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CHIEF OF STAFF

TOWN OF CUMBERLAND

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Jeffrey J. Mutter



Sarah King
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Hon. Louis DiPalma
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: In support of Senate Bill 3015

Dear Chair DiPalma and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

As Mayor of the Town of Cumberland, I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 8351/Senate Bill 3015, legislation that would enact the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations to create a fair, transparent, and adequate public school funding system for Rhode Island.

The Commission's work represents one of the most comprehensive examinations of our state's education funding system in more than a decade. Rhode Island now has a unique opportunity to modernize how we fund public education and ensure that every community has the resources necessary to provide students with the high-quality education they deserve.

Cumberland is fortunate to have one of Rhode Island's strongest public-school systems. Our schools consistently produce outstanding student outcomes, attract families to our community, and contribute significantly to our local economy and quality of life. Maintaining that level of excellence requires sustained investment and a funding system that reflects the true costs of educating today's students.

The Commission's recommendations center on four key reforms:

- Accounting for the full cost of education by expanding the current formula into a comprehensive Core Education Amount (CEA) that includes transportation, building maintenance, early childhood services, and other essential costs currently borne largely by local taxpayers.
- Tailoring funding to student need by ensuring resources follow students based on instructional requirements through more accurate weighting for economically disadvantaged students, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and those enrolled in high-cost career and technical education programs.
- Requiring local contributions that more accurately reflect each municipality's ability to pay, helping address inequities that have developed under outdated funding formulas.
- Improving fiscal responsibility and transparency by aligning investments with student outcomes and providing districts with appropriate oversight and technical support.

For Cumberland, these reforms would provide a more predictable and reliable funding structure that allows both municipal and school leaders to engage in responsible long-term planning. Annual budget development becomes increasingly difficult when education funding is uncertain or subject to significant fluctuations.

Greater predictability would allow us to make informed decisions about staffing, educational programming, capital investments, and future needs while minimizing unexpected burdens on local taxpayers.

Equally important, these recommendations would strengthen the partnership between the state and municipalities by creating a funding framework that is transparent, understandable, and equitable. Communities like Cumberland should be able to focus on delivering excellent educational opportunities rather than navigating uncertainty surrounding future funding levels.

Rhode Island's students, families, and communities cannot afford to delay these much-needed reforms. I respectfully urge you to support and champion House Bill 8351 and Senate Bill 3015. Enacting the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations will help ensure that every Rhode Island student—regardless of where they live—has access to a world-class education while providing municipalities with the stability necessary for sound fiscal management and future planning.

Thank you for your service to our state and for your continued commitment to Rhode Island's students, families, and communities. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey J. Mutter". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Mayor Jeffrey J. Mutter