

March 9, 2026

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Lindsay Paiva, I use she/her pronouns, and I am writing today in support of bill [H 7415](#) and [HJR 8131](#), and in opposition to bill [H 7615](#). I am a Providence community member and resident, community organizer, and a third grade teacher of multilingual learners in Providence Public Schools.

I have plenty of statistics and data to share with you, but I actually want to start with a story.

I just had a going away party Friday for my student who transferred from my school to Achievement First. There were cupcakes and tears and a closing circle where we shared our love and appreciation for him as a member of our class community. I have had students come and go during the school year before, but this one was particularly hard to accept.

This student had just moved to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic last spring. Due to expert MLL instruction from two highly effective educators both with Master's degrees in ESL and over 35 years of combined classroom experience in Providence, this student was able to develop strong English language skills very quickly.

Despite his academic strengths, he is often frustrated because his Spanish proficiency is so strong and is not yet aligned with his skills in English. This frustration often leads to him exhibiting challenging behaviors and requires that he be provided specialized supports.

He is moving from an exceptional learning environment to one with inexperienced and uncertified educators with little to no understanding of best practices for multilingual learners nor students with difficult behaviors. This is just one child from one school community, but there are thousands of stories like this.

Across all seven Achievement First schools, 66% of teachers are inexperienced (less than three years in the classroom) and 41% are teaching on an emergency certification. No charters in the state use the special state funding for students with significant needs. Overall, charter schools do not serve comparable rates of students with IEPs or multilingual learners (MLLs) to their sending districts.

Charter schools are splitting up existing systems and district infrastructure, creating more bureaucracy, requiring even more well-compensated administrators, and eroding workers', parents', and students' rights through lack of accountability to the public.

There need to be robust systems in place to analyze charter effectiveness and to identify their shortcomings. Our public school districts are hemorrhaging money and filling charter school coffers. Providence Public Schools currently budgets over \$36,000,000 to charter school tuition alone.

The money follows the student, but it does not necessarily follow them directly into their school site to increase student services, teacher supports, after school programs, field trips, or professional development. Much of this money flows out of Rhode Island and into corporate charter organizations like Achievement First and Excel Academy. The CEO of Achievement First made over \$476,000 in 2024.

We need a charter cap and moratorium now to pause the expansion, to take a closer look at what is actually happening in charter school classrooms and budgets, and to think about strategic next steps to reinvest in public education that serves **ALL** students, especially our multilingual learners and special education students.

Overall, charter schools do not serve comparable rates of students with IEPs or multilingual learners (MLLs) to their sending districts:

	Students with Disabilities	MLLs
Cranston	13%	10%
Central Falls	15%	41%
Pawtucket	16%	19%
Providence	19%	40%
Woonsocket	28%	20%
Achievement First	8%	29%
Excel	5%	21%
Segue	10%	38%
BVP	15%	16%
Paul Cuffee	10%	19%

One of my other major concerns is the lack of public input and oversight for charters. I can, and do, regularly show up to Providence School Board meetings to voice my opinion and to ask hard questions, not only as an educator and employee, but as a resident and community member. The lack of oversight, accountability, and transparency with charter school boards is troubling and astounding, especially given the amount of public money that they receive from national, state, and local sources.

Splintering a community by pulling students out of public schools and placing them in a myriad of charter schools minimizes collective voice and destabilizes our democracy and opportunities for collective action.

By removing community input from schools, and reversing the democratized model of public education, charter schools are contributing to the silencing of the political voices of low-income communities. Instead of moving resources AWAY from our public schools, we should be doubling down to build a more equitable, vibrant, and well-funded public school system.

Please support these critically important bills ([H 7415](#) and [HJR 8131](#)) and reject this harmful legislation ([H 7615](#)).

Sincerely,
Lindsay Paiva