



RHODE ISLAND  
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND  
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AFT  
AFL - CIO

To: Senate Finance Committee  
From: Jeremy Sencer, RIFTHP Field Representative  
Date: May 19, 2026  
Re: Strengthening Education Funding Equity  
Testimony in Support of S 2226 (Acosta, et al.)

On behalf of RIFTHP, I submit testimony in support of S 2226, legislation that strengthens Rhode Island's education funding formula by incorporating Medicaid enrollment into the student success factor to better identify and support students experiencing poverty and high need.

Rhode Island's education funding formula recognizes that students facing poverty often require additional academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports to succeed. Ensuring the funding formula accurately identifies these students is critical to directing resources where they are needed most.

S 2226 improves the accuracy of the student success factor by expanding poverty measures beyond SNAP participation to include Medicaid enrollment beginning with FY2027 calculations. This change will help better capture students whose economic circumstances may not otherwise be reflected in existing measures and provide a more complete understanding of student need.

For educators and school staff, the effects of poverty are visible every day through increased demands for academic intervention, mental health supports, multilingual services, attendance interventions, family engagement, and wraparound supports. Funding formulas should reflect these realities and provide districts with the resources necessary to meet student needs.

The legislation also continues Rhode Island's efforts to improve support for multilingual learners and strengthen the use of data to ensure funding aligns with actual student populations and service needs. Better identification of high-need students creates a stronger foundation for educational equity across communities.

S 2226 represents a thoughtful adjustment to the education funding formula that advances equity while improving the precision of resource allocation to students with the greatest needs.

For these reasons, RIFTHP urges the Committee to support S 2226.

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