



Family Court of the State of Rhode Island
One Dorrance Plaza
Providence, RI 02903

MICHAEL B. FORTE
CHIEF JUDGE

April 1, 2025

Robert Craven, Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
State House
Providence, R.I. 02903

2025- H 6039

Dear Chairman Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,


I write to support 2025-H6039 a bill that adds school districts to the existing statute that mandates the duty and cooperation of other state agencies with the Family Court in its mission to further the safety and best interests of children. The Family Court oversees the case plan and progress of children and adolescents in state care. Children and youth in foster care face many challenges in their educational progress. Some may not be eligible for IDEA mandated educational advocates.

Yet, children and youth in foster care may experience educational difficulties, just by virtue of moving from one foster home and school district to another, reunifications with parents in new school districts and other trauma-related experiences unique to the child welfare system, such as hospitalizations, truancy and removal from family and school districts of residence. Per the 2024 KIDS COUNT Factbook, only 19% of third graders and 10% of eighth graders in foster care meet expectations in English Language Arts assessments. Many of these students do not have disabilities under the IDEA. But, they need help.

If the child/youth were experiencing school-related problems that were brought to the attention of the judge reviewing the case plan, it would be most helpful for them to have access to educational or counseling personnel from the school.

Accordingly, the Court supports 2025-H 6039 and thanks the committee for the opportunity to comment.

Very Truly Yours,


Michael B. Forte
Chief Judge

