



Parents Leading for Educational Equity
100 Niantic Avenue, Suite 101
Providence, Rhode Island, 02907
jramirez@pleeri.org

May 20, 2026.

Testimony in Support of S-2934

Dear Chairwoman Gallo and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Bill S-2934. Parents Leading for Educational Equity (PLEE) is a parent-led, grassroots organization based in Providence that works to ensure that families, particularly multilingual families, are meaningfully engaged in decision-making that impacts their children's education.

PLEE brings both lived experience and formal policy leadership to this issue to address long-standing barriers to shared accountability, teacher quality, and school-level flexibility in the Providence Public School District (PPSD).

- This bill is aligned with the recommendations of the Senate Study Commission on Improving Providence Schools and represents an important step toward strengthening school communities and ensuring better outcomes for students.

We write in support of S-2934, which includes a component that would allow a more innovative and flexible salary schedule, including differentiated compensation for educators in Providence who take on greater responsibilities or serve in high-need school environments and establishes a clearer, fairer, and more transparent process for addressing concerns regarding teacher performance in the Providence school system. By outlining due process protections and creating an expedited arbitration pathway focused on educational quality, S-2934 strikes an important balance between supporting educators and ensuring accountability for student outcomes.

S-2934 updates the layoff process by incorporating performance, experience, and student need into decisions, rather than relying solely on seniority. The bill introduces thoughtful exceptions that protect high-performing educators and those serving in our most under-resourced schools, including multilingual educators and those with proven linguistic proficiency. In Providence, at least 80% of students are students of color and a growing percentage are multilingual learners, these provisions are critical to building stable, responsive school environments that students and families can rely on.

This bill lays the foundation for a more effective, equitable, and collaborative school system in Providence by balancing the need for educator support with the urgency of student-centered reform. In the end, this creates space for real improvement driven by those closest to the classroom.

Families deeply value the role of committed, skilled teachers in their children's lives. At the same time, when persistent performance issues go unaddressed, it is students, particularly those with the greatest needs, who are most impacted. This bill promotes a professional culture grounded in growth, responsibility, and collaboration, while maintaining clear standards that protect both students and educators.

At the same time, PLEE remains firm as previously testified, that neither the City nor the School Board has demonstrated sufficient readiness to assume control of Providence schools.

This stance is based on direct participation in current working groups; there is no indication that these early-stage efforts can realistically evolve into a comprehensive, fully vetted transition plan within the limited timeframe proposed by this bill. Ending state intervention without foundational elements in place would not represent a proper transition but an unrealistic timeline that poses risk to students. This is multi-year work, not work that can be completed in a matter of months.

Developing a responsible transition plan would require:

- Cross-agency coordination
- Legal and governance design
- Budget modeling and fiscal alignment
- Labor and operational planning
- Sustained community engagement and feedback loops
- Phased implementation with oversight

Most of this bill would strengthen Rhode Island's education system, help address educator shortages, improve recruitment and retention of multilingual educators, and create more accessible and inclusive school communities for families of diverse backgrounds.

So while we support most of this legislation because it honors and rewards teachers who go above and beyond in service of students, those serving as mentors and lead professional learning; we want to be clear that a return to local control without the above stated safeguards would be placing students at risk.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Parents Leading for Educational Equity (PLEE)