

## **Findings**

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### ***District Policies***

Out of the thirty-three school districts surveyed, only five had policies in place specifically related to Internet filtering: Central Falls, Chariho, Cumberland, Exeter-West Greenwich, and North Providence. Nevertheless, of these, only Cumberland and Exeter-West Greenwich truly follow the model policy set by RIDE, while Chariho's comes close.

Chariho follows most of the points from the model policy but failed to include details regarding the procedure for requesting to unblock a website as well as the process for handling denied requests as mandated by the 2016 law. Additionally, the explanations provided by Chariho for blocking various website categories were often misleading. For a number of blocked categories, the school district simply listed "CIPA" (Children's Internet Protection Act, a federal law dealing with Internet filtering) as the only reason for barring access to those sites. However, CIPA simply doesn't require blocking many of the categories (such as "drugs" and "sexual education") that were cited by the district.

The policies for Central Falls and North Providence don't follow any of the standards of the law, even though they were both revised after RIDE provided the model policy. Central Falls' brief Internet policy simply reiterates the main points of CIPA, and North Providence only highlights its filtered categories and the use of email filtering, and briefly explains how to block or unblock websites. Finally, two districts – Block Island and Burrillville – responded that their district is currently working on adopting a policy.

Twelve school districts sent in copies of other policies that were unresponsive to the ACLU's request and the new law, such as policies relating generally to technology use or Internet use. While some of these policies talk about Internet filtering, none of them comply with the 2016 legislation. Fourteen other districts acknowledged that they did not have a filtering policy at all and none of them indicated any intention of developing one in the near future. Table 1 provides a breakdown of policies by district.

**Table 1: Internet Filtering Policies by District as of December 2017**

<b>District</b>	<b>Internet Filtering Policy</b>
<b>Barrington</b>	<i>No - Sent Tech Use Policy</i>
<b>Block Island</b>	<i>No – Working on Policy</i>
<b>Bristol-Warren</b>	<i>No Policy</i>
<b>Burrillville</b>	<i>No - Working on Policy</i>
<b>Central Falls</b>	<i>Yes - But Not in Conformance with Law</i>
<b>Chariho</b>	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Coventry</b>	<i>No Policy</i>
<b>Cranston</b>	<i>No Policy</i>
<b>Cumberland</b>	<i>Yes</i>
<b>East Greenwich</b>	<i>No - Sent Internet Use Policy</i>
<b>East Providence</b>	<i>No - Sent Internet Use Policy</i>
<b>Exeter-West Greenwich</b>	<i>Yes</i>
<b>Foster-Glocester</b>	<i>No Policy</i>
<b>Jamestown</b>	<i>No - Sent Tech Use Policy</i>
<b>Johnston</b>	<i>No - Sent Tech Use Policy</i>
<b>Lincoln</b>	<i>No Policy</i>
<b>Little Compton</b>	<i>No Policy</i>
<b>Middletown</b>	<i>No Policy</i>
<b>Narragansett</b>	<i>No Policy</i>
<b>Newport</b>	<i>No - Sent Internet Use Policy</i>
<b>North Kingstown</b>	<i>No Policy</i>
<b>North Providence</b>	<i>Yes - But Not in Conformance with Law</i>
<b>North Smithfield</b>	<i>No Policy</i>
<b>Pawtucket</b>	<i>No Policy</i>
<b>Portsmouth</b>	<i>No Policy</i>
<b>Providence</b>	<i>No - Sent Internet Use Policy</i>
<b>Smithfield</b>	<i>No Policy</i>
<b>South Kingstown</b>	<i>No - Sent Internet Use Policy</i>
<b>Tiverton</b>	<i>No - Sent Internet Use Policy</i>
<b>Warwick</b>	<i>No - Sent Tech Use Policy</i>
<b>West Warwick</b>	<i>No - Sent Tech Use Policy</i>
<b>Westerly</b>	<i>No Policy</i>
<b>Woonsocket</b>	<i>No - Sent Tech Use Policy</i>



### ***Filtered Categories***

CIPA is partly – but only partly – to blame for some of the over-filtering that takes place in school. CIPA requires any school and library receiving federal funding for Internet services to use a “technology protection measure” that blocks visual depictions of “obscene [material], child pornography,” and – in the case of minors under 17 – material “harmful to minors” on all computers connected to the Internet. The term “harmful to minors” is defined to apply generally to materials that taken as a whole depict nudity in a prurient manner.<sup>3</sup>

As our 2013 report highlighted, “Congress approved CIPA even after a Congressional committee investigating the issue presciently concluded that, with the use of such filters, ‘protected, harmless, or innocent speech would be accidentally or inappropriately blocked.’ This highlighted a fundamental disconnect between the aims of the legislation and the realities of technology; while CIPA’s goal is to keep minors from viewing certain images, blocking or filtering software generally relies on text.”

Currently, thirty-one school districts use OSHEAN as their network provider (only Lincoln and North Smithfield use other network providers). OSHEAN is a Rhode Island-based non-profit coalition that provides Internet-based technology for its member institutions and the communities they serve. OSHEAN uses a third party filtering software known as iBoss to facilitate Internet filtering for all participating school districts.<sup>4</sup>

Like just about every other popular filtering system, iBoss has been the occasional subject of controversy due to the inevitable clunky overreach of this technology. In 2011, the ACLU of Maryland criticized iBoss after receiving a complaint from Montgomery County, which at the time was using their filtering software on all of its government computers, that it was improperly blocking access to a wide variety of LGBT-related websites by falsely labeling them as pornography.<sup>5</sup> Soon after the complaint, iBoss updated its software in an effort to prevent websites with content geared toward the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities from being improperly blocked as “adult” content.

The ACLU of Maryland criticized iBoss after receiving a complaint... that it was improperly blocking access to a wide variety of LGBT-related websites by falsely labeling them as pornography.

To comply with CIPA, all school districts block categories for “child pornography,” “pornography/nudity,” and “adult content.”<sup>6</sup> However, a look at other filtered categories is worrisome. Categories such as “sexual education,” “drugs,” and “violence/hate” were reoccurring themes in several districts with little to no explanation as to why they were blocked. Table 2 provides a breakdown of some of the most problematic categories and the districts that use them.

<sup>3</sup> For additional information on the flaws of Internet filtering software and its impact on public access to information, readers are referred to two earlier reports prepared by the RI ACLU on CIPA’s implementation in the public library setting: *Bowdler’s Legacy: Congress, the Supreme Court and Internet Censorship in Rhode Island Public Libraries*, available at <http://www.riaclu.org/PublicEd/Reports/libraryinternetreport.pdf>; and *Reader’s Block: Internet Censorship in Rhode Island Public Libraries*, available at <http://www.riaclu.org/PublicEd/Reports/2005libraryinternetreport.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> At the time covered by the ACLU’s 2013 report, school districts were using a different filtering software system known as M86.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.aclu.org/news/web-filter-company-acts-address-aclu-complaints-lgbt-censorship-montgomery-county>

<sup>6</sup> iBoss also lists “violence/hate” as a category that CIPA mandates be blocked. See [http://www.oshean.org/resource/resmgr/iboss/CIPA\\_Compliance.pdf](http://www.oshean.org/resource/resmgr/iboss/CIPA_Compliance.pdf). However, CIPA does not, in fact, require filtering of non-sexual websites.

**Table 2: Sample of Blocked Categories by District**

Category	Districts Banning It
Abortion♦	Barrington*
Alcohol/Tobacco	Barrington, Chariho, Cumberland, East Greenwich, Exeter-West Greenwich, Foster-Glocester, North Providence, Pawtucket, Portsmouth, Providence, Smithfield, South Kingstown, Westerly
Alternative Lifestyles♦	Barrington
Clubs and Societies♦	Cumberland
Crime♦	Barrington, Burrillville, North Smithfield
Cults♦	Barrington*, Lincoln, Newport, North Smithfield,
Drugs	Chariho, Exeter-West Greenwich, Foster-Glocester, North Kingstown, North Providence, Pawtucket, Portsmouth, Providence, Smithfield, South Kingstown*, West Warwick, Westerly
Government	Cumberland, North Smithfield
Guns/Weapons	Central Falls, Chariho, Cumberland, East Greenwich, Exeter-West Greenwich, Foster-Glocester, Jamestown, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Portsmouth, Providence, Smithfield, South Kingstown, Westerly
Violence/Hate	Block Island, Burrillville, Central Falls, Chariho, Cumberland, Exeter-West Greenwich, Foster-Glocester, Jamestown, Johnston, Middletown, Narragansett, Newport, North Kingstown, North Providence, Pawtucket, Portsmouth, Providence, Smithfield, South Kingstown, Tiverton, West Warwick, Westerly
Religion	Burrillville, East Greenwich
Sex Education	Chariho, Cumberland, East Greenwich, North Providence, Pawtucket, Smithfield, South Kingstown, Westerly
Swimsuit/Lingerie	Central Falls, Chariho, Cumberland, East Greenwich, Exeter-West Greenwich, Jamestown, Lincoln, Newport, Smithfield, South Kingstown, Westerly
Terrorism	Barrington, Burrillville, Cumberland, Narragansett, North Providence, North Smithfield, Providence

♦Category not specifically listed in iBoss

\* Only blocked for certain grades

Even some categories that might at first blush seem appropriate for school districts to block are problematic because of their ultimate breadth and impact on legitimate educational research. For example, according to iBoss' description, sites are blocked under the category of "alcohol/tobacco" if they contain *any* content related to alcohol and tobacco. It extends so far as to block sites about bars. The broad definition of this category may result in a site being blocked if a student is trying to do research on anything concerning the tobacco industry or alcohol-related issues. For example, could sites addressing the problem of drunk driving or fetal alcohol syndrome be inaccessible to students because of this filter?

The category designated as "drugs," which is also blocked by many districts, is described by iBoss as any site "containing content relating to illegal drugs." Students preparing a report on marijuana legalization or the opioid epidemic could find themselves unable to access many useful websites. Similarly, the description for the "violence and hate" category simply states that it blocks sites that "promote violent behavior or depict gratuitous images of death, gore or bodily harm." This category, which is one of the most commonly blocked, cited by twenty-two districts, may impede students from accessing sites that contain various historical war images or some of the released pictures of inmates from Abu Ghraib.

The same holds true for the widely blocked category designated as "terrorism," which blocks sites that "contain content *related to* terrorism or radicalization." Do districts truly fear students may become radicalized terrorists by spending time during school hours surfing the Internet and reading about those groups? Instead, blocking this category takes away from teachers and students a useful pedagogical resource for learning about one of the most important subjects of the day.

Districts that block categories such as "drugs" and "terrorism" disregard the importance of those subjects as educational resources for students.

Two other categories specifically established by iBoss that are of obvious concern are "sex education" and "religion." Both of these categories are broadly defined to include sites that could aid and promote research for students. According to iBoss, any sites that include content relating to sexual education will be blocked under "sex education." This filter will prevent students from accessing information either for educational or personal research regarding birth control or sexually transmitted diseases, and may even be vague enough to block sites containing information regarding sexual and gender identity.

Similarly, the "religion" filter is set to block any sites that "promote *or provide information* regarding religious beliefs and practices." This broad definition may prevent students from learning about *any* type of religion – even their own. The districts that block these categories disregard the importance of those subjects as educational resources for students.

It is important to note that the list of iBoss categories contained on the OSHEAN website, and touted in the company's literature, does not actually outline a number of other categories blocked by some local school districts that are also extremely problematic from an academic freedom perspective.<sup>7</sup> They include such open-ended but undoubtedly educationally pertinent categories as: *abortion, alternative lifestyles, crime, and cults*. It is unclear whether these categories have been recently updated and added to the iBoss list or

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.oshean.org/resource/resmgr/iboss/iBossCategories.pdf>

whether they are based on some other filtering mechanism. Either way, they encapsulate the harm to the educational process that over-filtering can bring.

Appendix A breaks down by school district all of the categories blocked by their filtering systems. While virtually every district blocks sites well beyond what CIPA mandates, some are particularly problematic in terms of the types and numbers of categories blocked. Barrington, for example, bans sites with content related to “abortion,” “alternative sexual lifestyles (GLBT),” “cults,” and “crime/terrorism.” Cumberland bans more than two-dozen categories, including ones relating to “hobbies” and “humor.” East Greenwich bans sites designated as “dictionary,” “news,” and “political.” This type of over-blocking is precisely what the 2016 law promoting academic freedom is aimed at preventing.

Over-blocking is particularly impactful on students whose families are unable to afford Internet access at home, and who therefore cannot easily obtain unfiltered access to the Internet. Even those students who are able to use school loaned computers at home are largely affected by over-blocking. As one of our reports earlier this year found, 68% of school districts that participate in these so-called “1-1 programs” enable their Internet filtering software even when the student uses the device at home.<sup>8</sup> This directly undermines the authority of parents who may not be aware that their child’s Internet usage is being limited and monitored by school administrators even when they are at home, and continues to prevent students from reaching educationally appropriate websites for their schoolwork.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

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When legislation was passed in 2016 to set standards and procedures for all Rhode Island school districts to follow in regards to Internet filtering, it was simply the first step. The most important steps will be how the districts follow and implement it. By early December 2017, however, only two districts have successfully approved an Internet filtering policy that mirrors RIDE’s model and complies with the law.

*In order to protect and promote student’s academic freedom and free speech, it is imperative that all school districts adopt a policy that follows the RIDE model to comply with the 2016 law before the end of the current academic year.*

In addition, each district must ensure that they are in fact following the state mandate and creating procedures to abide by it, especially when it comes to deciding what categories to filter. It is essential that the process take into consideration the principles of academic freedom referenced in the statute, and that effective procedures for unblocking websites at the request of teachers be in place.

Without adoption and implementation of strong policies across the board, we will continue to see an array of issues involving the over-filtering of our schools’ Internet systems, which will continue to negatively impact students from accessing information and teachers from making use of helpful educational tools.

Today, the Internet provides schools with access to a wide variety of subjects, issues, and opportunities. It has also expanded and enhanced the way that students learn and interact

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<sup>8</sup> “**High School Non-Confidential:** *How School Loaned Computers May Be Peering Into Your Home.*” June 2017. <http://riaclu.org/news/post/aclu-of-ri-report-highlights-school-officials-ability-to-spy-on-students-at/>

with each other, which is why the use of unnecessarily broad and expansive filtering in schools undermines these ideas, why the 2016 law is so important, and why its implementation should be a priority for all school districts.

In November 2017, the ACLU asked the state Commissioner of Education to take action to ensure school district compliance with the 2016 law. The ACLU plans to continue to monitor implementation until there is 100% compliance with this important educational statute. In the meantime, parents, teachers and other concerned citizens should press their local school district to comply with this statute.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> This report was prepared by ACLU of Rhode Island policy associate Marcela Betancur.

## APPENDIX A

District	Categories Blocked	Filtering Software Used
<b>Barrington</b>	Adult content, abortion*, academic fraud, alcohol*, Alternative Sexual Lifestyles (GLBT), Auctions, Audio Streaming Services*, Backups/storage, botnets, Chartrooms*, Child abuse material, Crime/terrorism, cults*, dating sites, drugs, dynamicDNS, embeddedThreats, gambling, game sites, government blocking list, guns & weapons, hacking, instant messaging, keyloggers, malicious, file sharing, nudity, paytosurf, peertopeer, phishing, proxies, radio, remote desktop, social networking, spyware, surveillance monitoring, suspicious, swimsuit/lingerie/models, text messaging, violence, viral	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Block Island</b>	Adult content, malware, porn/child, porn/nudity, violence & hate, web proxies	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Bristol-Warren</b>	File sharing, malware, porn/nudity, toolbars, adult content, dating and personals, gambling, porn-child, web proxies	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Burrillville</b>	Adult content, gambling, instant messaging, dating, games, crime/terrorism, religion/personal beliefs*, violence/undesirable, malicious	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Central Falls</b>	Ads, auctions, file sharing, friendship, games, guns & weapons, malware, porn/nudity, swimsuit, toolbars, adult content, dating and personals, forums, gambling, porn-child, violence/hate, web proxies	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Chariho</b>	Ads, adult content, alcohol & tobacco, dating & personals, drugs, friendship & social networking, gambling, guns and weapons, malware, pornography, sexual education, swimsuit and lingerie, violence and hate, web proxies	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Coventry</b>	<i>District DOES NOT keep any list of categories</i>	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Cranston</b>	Adult content, Child porn, porn, games, R rated*, absence/tasteless*	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Cumberland</b>	Adult content, gambling, dating sites, game sites, e-banking, terrorism, violence/undesirable, malicious, clubs and societies, government blocking list, ads, alcohol, swimsuit/lingerie, remote control desktop, auctions, audio streaming, botnets, child porn, dynamic dns, chats, embedded threats, fashion, guns and weapons, hacking, hobbies, humor, ISPs, keyloggers, media sharing, IT security, nudity, pay to surf, personal, phishing frauds, radio, sex education, social networks, software sharing, spam, spyware, text messaging, viral video	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>East Greenwich</b>	Alcohol/tobacco, auctions, business, dictionary, file sharing, food, friendship, games, guns and weapons, image/video search, malware, news, political, porn/nudity, professional services, religion, sex ed, sports, swimsuit, toolbars, travel webhosting, webmail	OSHEAN/iBoss

District	Categories Blocked	Filtering Software Used
<b>East Providence</b>	Malware, porn/nudity, adult content, porn-child, violence, web proxies	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Exeter-West Greenwich</b>	Ads*, alcohol, tobacco, auctions, file sharing, friendship, games, guns and weapons, malware, porn/nudity, swimsuit*, adult content, dating/personals, drugs*, gambling, porn, child, private websites, violence and hate, web proxies, shopping*	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Foster-Glocester</b>	Alcohol, tobacco, guns, weapons, malware, porn/nudity, adult content, dating and personals, drugs, gambling, porn-child, violence and hate, web proxies.	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Jamestown</b>	Games, guns & weapons, malware, porn/nudity, swimsuit, adult content, dating and personals, gambling, porn child, violence and hate	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Johnston</b>	Porn, drugs, gambling, adult content, social media, anonymous proxys, chat/messaging, web mail, hate, other search engine (no safe mode), social networking, streaming media, games, health.	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Lincoln</b>	Adult content, academic fraud, botnets, child abuse material, cults, dating sites, dynamic DNS, embedded threats, hacking, keyloggers, malicious, nudity, paytosurf, peertopeer, phishing/frauds, proxies, spamURL, spyware, suspicious, swimsuit/lingerie/models	Cox/Content Keeper
<b>Little Compton</b>	Games, malware, porn-child, adult content, porn/nudity, web proxies, IRC, messenger	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Middletown</b>	Malware, porn/nudity, adult content, porn-child, violence, web proxies, dating and personals.	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Narragansett</b>	Adult content, dating and personals, gambling, games, malware, porn-child, porn/nudity, violence & hate, web proxies, terrorism/radicalization.	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Newport</b>	Violence/hate/racism, intimate apparel/swimsuit, nudism, pornography, weapons, cult/occult, gambling, hacking/proxy avoidance systems, pay to surf sites, social networking, malware, adult/mature content, illegal skills, questionable skills	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>North Kingstown</b>	Adult content, controlled substances, malware, porn-child, porn/nudity, violence and hate, and web proxies	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>North Providence</b>	Ads, alcohol, auctions, file sharing, guns& weapons, malware, porn/nudity, sex ed, toolbars, adult content, dating and personal, drugs, gambling, porn-child, violence & hate, web proxies, terrorism/radicalization	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>North Smithfield</b>	Adult content, academic fraud, botnets, child abuse material, crime terrorism, cults, dating sites, drugs, dynamicDNS services, embedded threats, gambling, gov blocking list, guns and weapons, hacking, keyloggers, malicious, nudity, pay to surf, peer to peer, phishing/fraud, proxies, remote control desktop, shareware, software downloading, spam, spyware, tobacco, violence/undesirable, viral video	Did not provide name of proxy

District	Categories Blocked	Filtering Software Used
<b>Pawtucket</b>	Alcohol & tobacco, file sharing, guns and weapons, malware, porn/nudity, toolbars, adult content, dating and personals, drugs, gambling, porn-child, violence & hate, web proxies, adult, aggressive, art nudes, dating, drugs, gambling, hacking, malware, mixed adult, naturism, phishing, proxy, sexuality, spyware, violence, virus infected	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Portsmouth</b>	Alcohol, tobacco, guns, weapons, malware, porn/nudity, adult content, dating and personals, drugs, gambling, porn-child, violence and hate, web proxies.	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Providence</b>	Ads, adult content, alcohol/tobacco, dating/personals, drugs, file sharing, forums, friendship, gambling, guns & weapons, malware, porn/nudity, toolbars, violence & hate, webmail, web proxies, terrorism/radicalization, app management, chat, gaming, social media.	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Smithfield</b>	Ads, adult content, alcohol & tobacco, dating & personals, drugs, friendship & social networking, gambling, guns and weapons, malware, pornography, sexual education, swimsuit and lingerie, violence and hate, web proxies	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>South Kingstown</b>	Alcohol & tobacco*, friendship, guns and weapons, malware, porn-child, violence & hate, adult content, dating & personals, drugs*, forums, gambling, porn/nudity, sex ed*, swimsuit, toolbars*, web proxies	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Tiverton</b>	Malware, porn/nudity, adult content, porn-child, violence, web proxies	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Warwick</b>	Amazon, hbo, hulu, netflix, academic dishonesty, malicious sites, pornography, social - instamessaging, chat rooms, social networks, time wasting, general time wasting, 1movies.tv, fmovies.se.	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>West Warwick</b>	Malware, porn/nudity, adult content, porn-child, violence, web proxies, dating and personals.	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Westerly</b>	Ads, adult content, alcohol & tobacco, dating & personals, drugs, friendship & social networking, gambling, guns and weapons, malware, pornography, sexual education, swimsuit and lingerie, violence and hate, web proxies (they also have a list of websites they independently block	OSHEAN/iBoss
<b>Woonsocket</b>	<i>District DOES NOT keep any list of categories</i>	OSHEAN/iBoss

\* Blocked only for certain grades



## APPENDIX B

## *RIDE Model Policy*

### **Model School Internet Filtering Policy Adopted Pursuant to R.I.G.L. 16-21.61-1**

#### **1. Definitions**

In accordance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), [the District] is required to have in place a filtering device on all computers with Internet access. The filter should protect minors from access to visual depictions that are obscene or constitute child pornography, or that are harmful to minors, as defined in CIPA below:

Harmful to minors, means any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that--

- (A) taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
- (B) depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
- (C) taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

#### **2. Technology Committee**

(A) [The District] shall appoint a Technology Committee, which shall include designated members of [the library staff, IT staff, administrators, and educators]. Deciding what categories of content to filter shall be made by the Technology Committee and approved by the school committee.

(B) Principles of academic freedom shall be considered in deciding what categories to filter.

(C) The Technology Committee shall prepare a document with the list of filtered categories that have been chosen and a brief explanation of the educational or legal basis for the decision to filter each category.

(D) The Technology committee shall annually review the filtered categories annually and make recommendations to the [Network Administrator] for any adjustments.

#### **3. Requests to Unblock Website**

(A) Websites may be unblocked in certain circumstances for anyone who meets the following criteria:

1. Educational purposes – there is educational material being blocked by the filtering system. Where access to a specific site consistent with the purpose of education is blocked, the site shall be unblocked.
2. Staff related purposes – a staff member needs a website unblocked related to their job (such as purchasing, law enforcement, bona fide research).

(B) Any person requesting to have a site unblocked should submit a formal request to the [Network Administrator] through the online ticketing system. The request submission will include:

- Date of the request
- Website address to be unblocked
- Explanation of purpose for unblocking the site (refer to criteria above)
- Name and title of the requester
- Electronic signature based on login credentials

(C) If deemed appropriate to the criteria mentioned above and if there is no threat to the network or resources, the site will immediately be unblocked and access granted.

#### **4. Denied Requests**

(A) If a request to unblock a website is denied, the [Network Administrator, Ticketing System] will provide the specific reasons as to why the request was denied as well as the individual’s right to appeal the decision.

(B) Further appeals may be made in writing to the [Superintendent/other Administrator] requesting that the denial be overturned.

## **5. Reporting**

(A) [The District] will maintain a public record of any requests made to unblock a website and all copies of responses provided.

(B) [The District] will submit annual reports to the school committee regarding the number of requests granted and denied to unblock a site. The results of the report shall be used to review the filtering categories in place and consider modifications to them or to the administrative procedures in place.

(C) The report shall also be used to determine whether improvements and modifications should be made to the filter itself or a different filtering software vendor should be used.





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