

To: Representative Marvin Abney and esteemed members of the House Finance Committee

From: Sara Meirowitz

Date: March 14, 2025

Re: In Support of Senate Bill 250/ House Bill 6045, titled AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION
-- THE EDUCATIONAL EQUITY AND PROPERTY TAX RELIEF ACT

Dear Chairman Marvin Abney and esteemed members of the finance committee.

My name is Sara Meirowitz, and I am here today as a proud parent and an advocate for the well-being of all Rhode Island students. ***I am writing in strong support of House Bill 6045, which would require state support for school social worker staffing to ensure a ratio of at least one full-time social worker for every 250 students.***

In 2012, and after years of struggling with severe anxiety my child presented with PICA, a mental health condition where a person compulsively swallows non-food items. What began as a goal for social emotional wellbeing, devolved into conversation about his ability to safely remain in school. My family was overwhelmed- we knew our child needed help and support as well as to remain tethered to education.

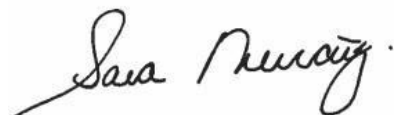
We faced a complex medical and behavioral health system with no clear path forward. It was our school social worker who changed everything. She helped us navigate the system, develop a care plan, secure an evaluation, and ultimately get my child admitted to Bradley- a world renowned pediatric behavioral health hospital program that provided the care and resources he needed.

Because of her support, my child is now a thriving 15-year-old, excelling in public high school. He has the confidence to make friends, join sports teams, and be the best version of himself. She didn't just help us through a crisis—she helped us find a solution. I cannot imagine where we would be without her.

Regrettably not every child in Rhode Island has access to this level of support. Without adequate staffing, families in crisis are left without guidance, and students struggle without the resources they need to succeed. Every child deserves the chance to overcome obstacles and reach their full potential, and every family deserves the support of a skilled professional when navigating life's hardest moments. Today- you can give them that support.

I urge you to support House Bill 6045 and ensure that Rhode Island schools have the social workers necessary to provide this critical support. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the well-being of our students.

With gratitude for your service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sara Meirowitz".

Sara Meirowitz