March 10, 2026

The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma
Chair, Senate Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

Subject: Letter of Support for CCRI Bond Proposal for a Workforce Innovation Center

Dear Chairman DiPalma:

The Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner supports the Community College of Rhode Island in its proposal for a bond issue that will finance the building of a Workforce Innovation Center (WIC) on the Warwick campus of the community college.

The WIC will add to the workforce development capacity across Rhode Island, developing the talent that employers need to advance our economy and offering opportunity for Rhode Islanders to build the skills that they need to help ensure a better future for themselves and for their families.

Across Rhode Island, our economy faces workforce challenges. CCRI has identified gaps between job openings and the number of qualified workers available in advanced manufacturing, construction and trades, and healthcare industries. The Workforce Innovation Center is designed to assist the State's effort to train and educate our workforce, to meet the needs of employers beyond 2030.

CCRI is a proven leader in the workforce space. Our partnership with the college at the Westerly Education Center demonstrates the unique capability of the college to develop curriculum and provide faculty tailored to meet employer needs. The tremendous success of our combined support to workforce training for General Dynamics – Electric Boat has been a boon to the state economy and thousands of Rhode Islanders. Creation of the Workforce Innovation Center represents a unique opportunity to expand the capacity of the college and apply the successes that are already benefitting the state to a broader segment of our population.

Respectfully,

Shannon Gilkey, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Postsecondary Education

cc: The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Finance
        Mr. Steven Hayes, Esq. Chief Legal Counsel to the President of the Senate