



March 18, 2026

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese, Chairman
House Labor Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Letter of Opposition Re: House Bill 8248

Dear Chairman Corvese:

We are writing in strong opposition to House Bill 8248. This bill would require charter public schools and mayoral academies to provide prevailing wages to teachers and administrators.

Charter mayoral academies follow a financial structure that was approved by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and operate primarily on public funding. Most resources are spent on teachers and classrooms, and we do so with less funding than most of our peer district schools.

A common misconception is that mayoral academies operate with significantly more funding than district schools. However, we are subject to a local withholding at a minimum of 7% and maximum 14% of local share. This inherently reduces the per pupil funding available for each student that attends a mayoral charter school.

In addition, charter public schools in Rhode Island must finance or rent their school buildings and do not have access to municipal bonding. District schools in Rhode Island receive up to 90% reimbursement through the School Building Authority (SBA) for school construction and renovation. Charter public schools can only receive up to 30% reimbursement, and rent is not reimbursable at all, creating a significant inequity for charter school students. Our schools spend between 10 and 15% of their entire budget on these facilities costs, and they are not flexible. There is simply no belt-tightening possible to shift funds towards meeting the requirements of this bill.

Nevertheless, our schools continue to provide an excellent education to thousands of children. Like all public schools, we serve every young person who comes through our

doors. Our students are increasingly multilingual, and many require intensive special education programming for which we must be prepared.

Our schools support fair wages and are very comparable to the sending district teacher salaries and benefits. It is essential that we have the little budget flexibility that remains after facilities costs to address student needs as they evolve, sometimes unexpectedly, and balance them with the vital effort to compensate our teams well.

Teachers and administrators choose to work at our schools for a variety of reasons. Every day they come to work looking to improve the educational outcomes of the students we serve. This bill would constrain this work and result in fewer resources for children.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our position in opposition to this legislation.

Sincerely,



Sarah Anderson
CEO, Blackstone Valley Prep



Tom McDermott
Executive Director, Rhode Island
Achievement First



Owen Stearns
CEO, Excel Academy

cc. House Labor Committee members

Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel, Office of Speaker Joseph Shekarchi