



March 23, 2021

To Members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Nicholas C. Donohue, and I am the President & CEO of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, a philanthropic organization based in Quincy, Massachusetts, and a longstanding funder of Providence Public Schools and various Rhode Island based education non-profits. I am reaching out to you today as you consider H5827: An Act Relating to Education - School Committees and Superintendents.

Today, [two thirds of American high school students attend a school with a police officer](#), and schools with predominantly Black and Latinx students are more likely to have police. Research shows that having school resource officers in schools [does not lead to better safety](#), but rather, punitive disciplinary measures that affect students of color at higher rates than their white peers, contributing to our country's school-to-prison pipeline.

Tracking on student disciplinary incidents, such as suspensions and expulsions, especially with involvement of law enforcement, will not put an end to this issue. But reporting on and analyzing this data, especially by race, is an important first step in creating an education system that works for all of our young people. Data is an instrumental tool that can help us understand educational inequities in our schools and communities.

The future of Rhode Island Schools are dependent upon supporting our young people to thrive in their schools – to feel safe, known, welcome, heard and cared for. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and more importantly, for listening to young people and families who are leading efforts to achieve equity in their schools and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Donohue', written in a cursive style.

Nicholas C. Donohue  
President & CEO  
Nellie Mae Education Foundation