



Senate Committee on Education
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI. 02903

RE: S.2934 (2026) An Act Relating to Education - Foundation Level School Support

May 20, 2026

Dear Chair Gallo and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

Speaking for myself as a Providence resident, parent of children who attended the Providence Public Schools for a period of 19 years, education policy expert, and Providence City Councilor, I am writing to comment on S.2934 (2026) An Act Relating to Education - Foundation Level School Support. This bill is in three main parts, which I will address in turn.

The first part permits the Providence Public Schools to institute structures that reward for professional excellence and their willingness to take on additional responsibilities. This Section revises the current law's requirement that compensation be tied strictly to years of service without regard to the needs of students or individual educators' professional skills and capacities. This provision supports school-based management, a goal that I strongly support for the Providence Public Schools. With rewards for professional achievement, educators have added incentives to pursue excellence in the service of teaching and learning. Many districts nationwide have negotiated collective bargaining agreements based on this kind of career ladder. Such structures would serve educators in the Providence Public Schools very well and thereby benefit students.

The second part related to seniority and performance review. I have deep respect for our state's teacher unions and their prerogative to negotiate contracts that work for their members. I also note that Rhode Island is in the significant minority nationwide by committing to last-in first-out policies. This is of particular concern in Providence, which is working hard to recruit teachers of color. With a seniority-only system, these are the teachers who are most likely to be eliminated in a bad budget year. Such outcomes are truly damaging to the kind of school system we envision, and I hope that this legislation can be met with an open mind when we work together toward better schools for Providence's young people.



The third part of the proposed legislation stipulates expectations related to a July 1, 2026 return to local control from Rhode Island Department of Education oversight. I cannot at this time support this, as negotiations are currently under way to establish an appropriate timeframe for this process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Councilor Jill S. Davidson