

**Anthony Melillo**  
Cranston School Committee, City Wide  
Vice Chairman  
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Dear Members of the Rhode Island House of Representatives,

As Vice Chairman of the Cranston School Committee and a proud advocate for public education, I write in strong support of Rhode Island House Bill 7420.

Across Rhode Island, local school districts continue to face increasing financial pressure from rising transportation costs, special education expenses, contractual obligations, healthcare costs, aging infrastructure, and state and federal mandates. While communities like Cranston remain committed to providing students with the highest quality education possible, the reality is simple: unfunded mandates continue to place an unsustainable burden on local taxpayers and school departments.

House Bill 7420 is a thoughtful and responsible step toward addressing these challenges.

The bill's proposal to shift dual enrollment costs, including programs at CCRI and NEIT, to the state beginning July 1, 2026, is particularly important. Dual enrollment programs provide tremendous opportunities for our students by allowing them to earn college credits while still in high school, preparing them for future success while reducing future college expenses for families. These programs should be encouraged and expanded — not limited by the financial strain placed on local districts.

In addition, the bill recognizes the importance of fiscal responsibility by allowing districts flexibility regarding curriculum purchases and providing opportunities to utilize lower-cost alternatives when appropriate. At a time when districts are being asked to do more with less, flexibility and efficiency are critical.

The requirement for annual reporting on district costs will also provide valuable transparency and data that can help state and local leaders better understand the true financial pressures facing public education.

Though our students may represent a percentage of our population, they are 100% of our future. Supporting legislation that reduces unfunded mandates and creates a more equitable partnership between the state and local school districts is not only good policy — it is an investment in Rhode Island's future.

I respectfully urge your support of House Bill 7420.

Sincerely,

*Anthony Melillo*

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Vice Chairman

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