



State of Rhode Island

Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State

Gregg M. Amore, Secretary of State

April 30, 2026

The Honorable Marvin Abney, Chair
House Committee on Finance

RE: In support of HJR8355 - A Joint Resolution Making an Appropriation of \$300,000 to the Rhode Island School for Progressive Education for Fiscal Year 2027.

Dear Chair Abney,

I write to express my support for House Resolution 8355, legislation that will make an appropriation of \$500,000 to the Rhode Island School of Progressive Education (RISPE) for Fiscal Year 2027.

As a former history and civics teacher for nearly 30 years, I am well aware of the discrepancies in our current education system and how these inequities impact the success of students in their future careers and civic lives. Several studies have highlighted the positive impact teachers of color have in the classroom and how all students, especially students of color, benefit from these educators throughout their academic journeys. For example, a 2021 University of Maryland study found that teachers of color have significant and lasting effects on the social-emotional, academic, and behavioral outcomes of their students, regardless of students' race or ethnicity.

The strategic goal that guides the work at RISPE is to improve outcomes for all students in Rhode Island's urban public schools. RISPE has programs for education providers to help address the lack of teachers of color and the need for more culturally competent educators. RISPE is committed to transforming teacher education in Rhode Island through high-quality, culturally competent, anti-racist teacher training with an explicit focus on creating a pipeline of teachers of color for our State's urban public schools.

I urge this Committee to support House Resolution 8355 and invest in RISPE, as its leadership in our state's urban educational infrastructure will help our most vulnerable and neglected students, who will have greater opportunities to reach their full potential and achieve academic success.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michelle Arias, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, at marias@sos.ri.gov.

Sincerely,

Gregg M. Amore
Secretary of State

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance
The Honorable Scott A. Slater

State House, Room 218, Providence, RI 02903

Phone: 401-222-2357 | Fax: 401-222-1356 | secretaryamore@sos.ri.gov | www.sos.ri.gov