



To: Jamie Plume, Committee Clerk
From: Andrew Bramson, President and CEO
Re: S3216, Senate Resolution - APPROPRIATION OF \$500,000 TO ONWARD WE LEARN IN SUPPORT OF RHODE ISLAND GEAR UP - Support
Date: May 18, 2026

Onward We Learn respectfully submits this testimony in support of Senate Resolution 3216 for the sum of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) to Onward We Learn in support of the Rhode Island GEAR UP operations and scholarship program.

Onward We Learn brings the strongest evidence base in Rhode Island when it comes to impact in college access and success programming. Our recent longitudinal study shows that students who participate in Onward programming are 48% more likely to graduate from high school on time and earn a college degree within six years compared to closely matched peers. This level of impact is rare and underscores the effectiveness of sustained, out-of-school time interventions.

Continued investment by the Rhode Island General Assembly will allow Onward We Learn to sustain this proven model, reach more students, and contribute meaningfully to Rhode Island's goals of increasing educational attainment and economic mobility. Moreover, these resources are critical in helping Onward We Learn and the State of Rhode Island demonstrate the 100% match requirement associated with the state's federal GEAR UP from the U.S. Department of Education.

Please see the attached one-page infographic for additional detail on Onward We Learn's impact and effectiveness.



A 17-year Study on the Postsecondary Outcomes for Onward We Learn Participants (2007-2024)

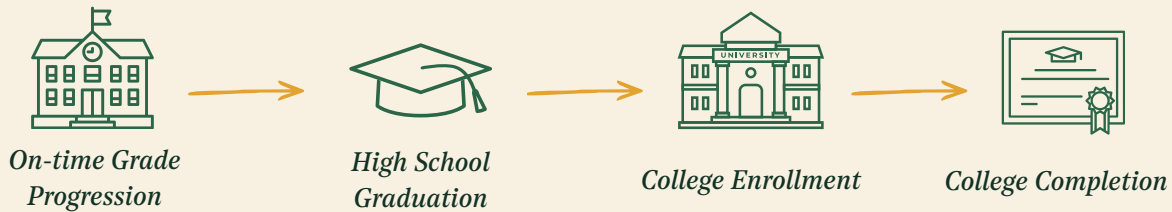
An educational journey of Onward We Learn GEAR UP students from middle school through college.

48%

more likely to earn a college credential

Onward We Learn GEAR UP participants in Rhode Island were 48% more likely than their closely matched peers to earn a college credential within six years of expected high school graduation.

Across every major milestone, Onward participants significantly outperformed comparison students.



745



Onward Gear Up Participants

745



Comparison Group Peers

A total of 745 Onward GEAR UP participants were matched to 745 comparison-group peers using Propensity Score Matching based on demographic and educational characteristics.

Students were followed from 6th grade through six years after their expected high school graduation via the RI Longitudinal Data Systems (RILDS) and National Student Clearinghouse data.

**An estimated 55,000 data points from RILDS were used in this analysis.*