

RESOLUTION CONCERNING EXPANSION OF
ACHIEVEMENT FIRST MAYORAL ACADEMY
AND THE OPENING OF TWO OTHER CHARTER SCHOOLS IN PROVIDENCE

WHEREAS, the Achievement First Mayoral Academy applied to the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education (“CESC”) to expand its enrollment from 912 to 3,112, with likely more than 80% of that enrollment coming from Providence residents, and

WHEREAS, the Achievement First Board approved the application subject to an assessment by the Mayor of Providence that the proposal was in the best interest of all of the City’s students, stating:

if authorization to open the new school be granted, AFRI will only open such school with a subsequent affirmative vote by the Board of Directors of AFRI and provided further that such vote must include an affirmative vote by the Mayor of Providence based on his assessment that the opening of this additional school will be aligned with the best interests of the Providence Public School District, and

WHEREAS, CESC began holding hearings on the application on October 17, with the last public hearing scheduled for November 9, and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island General Laws §16-77.3-3(f) (as amended by the 2016-17 budget) provides that:

In considering a proposed charter or an amendment to a charter for expansion, the council on elementary and secondary education shall place substantial weight on the fiscal impact on the city or town, programmatic impact on the sending school district, and the educational impact on the students in the district to ensure that the proposal is economically prudent for the city or town, and academically prudent for the proposed sending school district and for all students in the sending district, and

WHEREAS, the CESC has not presented a fiscal impact study of the Achievement First application in connection with the ongoing hearings, and

WHEREAS, the Internal Auditor estimated the net fiscal impact of the original Achievement First application in 2011 to exceed \$10,000 per student, even after accounting for savings from staff reductions, and

WHEREAS, a proportionate fiscal impact from the loss of 2,200 students would exceed \$20 million, which would be devastating for the remaining students in the Providence Public Schools, and

WHEREAS, the Internal Auditor has begun an economic impact analysis of the proposed expansion, which he expects to complete within two (2) weeks, and

WHEREAS, CESC is also being asked to consider approve two new Charter School applications, from the Charette School with a proposed enrollment of 225 Providence students

and the Wangari Maathai Community School with a proposed enrollment of 304 Providence students;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Providence City Council hereby requests that CESC extend its hearing schedule to continue a minimum of thirty (30) days after the publication of CESC's analysis of the fiscal impact on Providence of the proposed expansion of Achievement First and the new school applications of the Charette and Wangari Maathai Community Schools, and that CESC schedule a minimum of three (3) hearings at least one week apart during that extended period for review and comment by the Providence Public Schools.