



Angélica Infante-Green  
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island  
DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
Shepard Building  
255 Westminster Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

April 21, 2025

The Honorable Joseph M. McNamara  
Chair, Rhode Island House Committee on Education  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**Re: Oppose as drafted, House Bill 5335**

Dear Chair McNamara:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H5335 – Relating to Education. At this time, the Rhode Island Department of Education opposes this bill, and further, does not believe it is necessary.

At the direction of the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Commissioner are already engaging in a well-documented and public process for the transition of Providence Public Schools to local control. This was articulated in the Council's action on August 29, 2024. As part of the process outlined, all governance stakeholders—RIDE, the Mayor's Office, the Providence City Council, the Providence Public School Department, and the Providence School Board are all engaged in biweekly meetings to prepare for the transition.

Additionally, the Commissioner of Education laid out in her [January 10](#) and [February 18](#) letters the conditions that, if met, could accelerate this process. Therefore, this bill is both unnecessary—in the sense that the transition process is already underway—and premature—in the sense that a rushed transition on the timeline proposed by the City in the legislation is not in the best interests of families, educators, and the children we are charged with serving. Finally, this bill subverts and undermines the decision-making authority of the Council, a body which voted unanimously and in one singular voice, setting a dangerous precedent.

RIDE is committed to partnering with the City and a diverse set of partners including students, families, educators, PPSD Board members and district leadership, and the City Council to accelerate return to local control. However, this return needs to be done responsibly and with the guidance of all parties in the design of a transition to local control plan.

Thank you for considering this feedback. If there are any questions or additional information would be useful, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Drew M. Echelson", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Drew Echelson  
Deputy Commissioner, System Transformation

CC: The Honorable Scott A. Slater  
The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Education  
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker  
Lisa Cataldi, Clerk, House Committee on Education