

Lisa Cataldi

From: Lindsay Paiva <lindsayepaiva@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 6:31 PM
To: House Education Committee
Subject: Support for House Bill H7726

Please see the testimony below in support for House Bill H7726:

My name is Lindsay Paiva and I teach third grade multilingual learners at Webster Avenue Elementary School in Providence. I am writing in support of Bill H7762.

If you have never visited Webster, you cannot know how special and beautiful our school community truly is. Over the years we have built a trusting, loving community of educators, parents, and families who show up for each other. Our faculty and staff care deeply about our students and families, and work hard to build strong relationships that outlast students' tenure at our school. I cannot imagine the impact of closing our school and cannot picture a world in which Webster ceases to exist.

Schools are communities. They are the cornerstone of our democracy. They are where we can start to practice building the world we want to live in, the world our students deserve. And right now they can be closed with a moment's notice. With no community input. Without a shred of data to back up claims of "low performance." Make no mistake; low performing schools are manufactured. They are a direct result of underfunding, neglect, and poor administration, not an indication of a lack of care or effort from teachers, parents, or students.

Since the state takeover in Providence in 2019, our Webster community has suffered, like many Providence schools, from RIDE and PPSD central administration's mismanagement, misappropriation of resources, and mistreatment of educators, families, and students. We have been disrespected, ignored, and cast aside while our schools remain underfunded and poorly run.

Now we are facing a crippling budget deficit, unapologetic school closures, and some of the worst conditions in our schools since I started teaching in the district.

We have a large percentage of students with special education needs and who are multilingual learners. These students require specialized services and more staff to support their unique needs per federal law, but these mandates do not include federal funding. And between our broken and toothless school funding formula and the utter lack of accountability for cities and towns who don't fully fund their schools, Providence and urban centers in RI operate on a budget deficit every year, while wealthy districts see increases in per pupil spending.

So we have to do more with less.

These inequalities are manufactured and maintained by corrupt and ineffective policies. Please pass this bill to end the gaslighting, misinformation, and complete lack of accountability by RIDE and district officials who unapologetically close our schools without our input. The community and directly affected stakeholders should be the voice driving these decisions, not someone sitting in a cubicle and putting numbers in a spreadsheet. Thank you for your time.

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Lindsay Paiva
Providence Teacher

Pronouns: she, her, hers