



William McCaffrey
Superintendent of Schools

401-734-3217
william.mccaffrey@warwickschools.org

May 18, 2026

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

Dear Chair McNamara and Members of the House Education Committee:

As a public school superintendent, I am writing in support of House Bill 8531 regarding approval of private schools and at-home instruction.

This legislation creates a fair and balanced process for reviewing requests for homeschooling while continuing to respect the rights of parents to choose the educational setting that works best for their children.

House Bill 8531 gives school districts clearer guidance in situations where there are serious attendance concerns, ongoing truancy issues, or questions about whether a child will receive appropriate instruction and support. The bill helps ensure that homeschooling is being used for legitimate educational purposes and that students do not fall through the cracks.

The proposal also includes important protections for families. Parents are provided opportunities to submit documentation, explain circumstances, and appeal decisions through the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The bill requires written explanations and timelines for decisions, creating a process that is transparent and consistent across the state.

In addition, the legislation recognizes the needs of students with disabilities by requiring consideration of whether appropriate services and accommodations can reasonably be provided in the proposed instructional setting.

From a school district perspective, this bill provides reasonable safeguards while still preserving parental choice. Most importantly, it keeps the focus where it belongs — on ensuring that children are safe, supported, and receiving an education.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support for House Bill 8531.

Sincerely,

William D. McCaffrey, Superintendent of Schools

69 Draper Avenue, Warwick, Rhode Island 02889