



The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Chair, House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

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

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

RE: Support for H8429 and S3214 - Return of Central Falls Schools to Local Control

Dear Chair Abney, Chair DiPalma, and Members of the House and Senate Finance Committees:

I am writing in support of H8429 and S3214, which would return the Central Falls School District to local control effective July 1, 2026.

As the former Mayor of Newport, a Vice President of the League of Cities and Towns, and in my work advising cities and school districts on long-term financial planning, I have seen firsthand how essential local accountability is to the health of a school system. Students, families, educators, and taxpayers are best served when decision-making is rooted in the community and supported by a governance and funding structure that is both transparent and sustainable. After thirty years of state oversight, Central Falls should have such a structure.

At the direction of the General Assembly, the Special Joint Legislative Commission to Study the Return of Central Falls Schools to Local Governance delivered a thoughtful and thorough look at the issues involved in this transition. Its final report acknowledges the progress the district has made, the strong community desire for local control, and the need for safeguards, oversight, and a stable funding framework to support a successful transition.

H8429 and S3214 reflect a balanced approach, repealing the current statutory structure governing the district's board of trustees and establishing a clear pathway back to local control while maintaining a meaningful state-local partnership. The legislation also addresses the fiscal reality that Central Falls has limited municipal capacity compared to other communities, and they appropriately recommend a predictable funding structure for the Central Falls Stabilization Fund to ensure the district remains financially stable and students are supported.

A plan needs to be put into motion to ensure success and this legislation does just that. It outlines continued coordination among the City, the School District, the Central Falls School Board, RIDE, and the State; enhances reporting and oversight during the transition; continues

school board training; and creates a funding framework that allows the City to increase its local investment without jeopardizing its overall fiscal health.

Returning Central Falls schools to local governance is about how best to deliver for kids. Local control strengthens civic engagement, gives families and residents a direct voice in their schools, and ensures that educational decisions reflect the needs and priorities of the Central Falls community. At the same time, the legislation recognizes the State's ongoing responsibility to ensure adequate and equitable funding for Central Falls students.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the House and Senate Finance Committees to support H8429 and S3214 and advance the return of Central Falls schools to local control by July 1, 2026.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Sincerely,

Xay Khamsyvoravong
Candidate for Lt. Governor