



**WARWICK SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
Shaun Galligan, Chair

Mr. Shaun P. Galligan  
14 Pilgrim Drive  
Warwick, RI 02888

February 6, 2025

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Education  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**SUBJECT:** Opposition to H5252 – Warwick Schools Budget Commission

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Education,

I write to you today as a concerned parent, citizen, and stakeholder in the Warwick Public Schools community, respectfully urging you to oppose Bill H5252, which seeks to establish a *Warwick Public Schools Budget Commission*.

While I recognize the intent of H5252 is to improve fiscal oversight, I firmly believe that this bill undermines local control, disenfranchises our elected school officials, and imposes unnecessary bureaucratic oversight that could negatively impact student needs or achievement.

The Warwick School Committee is not opposed to additional oversight, and we have publicly expressed our desire to go about this in a different approach, one which would include locally elected officials solving the problem in a public manner, while contracting independent financial consultants. We firmly believe that special legislation of this nature is not required.

The Warwick School Committee and School Administration have been working expeditiously and collaboratively with other city leaders and the State Auditor General's office, to show an immediate reduction to the FY25 projected deficit, while carefully crafting an attainable and sustainable amortized five-year plan.

The establishment of a budget commission would strip the Warwick School Committee of its authority, transferring critical decision-making power to an unelected body, who may not have an adequate understanding of our school district's needs, or student demographics.

69 Draper Avenue, Warwick, Rhode Island 02889  
401-734-3100 | [www.warrickschools.org](http://www.warrickschools.org)

WARWICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS DO NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF AGE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, RACE, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, COLOR, OR DISABILITY IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS.



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Our elected officials were chosen by the residents of Warwick to represent our community's interests, and removing their ability to oversee school finances weakens the democratic process. The proposed commission would not be directly accountable to the taxpayers and parents, raising concerns about transparency and responsiveness to local needs.

Furthermore, if any legislation is deemed necessary for the City of Warwick, Warwick Public Schools, and the Warwick School Committee, the existing legislation relating to State Budget Commissions should be leveraged, to ensure impartiality [Title 45 – Towns and Cities, Chapter 45-9-Budget Commissions].

We are concerned that a newly formed commission primarily composed of members appointed by the Mayor, with the Chair seat being selected by the Mayor, directly contradicts the intent of Title 16 of the Rhode Island General Laws. These laws were established to protect public school education within cities and towns, from being underprioritized or manipulated by politics.

Additionally, imposing a budget commission could result in top-down financial decisions that prioritize cost-cutting over the best interests of students and educators. Warwick's schools require sustainable, well-planned financial solutions that support quality education rather than short-term budgetary control measures, which may not reflect the educational priorities of our community. The Warwick School Committee is committed to establishing financial policies to influence the creation of top-tier school financial management practices, to prevent recurrence, and ensure financial sustainability.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that you vote against Bill H5252. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Shaun P. Galligan, Chairman  
Warwick School Committee  
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