



March 17, 2026

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

RE: H 7904

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of NEARI, I write in opposition to H 7904, legislation that would extend the allowable term of employment contracts for school superintendents from three (3) years to five (5) years.

Educators recognize the important role that superintendents play in leading school systems and maintaining stability in district leadership. However, Rhode Island's current statutory framework appropriately balances stability with accountability by limiting superintendent contracts to three years. This structure mirrors the statutory limit placed on teacher collective bargaining agreements, which are also limited to three-year terms. Maintaining parity between the length of teacher contracts and superintendent contracts helps preserve a reasonable and balanced approach to long-term commitments within school systems.

Extending superintendent contracts to five years would disrupt that balance and could create governance challenges at the local level. School committee members are elected officials whose maximum term of office is four years. Allowing superintendent contracts to extend beyond that timeframe could bind future committees to leadership agreements negotiated by a prior body, effectively preventing newly elected committees from exercising their authority to evaluate district leadership and negotiate contract terms during their elected term. This dynamic risks disenfranchising voters and limiting the ability of newly elected school committees to fulfill their governance responsibilities.

Additionally, many school committees operate under local policies in which superintendent contracts automatically renew or "roll forward" if notice of non-renewal is not provided by a specified date. These provisions are intended to provide stability and continuity in district leadership. However, when combined with a five-year statutory maximum, such policies could unintentionally extend superintendent contracts even further into the future, compounding the concern that future school committees may have limited opportunities to reassess or renegotiate leadership contracts.

Rhode Island's current three-year contract framework already provides sufficient stability for district leadership while preserving appropriate accountability to elected school committees and the communities they represent. Aligning superintendent contract limits with the existing three-year statutory limit for teacher contracts helps ensure consistency across the education system and supports responsible governance.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to oppose this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alexander Lucini".

Alexander Lucini
Government Relations Director, NEARI