

April 1, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chairperson
House Finance Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: House Bill 7127

IN SUPPORT

Dear Chairperson Abney:

I am writing to express strong support for Governor McKee's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget, specifically the Learn365RI initiative within the Elementary and Secondary Education budget.

My colleague Victoria Restler and I have written about how valuable and essential Out of School Time is for children, their parents, and the Rhode Island Economy ([McKamey & Restler, 2021](#)).

We write, "OST is a smart and cost-effective use of public funds -- studies confirm that out of school time education benefits academic learning, social-emotional growth, school retention, and supports our local economy by allowing parents and caregivers to work while young people are safely cared for" (p. 3). **89% of Rhode Island Parents support public funding for out of school time programming. [For every dollar spent in OST, the return to taxpayers is between \\$2.99 and \\$4.03.](#)**

OST funding provides a four-fold recovery investment:

1. **OST funding would stabilize and boost jobs in the human services sector.** After school programs continue to be in a staffing crisis. Staffing shortages and maintaining staff levels through health and safety protocols were the top two concerns among after school providers ([Afterschool in the Time of COVID-19 Wave 6 survey](#)).
2. **OST funding would enable expanded quality after school childcare so that parents can participate in the workforce.** 81% of Rhode Island parents agreed that after school programs help them keep their jobs. And yet waitlists continue to be long. Many families do not have access to after school care.
3. **Funding OST would equalize disparate learning and socio-emotional well being.** OST programs have been shown to [reduce dropout rates, promote English Language Learning, and develop problem solving skills, and support socio-emotional learning, among other important outcomes.](#)
4. Rhode Island is in [a state of emergency in child and adolescent mental health](#). **Funding OST would extend a "whole child approach" (CDC.gov) to supporting children's mental health.** [75% of parents surveyed by the After School Alliance](#) agreed that OST programs allow kids to build positive relationships with caring adults. Research suggests [OST programs support young people in developing social emotional skills.](#)

OST is not an after-thought. OST is not simply a longer school day. OST provides important experiential educational spaces that foster positive relationships, confidence, independence, problem solving and life skills. OST gives families peace of mind so that caregivers can return to work. ALL young people and families, regardless of income, need and deserve OST. We must provide consistent state funding for high quality before school, after school and summer school learning. For our young people, for our parents, and for our communities.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support funding for Learn365RI as proposed in the Governor's FY 2027 Budget.

Sincerely,
Dr. Corinne McKamey
Educational Consultant
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