



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

April 9, 2024

The Honorable Marvin Abney  
House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith St  
Providence RI, 02903

Dear Chairman Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I write this letter in support of House Bill 8049, which will authorize the City of Providence to issue \$125 million in bonds to rehabilitate our schools at Providence Public Schools (PPSD).

Safe, modern, and sustainable school buildings are foundational to high-quality education. PPSD has set the goal of having 100 percent of our students in new or new-like buildings by 2030 and House Bill 8049 is an essential step to continue work towards this important goal for children, families, and communities in Providence. These school bonds were approved by the Providence City Council in August 2022 and by voters in Providence in November 2022. This bill will allow these school construction projects at PPSD to be eligible for state housing aid reimbursement.

The \$125 million school bond financed Phases 1-3 of the PPSD Capital Plan. These school construction projects included a full renovation of D'Abate Elementary School to serve as a Pre-K through fifth grade school; a new build at Frank Spaziano Elementary School to offer Dual Language education programs; extensive renovations at Esek Hopkins and Nathanael Greene Middle Schools; extensive renovations of learning spaces at Classical High School; and roof work, new classrooms near the auditorium, and an A/V buildout of auditorium space at Hope High School.

These investments, combined with Phase 4 of PPSD's Capital Plan will ensure that our schools – and in turn, our students and teachers – are safer and healthier. This work will also help increase student attendance at PPSD and will show our students and families that they are valued and deserve high-quality, 21<sup>st</sup> century learning facilities. Upon completion of this work in 2029, PPSD will have 28 school buildings and an Early Childhood Center for high-quality early childhood instruction and family-friendly diagnostic screening at Leviton Annex Elementary School in the West End. PPSD will also have the capacity for 2,000 additional students in case enrollment increases.

I commend Representative Biah for his commitment to ensuring that all students in Providence have safe, modern, and sustainable 21<sup>st</sup> learning facilities, and respectfully ask the committee to vote in favor of this legislation.

Sincerely,



Mayor Brett P. Smiley  
City of Providence