

Keith C. Catone, Ed.D., Ward 1 Representative, Cranston School Committee  
61 Windsor Road  
Cranston, RI 02905

Rhode Island House of Representatives  
House Committee on Education  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

March 10, 2026

Dear honorable members of the House Committee on Education:

I am writing in my capacity as the elected representative from Ward 1 on the Cranston School Committee in **support of H8131**, which would create a joint legislative commission to study Rhode Island's method of funding charter schools.

There are many aspects of RI's education funding formula in need of close review and reconsideration. One of these areas is the way in which the state funds charter schools. Charter school proponents often argue that the charter school system is not funded adequately. Traditional public school districts, like Cranston, are suffering harmful financial costs due to the payment of charter school tuition. One thing that people agree upon, no matter their perspective, is that our education funding formula needs an overhaul.

The recent RI Foundation / Annenberg Institute Blue Ribbon Commission report and recommendations regarding the state education funding formula did not take up the issue of charter school funding. The hesitancy of this group to address this important aspect of our state's education funding underscores the need for the proposed joint legislative commission. Such a commission can help us devise a plan to ensure charter schools are funded in ways that are fair to them, not harmful to traditional public schools, and supportive of students no matter which kind of publicly-funded school they attend.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Catone", written in a cursive style.

Keith Catone, Ed.D.