



Parents Leading for Educational Equity
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**Testimony in Support of H-7389
On Behalf of Parents Leading for Educational Equity (PLEE)
Members of House Finance Committee,**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Bill H-7389. Parents Leading for Educational Equity (PLEE) is a parent-led, grassroots organization based in Providence that works to ensure that families, particularly multilingual families, are meaningfully engaged in decision-making that impacts their children's education.

PLEE brings both lived experience and formal policy leadership to this issue as:

- A leading organization in supporting families to provide testimony and advocacy that directly informed the statewide Multilingual Learner (MLL) Regulations, including the adoption of multiple parent-driven recommendations.

We write in strong support of H-7389, which would allocate \$650,000 to support multilingual learner (MLL) teacher certifications. Many educators have expressed interest in obtaining MLL certification but lack the financial support to do so. As Rhode Island becomes increasingly diverse, the number of certified MLL educators has not kept pace with student needs. Rhode Island students deserve access to educators certified in languages beyond English. Increasing the number of multilingual educators would strengthen student-teacher relationships and allow parents and caregivers to engage more fully in their children's education in their home languages.

We also urge the Committee to support the bill's additional \$300,000 investment to help districts launch, expand, and improve Pre-K–12 dual language programs. Research shows these programs improve outcomes for both MLL and non-MLL students. Overall, this bill would strengthen Rhode Island's education system, help address educator shortages, improve recruitment and retention of multilingual educators, and create more accessible and inclusive school communities for families of diverse backgrounds.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Parents Leading for Educational Equity