



Angélica Infante-Green
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island
DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

April 7, 2026

The Honorable Senator Hanna M. Gallo
Chair, Rhode Island Senate Committee on Education
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Senate Bill S2077 – An Act Relating Education – Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

Chair Gallo and members of the Sente Education Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE), I write in opposition to Senate Bill 2077. This act would expand the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education to ten (10) members: make six (6) a quorum; and would make the teacher of the year and the chair of the student advisory council voting members of the Council.

RIDE opposes this change. The current structure of the Council has worked well in the many years that it has met with eight members. The student member of the Council gains invaluable experience by participating in Council discussions, actively listening, and posing thoughtful questions. However, serving as a voting member would introduce additional responsibilities that may be challenging for a student already managing academic and extracurricular commitments. The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education frequently deliberates on complex and sensitive matters – including personnel decisions, education regulations, collective bargaining, and budgeting priorities – requiring a level of engagement that may be difficult for a student to sustain.

Similarly, the Rhode Island Teacher of the Year plays a vital role in shaping discussions on the Council. While their insights are valuable, the demands of this statewide role are significant. As a non-voting member of the Council, the Teacher of the Year contributes meaningfully without the added commitment of voting responsibilities. Making this individual a voting member would change the nature of their participation in a way that may not be sustainable, given their other obligations.

Finally, 2077 calls for the Advisory Committee to meet quarterly at a minimum. RIDE recommends amending the language to specify “a minimum of four meetings per year,” which would provide flexibility by not requiring meetings during the summer vacation. Currently, the Committee meets monthly from September to June, averaging at least ten meetings annually. This amendment would help maintain the Committee’s effectiveness while allowing practical scheduling considerations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

CC: The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Education
The Honorable Alana DiMario
Kristen Silvia, Deputy Chief of Staff/Director of Legislation