



April 1, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Chairperson
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.

As the Rhode Island Afterschool Network (RIAN), we represent a statewide coalition of out-of-school time (OST) providers, educators, and community partners working to expand access to high-quality learning opportunities beyond the traditional school day. Learn365RI reflects a bold and necessary vision to ensure that all Rhode Island youth have access to year-round learning experiences that support academic success, social-emotional development, and workforce readiness.

Out-of-school time programs are essential to achieving the goals of Learn365RI. Across Rhode Island, OST programs are helping students build confidence, strengthen relationships, and engage in hands-on learning experiences that connect classroom content to real-world applications. These programs are also critical in addressing persistent challenges such as chronic absenteeism, learning recovery, and youth mental health.

At the same time, demand for afterschool and summer programming continues to far exceed supply. In Rhode Island, tens of thousands of children who would participate in afterschool programs are currently unable to access them due to cost, transportation, and limited availability. Investments through Learn365RI have and will continue to help close this gap and ensure more equitable access to opportunity for young people across our state.

At the same time, federal funding that supports afterschool and summer learning, most notably the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program, has remained essentially level-funded for nearly a decade, limiting its ability to meet growing demand. When adjusted for inflation, this represents a significant decline in real resources available to communities. In addition, recent federal funding disruptions and ongoing proposals to reduce or eliminate this funding stream have created uncertainty for providers and the families who rely on these



programs. In this context, Rhode Island's investment through Learn365RI is both timely and necessary to stabilize and strengthen access to high-quality out-of-school time opportunities.

We are especially encouraged by the Governor's commitment to strengthening the OST workforce through targeted investments, including support for RIAN's statewide apprenticeship. Building a sustainable, well-trained workforce is essential to ensuring program quality and long-term impact, and this investment represents an important step toward professionalizing and stabilizing the field.

Learn365RI is not just an education initiative, it is an investment in Rhode Island's future. By expanding access to high-quality OST programs, we are supporting working families, strengthening communities, and preparing young people for success in school, career, and life.

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

Sincerely,
Michael Dunican
Michael Dunican
Warwick, RI 02888