



April 10, 2025

The Honorable Joseph M. McNamara, Chairman
House Education Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: House Bill 6034, An Act Relating to Education – Establishment of Charter Public Schools

Dear Chairman McNamara:

On behalf of our Mayoral Academies, we would like to take this opportunity to share the work being done in charter schools to enhance the learning experience for kids and families across our state.

As school leaders, we are concerned with the potential impact H6034 and several other bills introduced this session will have on the choice of learning opportunities available for many kids. This is particularly critical for students and families in our urban core communities who may not have the ability to afford private or parochial schools if their traditional public schools are not meeting their educational needs.

It is important to note that demand for charter schools in Rhode Island continues to grow. The following numbers articulate this fact:

- Total applications have increased 27% in the last five years and more than doubled since 2014-15.
- In 2023-2024, there were 28,263 charter school applications in Rhode Island for 2,500 available seats.

Contrary to what is sometimes presented by those opposing expansion, charter schools provide learning opportunities to many kids in some of the poorest communities in our state.

In the 2023-2024 school year:

- 80% of charter school students reside in the state's four poorest communities – Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls, and Woonsocket.
- Rhode Island charter schools educate a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged and multilingual learners compared to the state average.
 - 62.9% of Rhode Island charter school students are economically disadvantaged, as compared to 43.9% statewide.
 - 23.1% of Rhode Island charter school students are multilingual learners, as compared to 13.5% statewide.

As leaders of our state's Mayoral Academies, we welcome the opportunity to share the work that we are doing to improve educational outcomes for our students. Our schools consistently outperform traditional public schools in the communities we serve. We believe this is the reason for the strong demand for families who are looking for a choice in where their child can receive an outstanding education.

For more than 25 years, charter public schools have served the needs of kids and families across our state. We stand ready to continue to provide high-quality educational options for families. House Bill 6034 and similar bills introduced this year are concerning as they will have the effect of stifling education innovation in our charter schools. This will effectively close the window on thousands of Rhode Island families looking to improve the education prospects for their children.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our position on H6034 and a little about the impact charter public schools have on improving the education of our state's children.

Sincerely,



Sarah Anderson
CEO, Blackstone Valley Prep



Jillian Fain
Sr. Dir of External Relations,
Achievement First



Owen Stearns
CEO, Excel Academy

cc: House Education Committee members