



May 13, 2026

The Honorable Hanna M. Gallo, Chairwoman
Senate Education Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Senate Bill 2783, An Act Relating to Education – Mayoral Academies

Dear Chairwoman Gallo:

On behalf of Rhode Island’s Mayoral Academies, we write to express our strong opposition to Senate Bill 2783.

This legislation would fundamentally alter the governance structure of Rhode Island’s Mayoral Academies by restricting voting membership on school boards solely to mayors or town administrators. We believe this proposal is unnecessary, counterproductive, and inconsistent with the principles of nonprofit governance, public accountability, and community representation that have guided Rhode Island charter public schools for decades.

Mayoral Academies are nonprofit public schools governed by independent boards that are established and operated in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, charter agreements, and public accountability requirements. Our boards include individuals with expertise in education, finance, law, governance, community engagement, and student support, as well as parent representatives and community voices that reflect the families our schools serve.

Senate Bill 2783 would effectively strip voting authority from these diverse community stakeholders and concentrate school governance authority in a small number of elected municipal officials, regardless of their expertise, capacity, or direct involvement with the school communities themselves. This would diminish parent and community voice in public education governance rather than strengthen it.

We are particularly concerned that the bill would:

- Undermine longstanding nonprofit governance structures that are designed to provide independent oversight and fiduciary accountability;
- Reduce the ability of schools to recruit highly qualified board members with relevant expertise;

- Inject unnecessary political instability into school governance as municipal administrations change over time;
- Create potential conflicts between municipal political priorities and the long-term educational interests of students and families;
- Discourage civic and parent participation by relegating non-municipal board members to purely advisory roles without voting authority.

Importantly, Rhode Island Mayoral Academies already operate with substantial public oversight and accountability. Charter public schools are authorized, monitored, and renewed by the state based on academic, operational, and financial performance. Our schools are subject to public records laws, public meetings requirements, annual audits, charter renewal processes, and extensive state reporting obligations.

We respectfully submit that there is no demonstrated governance failure or public policy need that justifies such a sweeping restructuring of our boards.

For many years, Rhode Island's Mayoral Academies have successfully partnered with municipalities, families, educators, and community leaders to expand high-quality public educational opportunities for students across our state. Senate Bill 2783 would weaken that collaborative model and replace it with a governance structure that is less representative, less stable, and less effective.

We strongly urge the Senate Education Committee to reject Senate Bill 2783.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to Rhode Island students and families.

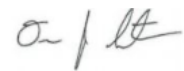
Sincerely,



Sarah Anderson
CEO, Blackstone Valley Prep



Tom McDermott
Executive Director, Rhode Island Achievement First



Owen Stearns
CEO, Excel Academy

cc: Senate Education Committee Members