



Segue Institute for Learning

An Independent Public Charter School District

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Angelo Garcia - Founder/Executive Director

Dr. Melissa Lourenco – Founder/District Administrator

Monday, March 31, 2025

Dear Chair McNamara and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed amendments to Section 16-77-3.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-77, which seek to limit the operation and expansion of charter public schools in Rhode Island. As a dedicated advocate for equitable and high-quality education, I urge you to reject these changes, as they threaten the ability of successful charter public schools to continue providing innovative and inclusive learning opportunities.

Charter public schools in Rhode Island have long served as incubators of best practices in education, fostering environments that emphasize accountability, autonomy, and community engagement. The proposed amendments, particularly the requirement for local written support for network charter public schools, would create unnecessary barriers to expansion and undermine the success of institutions like the Segue Institute for Learning.

Segue Institute for Learning has grown in response to the demonstrated needs of students and their families, evolving from a middle school into a network charter school due to its proven track record of academic excellence and community impact. Its success, as well as that of the newly established Legacy High School, exemplifies the value of charter public schools in Rhode Island. Legacy High School, which serves students from Providence, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, and Central Falls, is unique in the Northeast as the only school where all students participate in an educator pathway program. Segue's innovative model, which has garnered national recognition for excellence in family engagement and student support, would be directly threatened by the proposed legislation.

The four core cities included in Legacy High School's catchment area were intentionally selected due to the lack of open enrollment and flexible admissions requirements for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in traditional public schools. The proposed bill would restrict access to this vital opportunity for students who would otherwise be unable to participate. One of the most significant strengths of charter public schools in Rhode Island is their ability to bring multiple communities together. This bill could effectively erode that benefit, limiting student access to high-quality education options.

Forcing a charter public school to gain written municipal support before expanding unfairly disadvantaged students and families seeking an alternative to their assigned public schools. This provision places politics above student needs and ignores the established accountability measures already in place for charter public schools.

I respectfully urge you to oppose this legislation and protect the ability of schools like Segue Institute for Learning and Legacy High School to continue serving our communities. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to your support in ensuring that Rhode Island's students continue to have access to innovative and effective educational opportunities.

Respectfully,

Angelo Garcia
Founder/Head of District, Segue Institute for Learning