



East Providence School Department

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The Honorable Marvin Abney
Chairman, House Committee on Finance
RI General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for H8180 – Children’s Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS)

Chairman Abney and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter in strong support of H8180, as Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) are critical to ensuring that students and families have access to timely and effective behavioral health crisis support.

In schools, we regularly see students in behavioral health crisis, and too often, our only options are emergency services or the emergency room. These responses are not always appropriate and can disrupt a child’s education.

MRSS provides a better solution, offering immediate, community-based support that helps stabilize students and keep them engaged in school. H8180 is critical because it ensures these services are available to all students, regardless of insurance. Schools don’t see coverage, we see children who need help. H8180 strengthens the system so we can rely on consistent, timely support.

Without access to MRSS, crises escalate, impacting not only the student but the entire school environment. This bill is essential to supporting student well-being, school stability, and long-term success.

When behavioral health crises are not addressed promptly, the impact extends beyond the individual student. It affects classroom environments, school safety, staff capacity, and overall school climate. Investing in MRSS is not only an investment in children’s behavioral health, but also in their education and long-term success.

I respectfully urge you to support H8180 to ensure that Rhode Island’s children, families, and schools have access to a reliable, equitable, and effective crisis response system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra J. Forand, Ed.D.
Superintendent

The East Providence School Department, in partnership with families and the community, is committed to provide a comprehensive, inclusive program of academic excellence in a safe, nurturing environment preparing all students to become responsible, life-long learners able to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

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