



October 1, 2025

Council on Elementary and Secondary Education
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

Via Email

Dear Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education,

The National Education Association Rhode Island is writing in opposition to the proposed charter expansion for The Greene School.

The Greene School has demonstrated success through its unique commitment to expeditionary and place-based learning. Its student-centered approach, emphasis on outdoor education, and deep community engagement have provided meaningful learning experiences and positive outcomes for its students. However, in keeping with the original intent behind the creation of charter schools – to serve as incubators of innovation that inform and strengthen traditional public schools – such successful models should be shared and integrated into district schools, not expanded as part of a parallel system.

All students deserve access to the types of real-world, project-based, and inquiry-driven learning experiences that The Greene School provides. These opportunities should not be limited to a select group of students fortunate enough to attend one school. Instead, state and local education leaders should invest in ensuring that every district school has the time, resources, and funding necessary to provide similar experiential learning opportunities.

At one time, many Rhode Island middle schools and classrooms offered robust, inquiry-based and project-oriented instruction. Yet the continued emphasis on high stakes standardized testing has eroded these opportunities to make way for lessons that teach to the test. Project-based and experiential learning require significant investment, including resources for staff development, materials, and transportation – costs that many district schools cannot currently afford.

Rather than approving the expansion of a single charter school, the state should focus on making these enriching educational experiences universally available. RIDE should instead create pathways and opportunities for schools like The Greene School to share their expertise and best practices with educators across the state, fostering collaboration rather than competition. All students should have the opportunity to grow their intellectual curiosity, engagement, and ability to reflect.

At a time when public education funding is limited, it is essential that our resources be directed toward strengthening all public schools – not expanding separate systems that serve only a few.

For these reasons, we urge you to reject the proposed expansion of The Greene School's charter.

Sincerely,
Amy Mullen
Vice President, NEA Rhode Island