



February 10, 2026

The Honorable Joseph M. McNamara, Chairman
House Education Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Letter of Support Re: House bill 7419

Dear Chairman McNamara:

We are writing to express our support for House bill 7419, and to thank Representative Giraldo for introducing this legislation to help address the teacher shortage in our schools.

Our schools are not unlike many school districts across the state facing the challenge of finding certified teachers to appropriately staff our classrooms. While we are constantly looking for certified and qualified candidates to fill open positions, it is becoming increasingly difficult to fill open positions at our schools. This is particularly evident in difficult to fill roles, including secondary science and math, special educators, and multi-language learner (MLL) certified.

House bill 7419 would allow currently certified teachers as of July 1, 2026 to have their certifications extended from three to five years, this would include certain emergency certifications. In addition, in an effort to improve teacher recruitment the bill proposes a three-year window beginning July 1, 2026 where the fee for initial teacher certification and the Praxis examination fees would be waived.

Lastly, H.7419 directs the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to revise its regulations governing licensure of teachers and administrators to permit multiple pathways and flexibility in credentialing requirements. In addition, the bill mentions the Department can consider incorporating non-traditional classes and work/life experience when revising its regulations.

Continued teacher recruitment challenges call for innovative solutions to bring and retain more qualified educators into the field. We believe this bill is a step in the right direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our position in support of this legislation.

Sincerely,



Sarah Anderson
CEO, Blackstone Valley Prep



Tom McDermott
Executive Director, Rhode Island
Achievement First



Owen Stearns
CEO, Excel Academy

Cc: House Education Committee members
The Honorable Joshua Giraldo