



William McCaffrey
Superintendent of Schools

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May 13, 2026

Honorable Marvin Abney, Chairman
House Committee on Finance
Room 35
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 8180 - SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for H8180, which establishes a statewide Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) system for children in Rhode Island.

In Warwick Public Schools, a MRSS could be a key partner in responding to student behavioral health crises. MRSS provides a level of expertise and responsiveness that is essential in a school setting, where situations can escalate quickly and require immediate, specialized intervention.

Too often, without this support, schools and families are left with the default system response—calling 911, sending a child to the emergency room, or involving law enforcement. These are not appropriate or effective responses for many children and can lead to unnecessary disruption and trauma.

MRSS offers a better approach. It ensures that trained behavioral health professionals respond quickly and provide support directly to students and families in their natural environments, including schools. This helps de-escalate crises, maintain continuity in education, and support families in a meaningful way.

We are concerned, however, that recent administrative and structural shifts in how MRSS is implemented could reduce the effectiveness of this critical service. As a district that depends on MRSS, we are particularly concerned about changes that could:

- Limit access to experienced, child-focused providers
- Introduce delays or barriers to response
- Shift the model toward systems not designed for children

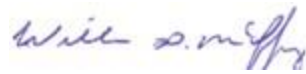
These changes would directly impact our ability to respond to student needs and could result in increased reliance on emergency rooms and law enforcement—outcomes we are working hard to avoid.

69 Draper Avenue, Warwick, Rhode Island 02889

H8180 is critical because it ensures that MRSS remains a stable, accessible, and child-centered system. By codifying MRSS in statute, the State provides schools and families with confidence that this essential service will remain available and aligned with best practices.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support H8180 and ensure that Rhode Island's schools and students continue to have access to the right response when it matters most.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Will D. McCaffrey".

William D. McCaffrey
Superintendent of Schools
Warwick Public School
Warwick, RI 02889