



To: Christopher O'Brien, Committee Clerk
From: Andrew Bramson, President and CEO
Re: H7127, Article 7, EDUCATION - Support
Date: March 31, 2026

Onward We Learn respectfully submits this testimony in support of 1) the \$100,000 line-item included in Governor McKee's Learn365 initiative within the FY 2027 RI Department of Education (RIDE) budget (the focus of Wednesday's April 1 House Finance Committee hearing) and 2) the \$455,000 included in the Office of Postsecondary Commissioner budget pursuant to §16-70-5 (for which House Finance heard a presentation on March 26, 2026).

Learn365 reflects a critical statewide commitment to expanding high-quality out-of-school time learning opportunities that accelerate student success, particularly for those furthest from opportunity. Onward We Learn's mission and programming are deeply aligned with this vision: we provide year-round, high-dosage academic and enrichment experiences that extend learning beyond the traditional school day and year, ensuring that students are prepared not only to graduate high school, but to persist and succeed in college and beyond.

Out-of-school time is not supplemental. It is essential. Research and lived experience in Rhode Island demonstrate that meaningful learning happens both inside and outside the classroom. Onward We Learn has spent decades building a model that integrates summer learning, afterschool programming, and individualized advising into a coherent pathway that supports students from middle school through college completion. Learn365's emphasis on expanding access to these kinds of opportunities is both timely and necessary, especially as students continue to recover from pandemic-related disruptions and longstanding inequities in access to enrichment and academic support.

Importantly, Onward We Learn brings the strongest evidence base in Rhode Island when it comes to impact in college access and success programming. Our recent longitudinal study shows that students who participate in Onward programming are 48% more likely to graduate from high school on time and earn a college degree within six years compared to closely matched peers. This level of impact is rare and underscores the effectiveness of sustained, out-of-school time interventions.

Continued investment by the Rhode Island General Assembly will allow Onward We Learn to sustain this proven model, reach more students, and contribute meaningfully to Rhode Island's goals of increasing educational attainment and economic mobility. Moreover, these resources are critical in helping Onward We Learn and the State of Rhode Island demonstrate the 100% match requirement associated with the state's federal GEAR UP from the U.S. Department of Education.