



NORTH KINGSTOWN SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

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May 18, 2026

The Honorable Members of the Rhode Island General Assembly
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI

RE: Support for S3808 – Funding for the Rhode Island Auditory Oral Program

Dear Honorable Members of the General Assembly,

I am writing in strong support of S3808, which would provide annual state funding for the Rhode Island Auditory Oral Program (RIAOP).

For over 20 years, RIAOP has provided specialized educational services to children who are deaf or hard of hearing and whose families have chosen listening and spoken language as their primary communication modality. The program serves students statewide through early intervention, school-based programming, outreach services, and support for hearing technology.

Currently, students attending RIAOP are funded through tuition paid by local school districts, while students attending the Rhode Island School for the Deaf receive primarily state-funded support. This creates an inequity in access based solely on communication modality and family choice.

S3808 would help correct this inequity by funding the RIAOP school-based program through a state allocation model similar to the Rhode Island School for the Deaf, while continuing outreach and early intervention services through existing reimbursement structures.

RIAOP provides critical expertise and support to families and school districts across Rhode Island and ensures that children who are deaf or hard of hearing have equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities.

I respectfully urge you to support S3808.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rachel Santa, Ed. D