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April 8, 2026

Letter in Opposition to H7414

Dear Members of the House Education Committee

Presently, I serve as chair of the District Wide Advisory Committee and I write in strong opposition to H 7414, which would terminate the current state intervention in the Providence Public School District (PPSD) as of July 1, 2026, ending the Turnaround Plan ahead of its approved timeline therefore nullifying the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's recommendation.

It has been noted that the Office of the Mayor, City Council, and newly appointed and elected school board members have continuously advocated for return to local control. They have begun beginning efforts and activities to move towards this goal but have not developed a comprehensive transition plan. It is interesting that PPSD received major opposition from the mayor's office when funding was requested for the school district which had been underfunding for years. This resulted in court intervention to achieve adequate funding for the district. My question, will the mayor, city council, and school board provide future adequate funding for the district or is this an effort to have control over funding?

While, under state control, PPSD has demonstrated improvement in academics, instruction, family and community engagement, and a vigorous school construction plan to ensure that 100% of all students have access to safe, new or like new learning spaces. Continued progress will need to be ensured during the transition to local control and this cannot be completed in a few months. The present legislation has an unrealistic timeframe that poses a risk to efforts in place to achieve a quality education for students and supportive efforts by teachers and administrators.

More foundational efforts and collaboration need to be implemented in order to achieve and ensure long term success for our students, families and educators. I urge the committee to oppose H 7414 until a comprehensive transition plan is in place that involves all communities of interest.

*Donna Huntley-Newby*

