



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

October 10, 2024

Dr. Javier Montañez
Office of the Superintendent
Providence Public Schools
797 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Superintendent,

I'm writing in response to your recent request for additional funding from the City of Providence on October 9, 2024. As you are aware and we have discussed, the City passed a balanced and responsible budget that increased the contribution to the Providence Public School District while maintaining the high level of services that our community deserves, increasing COLA costs and pension contributions and the end of ARPA related recovery dollars. We have made it clear that once a budget is passed, there is no way to appropriate additional taxpayer dollars.

The District, on the contrary, did not pass a balanced budget which is irresponsible and reckless. This forced you to begin the fiscal year in a substantial deficit, despite full knowledge of the anticipated city and state increases. You have continued to communicate an increasing gap in financing for the current year and have made veiled threats about the cuts anticipated, that we all agree, would only harm our students, families and teachers.

Since FY25 budget has passed, the City has negotiated two recent PILOT agreements that are before the City Council for approval. When these agreements are passed, there will be up to \$1M of new revenue for the city during this fiscal year to be appropriated. There are limitless improvements and investments that the City needs to make, but there are none more important than our students' future. We are fully committed to contributing this new revenue to the District, we can only responsibly do so under very specific conditions.

1. **The State must also increase their contribution to the District in the same proportion.** Currently, the State is responsible for at least 71% of the District's funding, including federal resources, while the City funds the rest. If the City increases its contribution mid-fiscal year in order to serve our community's needs, the State who is

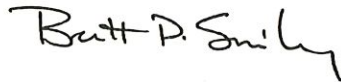
currently running the District, should assume the same responsibility by committing its contribution by \$3M.

2. **The District must engage in a third-party audit of finances.** Throughout the past two years, conflicting and incomplete information has been provided on revenues and expenses across the District for all accounts. This is of grave concern to the City and as the City has increased its contribution by 4.23% over the past year and a half, we still do not have clear awareness of where those funds are designated and each time there are threats of cuts, the gap in financing and items for consideration changes.

We all have shared responsibility for the success of our students and to support our teachers. With that responsibility in mind, the City is proposing to designate the only new revenue coming to the District and asks for open and transparent communication and accounting from all parties. While we were prepared to share this proposal during our conversations on the District's return to local control as outlined in the letter we received from the Department of Education, it has been represented that that timeline has now accelerated.

If you have any additional information or questions related to the FY25 approved budget, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,



Brett P. Smiley
Mayor

Cc: Honorable Daniel J. McKee, Governor of Rhode Island
Honorable Rachel Miller, President of the Providence City Council
Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner of the RI Department of Education
Krystofer Redden, Chief of Staff, RI Department of Education
Scott Sutherland, Chief of Staff, Providence Public Schools