



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR DANIEL J. MCKEE

June 18, 2026

TO THE HONORABLE, THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

I am transmitting to the Secretary of State, with my signature, 2026 – H 7415 Substitute A, “An Act Relating to Education – Establishment of Charter Public Schools.”

This act places a temporary moratorium on the approval and expansion of charter schools through the 2028–2029 school year, limits state funding for new or expanded charter schools through fiscal year 2029, and reduces the statutory cap on charter schools from 35 to 28.

As Governor, I set a goal for Rhode Island to meet or exceed Massachusetts student achievement levels by 2030. We are already making measurable progress toward that goal, having closed the achievement gap by 29 percent in math and 39 percent in English Language Arts. This legislation, along with the return of Providence and Central Falls schools to local control, puts our state in a stronger position to meet our goal by providing the necessary time to address several pressing factors impacting public education in Rhode Island today.

In deciding to sign this legislation, I had to consider the reality that our school communities are facing significant challenges. Declining student enrollment has resulted in over 10,000 fewer students in the public education system since 2021, creating financial pressures for municipalities and school districts across our state. These difficult conditions require careful consideration, especially as the state evaluates proposals for changing the funding formula. A temporary moratorium provides time to make those assessments while focusing on strengthening the schools already serving Rhode Island students, including an evaluation of existing charter schools. I will not allow this legislation to serve as a retreat from innovation or from reaching the goals we have set. Instead, we will treat it as a chance for the state to evaluate declining enrollment and the funding formula while preserving the flexibility for future charter growth.

In reaching this decision, I also considered the meaningful revisions made during the legislative process. My administration worked with the General Assembly to increase the statutory cap on charter public schools from the originally proposed 25 to 28, preserving flexibility for growth after the temporary moratorium ends. Additionally, the original legislation would have

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prohibited the Greene School's expansion to serve middle grades, even though the expansion had received final approval from the K-12 Council. I ensured that issue was addressed.

The reality is vetoing this bill, as some have requested, is not a comprehensive solution to solving the challenges facing the public education system in Rhode Island. It will not boost achievement for the 88 percent of students enrolled in our district schools; it will not improve student outcomes at existing charters; and it will not help fill the many approved vacant charter seats that currently exist in Rhode Island.

What will help us address these challenges is using this time to build on the work already underway. We are significantly increasing funding for all public schools; expanding out-of-school learning opportunities for all students by opening 21 Community Learning Centers and improving student attendance. This work will be further supported by a \$750,000 investment in dual language programs included by the General Assembly in the fiscal year 2027 budget, which I was proud to sign.

Our responsibility now is to build upon the progress we have achieved and take the necessary steps to ensure that every decision we make advances the success of all Rhode Island students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel J. McKee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Daniel J. McKee
Governor