

April 1, 2026

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

RE: H-7127 - Governor's FY 2027 Budget - Elementary and Secondary Education, Learn 365RI

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.

I am the Director of Youth Services at Providence Public Library (PPL), where we offer a variety of free programs and services for youth from birth to 19 years old. At PPL we see firsthand the impact out of school time programs have on positive youth development. They provide safe, supportive spaces where young people can explore their interests, build confidence, make mistakes, learn and grow, and develop meaningful relationships with trusted adults.

These programs also play a vital role in addressing challenges such as chronic absenteeism, learning recovery, and youth mental health, while connecting classroom learning to real-world experiences. Learn365RI reflects a critical vision to ensure all Rhode Island youth have access to year-round learning experiences that support academic success, social-emotional development, and workforce readiness.

However, demand for afterschool and summer programming continues to far exceed supply. Tens of thousands of Rhode Island children are unable to access these opportunities due to cost, transportation, and limited availability. At the same time, funding has remained essentially flat for years and has not kept pace with need, creating uncertainty for providers and families. As a public library that doesn't receive municipal funding and that has been hit hard by state and federal funding cuts, we, like many of our peers, are having a difficult time keeping our youth programming afloat. In this context, Rhode Island's investment through Learn365RI is both timely and essential to expanding equitable access and stabilizing programs.

Learn365RI is an investment in Rhode Island's future: supporting working families, strengthening communities, and preparing young people for success in school and life. We respectfully urge the Committee to support funding for Learn365RI as proposed in the Governor's FY 2027 Budget.

Sincerely,



Kate Aubin
39 Moorland Ave, Cranston