



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 (NEARI) is writing in firm opposition to the proposed New England Technical Academy. While the proposal asserts that, as a statewide charter, NETA “will not have a significantly negative impact on any single district or existing CTE program,” the reality is far different. Rhode Island public school districts are building and sustaining their own career and technical education (CTE) programs, and the financial drain caused by this charter would directly undermine those efforts, jeopardizing both programming and access for students.

Rhode Island already offers strong, high-quality CTE options. District programs at East Providence High School and Newport’s Rogers High School, and state programs at institutions such as Davies Career and Technical High School, are thriving because of sustained state investment. Moreover, districts including Bristol-Warren and South Kingstown are in the midst of new construction designed specifically to expand access to CTE seats. These programs already have the infrastructure, leadership, and proven records of student success.

If there is demand for new CTE pathways, those programs should be incorporated into existing schools—not funneled into a duplicative system that diverts resources away from what is working. Approving this charter would not expand opportunity; it would splinter it. Rather than strengthening Rhode Island’s public schools, the Council would be redirecting taxpayer dollars into a parallel bureaucracy tied to a private, for-profit institution whose fortunes are dependent on market volatility and not the public good.

**Simply put:** approval of this charter would duplicate programming, waste public investment, and destabilize local district programs. It would make it harder for communities to grow the high-quality CTE opportunities students are demanding and that our economy requires.

NEARI supports both college preparatory and CTE pathways. In fact, Rhode Island has become a national example: a [recent article](#) from *The 74* highlighted Cranston’s success in preparing students for both higher education and the workforce. This is where state energy and investment should be directed—toward scaling proven models within the district public school system.

Parents and students want more CTE options, and so do we. But the answer is not to establish a new statewide charter that will require additional administrators with six-figure salaries, siphon off taxpayer resources, and inevitably funnel students toward New England Tech, even when CCRI, RIC, URI, or local

trade programs may be the better fit. The Council must recognize the inherent conflict in handing Rhode Island's workforce development pipeline to a private institution whose primary obligation is not to students, but to its own bottom line.

Approving this charter would weaken our public school districts, destabilize our shared CTE infrastructure, and tie the state's workforce future to a private entity. For these reasons, we urge you to reject the New England Tech Academy charter application and instead commit to expanding CTE opportunities through Rhode Island's public schools, where transparency, accountability, and equity remain at the core of the mission.

Sincerely,

Amy Mullen  
Vice President  
NEA Rhode Island