



Testimony in Support of S2452: Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time

May 18, 2026

To: Senate Finance Committee

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Charter Schools, I write to express our strong support for S2452: Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time. This legislation invests in out-of-school time (OST) programs as essential partners in supporting the mental health and emotional well-being of Rhode Island's youth.

Schools and communities across Rhode Island are confronting persistent and growing challenges related to student mental health, engagement, and access to needed supports. These challenges have been intensified by reductions in federal funding and increased demand on school-day supports. OST programs play a critical role in addressing these gaps by providing trusted, relationship-based environments where students experience connection, stability, and belonging outside of the traditional school day.

S2452 makes a targeted and thoughtful investment by directing resources to evidence-informed, community-based, and school-affiliated OST programs serving students in grades K–12. Allowable uses—including trauma-informed training, mentoring and peer support models, social-emotional learning resources, and culturally responsive wellness initiatives—reflect best practices in youth development and prevention. Importantly, the bill allows programs the flexibility to respond to local needs while prioritizing inclusive and developmentally appropriate approaches. The funding structure outlined in S2452, including competitive distribution, geographic diversity, and transparent reporting, ensures responsible stewardship of public funds while strengthening community-based systems that complement school-day learning and student support services. **For these reasons, the Rhode Island League of Charter Schools respectfully urges the Senate Finance Committee to support S2452. This modest but impactful investment will help stabilize and strengthen out-of-school time programs that are essential to student well-being, resilience, and long-term success.**

Thank you for your consideration and continued commitment to the children and families of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lauren K. B. Matlach".

Lauren Matlach
Deputy Director, Rhode Island League of Charter Public Schools