

# Burrillville School Department

Office of Superintendent  
2300 Broncos Highway  
Harrisville, RI 02830



Tel: 401-568-1301  
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TTY: 800-745-5555  
Voice: 800-745-6575

December 17, 2024

Benjamin Haynie  
Chief of Program Development  
RI Department of Housing  
[Benjamin.Haynie@housing.ri.gov](mailto:Benjamin.Haynie@housing.ri.gov)

Dear Mr. Haynie,

For the past two school years, the Burrillville School Department has incurred significant costs due to the unilateral placement of unhoused families on the Zambarano campus of Eleanor Slater Hospital. When this idea was initially discussed, a public meeting was held and town officials brought to the attention of Housing Secretary Stefan Pryor the potential costs of this placement. At that time, they were assured that the state would provide significant reimbursement to address these costs. While we are aware that Secretary Pryor is no longer in the position, we respectfully request that additional compensation be awarded to the town of Burrillville in efforts to offset the substantial, unbudgeted cost.

During the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years, we were awarded \$74,000 and \$75,000, respectively. While this is much appreciated, the cost far outweighs this amount. Student transportation to districts of origin varies in cost from month to month. However, on average, the cost is approximately \$25,000-\$30,000 per month. In addition to this, there are several high-cost special education students living on the Zambarano campus and attending Burrillville schools. While the cost to this is difficult to quantify in an exact number, it should be noted that funding required to address the significant needs of a high-cost special education student typically exceeds \$75,000 per student.

Please do not misinterpret this request as an unwillingness to fulfill our duties to provide an education for the students housed at Zambarano. We are in full compliance with all requirements to provide a free and appropriate public education for these students. However,

The Burrillville School Department does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, religion, national origin, color, creed, political affiliation or disability in any of its educational programs and activities, and in employment and application for employment, as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1965, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and other federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies will be handled by: Director of Pupil Personnel Services (DPPS), 2300 Broncos Highway, Harrisville, RI 02830. Telephone: (401) 568-1301; Email: [nondiscriminationinquiries@bsd-ri.net](mailto:nondiscriminationinquiries@bsd-ri.net). Inquiries may also be made directly to: Office for Civil Rights (Boston Office), U.S. Dept. of Education, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02109-3921. Telephone: (617) 289-0111; Fax: (617) 289-0150; Email: [OCR.Boston@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Boston@ed.gov). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting or program at a school, call the DPPS at least two business days in advance of the meeting or program.

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the cost has escalated to the point where it has become an undue burden on the school department and the tax payers of the town of Burrillville. For the coming fiscal year, we are anticipating several cuts in staff to address these costs. Please give careful consideration to our request for additional funding to address these concerns.

Sincerely,

Don Fox

President, Burrillville Town Council

Terri Lacey

Chairwoman, Burrillville School Committee

Michael C. Wood

Town Manager

Dr. Michael Sollitto, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools