

From Dr. Jeffery Williams, D.Min, MPA

30 Apr 2026

Subject My Support for H8355 & RISPE

Dear Chair Marvin Abney,

Subject: Strategic Investment in Rhode Island's Educator Pipeline — RISPE (H8355)

What would it mean for Rhode Island if every classroom—especially those serving multilingual learners—had a well-prepared, culturally competent teacher ready on day one?

Without this support, the state risks maintaining the status quo: persistent vacancies, overextended teachers, and underserved student populations who need specialized instruction to thrive.

That is precisely the gap the Rhode Island School for Progressive Education is designed to address.

I write in strong support of funding through H8355, and as a founding member and former Board Chair of RISPE—an experience that has given me direct insight into both the problem and the solution.

Rhode Island is not facing a general teacher shortage alone, but a targeted one—particularly in multilingual learner (MLL) instruction, TESOL, special education, and elementary classrooms. RISPE is addressing this with precision.

Through focused, practice-based programming and direct partnerships with schools and districts, RISPE is preparing classroom-ready educators equipped to meet these exact needs—especially multilingual and culturally responsive teachers who reflect the students they serve.

This is workforce development, not theory.

H8355 represents a timely opportunity to scale a model that is already producing results. With state investment, RISPE can expand its reach and significantly strengthen the pipeline of qualified educators entering high-need classrooms.

I urge your support of H8355 and this strategic investment in Rhode Island's educational future.

Thank you for your service to the people of Rhode Island and for your consideration of our request.

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