

**Westerly Public Schools**

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Mark C. Garceau, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

Steven Morrone  
Assistant Superintendent

Christina Amanti Mathieu  
Director of Pupil Personnel

**Westerly Public Schools  
School Committee Goals:**

Support excellence in student performance.

Recruit, retain, and develop high quality staff.

Fully engage parents and community.

Develop and implement comprehensive financial strategy.

Improve and maintain Westerly School Facilities.

*Our mission is to create an inspiring, challenging, and supportive environment where students are encouraged and assisted in reaching their highest potential.*

**Westerly School Committee Resolution  
In Support of Rhode Island House Bill 7356 and Senate Bill 2216  
“School Employee Background Checks”**

**WHEREAS**, Westerly Public Schools recognizes the importance of maintaining the highest standards of safety and care within all schools, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to learn in a secure and nurturing environment; and

**WHEREAS**, the School Committee acknowledges that protecting students from potential harm, abuse, or misconduct is a paramount responsibility of every educational institution, whether public, charter, or nonpublic; and

**WHEREAS**, Rhode Island House Bill 7356 and Senate Bill 2216, entitled “School Employee Background Checks”, proposes an act relating to education that codifies a comprehensive system of criminal and employment background checks for all school employees, consistent with §16-21.9 of the General Laws; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed legislation requires all school districts, charter schools, nonpublic schools, and contracted service providers to obtain detailed employment histories, conduct rigorous reviews of all prior educational and child-related employment, and verify disclosures regarding any prior investigations, disciplinary actions, or misconduct allegations; and

**WHEREAS**, these Bills strengthen Rhode Island’s statutory framework by ensuring that all school employment decisions are informed by complete and verified information, reducing the potential for individuals with a history of abuse, inappropriate conduct, or false credentials to gain employment in positions involving regular contact with children; and

**WHEREAS**, the General Assembly’s proposed act complements existing laws under §16-2-18.1 by enhancing the depth and reliability of criminal background checks and requiring timely employer cooperation in providing prior employment information; and

**WHEREAS**, House Bill 7356 and Senate Bill 2216 also introduce accountability measures that include civil penalties for applicants who willfully falsify or omit information, and establish clear duties for both in-state and out-of-state employers to respond promptly ensuring that hiring entities have the accurate, verified information needed to make safe decisions; and

**WHEREAS**, the Westerly School Committee supports legislation that promotes transparency, integrity, and accountability in education, and aligns directly with the Town’s long-standing commitment to student welfare and the protection of youth in our community; and



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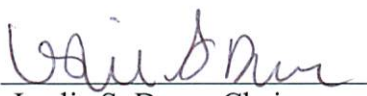

Christina Amanti Mathieu  
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**WHEREAS**, the School Committee further recognizes that the enactment of House Bill 7356 and Senate Bill 2216 would not only enhance public trust in Rhode Island’s school systems but also provide parents, educators, and residents with greater confidence in the safety of local educational institutions.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:** that the Westerly School Committee hereby expresses its strong and unequivocal support for Rhode Island House Bill 7356 and Senate Bill 2216: “School Employee Background Checks”.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** that the Westerly School Committee urges the Rhode Island General Assembly and the Governor to enact this bill into law promptly upon passage, recognizing it as a necessary and proactive measure to safeguard children throughout the State of Rhode Island.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the honorable members of the Rhode Island Senate and House of Representatives, the Governor of Rhode Island, and the Rhode Island Department of Education.

Signed:    
Leslie S. Dunn, Chair  
Westerly School Committee  
Timothy Killam, Clerk  
Westerly School Committee

Adopted: March 18, 2026

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