

Burrillville School Department

Office of Superintendent
2300 Broncos Highway
Harrisville, RI 02830



Tel: 401-568-1301
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Dear Governor McKee:

We are writing to express our strong support for the recommendations put forward by the Blue Ribbon Commission in its report, *Equalizing Opportunity: Creating a Fair and Transparent Funding System for Rhode Island's Public Schools*, prepared with research support from the Annenberg Institute.

The Commission's work represents a serious, thoughtful effort to modernize Rhode Island's school funding system. It acknowledges the progress made under the current formula while clearly laying out where the system is no longer meeting the needs of students, districts, or municipalities. Most importantly, it offers a practical path forward.

For too long, our funding system has excluded major cost drivers—transportation, building maintenance, early childhood services, and certain special education expenses—leaving districts to absorb significant financial pressure outside the formula. The Commission's recommendation to establish a comprehensive Core Education Amount better reflects the true cost of educating students today.

Equally important is the proposal to more precisely align funding with student need. Strengthening weights for economically disadvantaged students, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and high-cost CTE programs is not about spending more for the sake of spending more; it is about investing where the needs are greatest and ensuring fairness across communities.

Additionally, the emphasis on fiscal transparency, strategic planning, and accountability strengthens public trust. Rhode Islanders deserve to know not only how much we invest in education, but how those dollars are connected to student outcomes.

The Commission has provided you with a balanced framework that is student-centered, transparent, and fiscally responsible. Moving these recommendations forward would send a clear signal that Rhode Island is serious about building a world-class public education system and creating long-term economic opportunity for our state.

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I urge you to give this report the careful consideration it deserves and to take action to modernize Rhode Island's education funding system.

Respectfully,

Michael Sollitto

Michael Sollitto, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

Terri Lacey

Terri Lacey

School Committee Chairwoman

CC: David Cicilline & Nora Gordon, Commission Co-chairs, RI Foundation
Representative David J. Place, RI General Assembly
Representative Brian C. Newberry, RI General Assembly
Senator Jessica de la Cruz, RI General Assembly
Burrillville Town Council