

Allison Strumolo
Rhode Island Department of Education
Written testimony in support of House Bill No. 5227

I began my teaching career in 2004, dedicating myself to urban schools and students. Three years ago, I achieved a professional goal by joining the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) in the Office of School and District Improvement. In this role, I support the state's lowest-performing schools, managing approximately \$4 million in funding for improvement efforts. My work balances accountability and compliance with federal and state requirements, while prioritizing relationship-building with school leadership to drive meaningful change. This year, ten schools exited Comprehensive Support & Improvement (CSI) status, a significant achievement for the agency.

My experience as an educator underpins my work at RIDE. I taught as a special education teacher at Public School 106 in the Bronx (2004-2007), then as a special educator and middle school math teacher at Woonsocket Middle School (2008-2015). From 2015-2021, I was a founding middle school math teacher at Founders Academy, part of Beacon Charter School for the Arts in Woonsocket.

I hold an A.M. in English as a Second Language and Cross-Cultural Studies from Brown University, an M.S. in Elementary Education from Mercy College, and a B.S. in Finance and Accounting from the University of Rhode Island. I hold active teaching certifications in Elementary/Middle Special Education, Middle School Mathematics, and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Additionally, I was part of the inaugural cohort for TeachPlus-Rhode Island which works to understand educational policy as a lever for student success. I worked for five years for The New Teacher Project (TNTP), as a special education seminar instruction and teacher effectiveness coach supporting new teachers during their first year.

RIDE's Professional Union (Local 2012) was established in 1969 and has existed for over 50 years as part of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. I urge the labor committee to protect the rights of RIDE employees to collectively bargain over all terms and conditions of employment through passing bill H 5227.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Allison Strumolo