



WARWICK SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Shaun Galligan, Chairman

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David Testa, Member

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 27, 2025

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RIDE Orders Warwick Public Schools to Submit FY26 Budget; School Committee Calls on Mayor and Council to Respond in Writing

WARWICK, RI — The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has issued a Declaratory Order (D.O. 25-01A) directing Warwick Public Schools to submit its FY 2026 budget file to RIDE “forthwith,” even if the City of Warwick has not provided sufficient funding to produce a balanced budget.

Following this directive, the Warwick School Committee announced today that it will comply fully with RIDE’s order and submit the required “budget-only” file to the Department of Education, as mandated by R.I. Gen. Laws §16-2-9.4(d).

At the same time, the Committee has sent a formal letter to Mayor Frank Picozzi, and the School Budget Commission, requesting a written response within five business days outlining how the City intends to resolve the \$2.1 million shortfall identified by the Budget Commission.

69 Draper Avenue, Warwick, Rhode Island 02889
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“The Rhode Island Department of Education has spoken clearly and decisively,” said Shaun Galligan, Chair of the Warwick School Committee. “Warwick Public Schools will comply fully with RIDE’s directive and meet every legal requirement. The Mayor and Budget Commission must now do the same by putting in writing what they intend to do about the \$2.1 million shortfall in the FY 2026 school budget.”

The RIDE order, issued by Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green on October 21, 2025, confirms that if no supplemental appropriation or amended budget has been approved by the City Council, Warwick Public Schools must proceed with submission. The Order also specifies that the Budget Commission and City leadership hold responsibility for determining next steps to ensure compliance.

“The law is unambiguous,” Galligan added. “Our school district has done everything required under statute. The next move is up to the Mayor’s School Budget Commission and the Mayor. Families, students, and taxpayers deserve to know — in writing — how their leaders intend to meet this obligation.”

For more than two weeks, the Warwick School Committee has sought direction from city officials to bring the district’s budget into legal compliance. To date, no response has been received.

“This is not about politics — it’s about compliance and accountability,” Galligan said. “Our schools cannot continue to operate in violation of state law or without certainty about funding. It’s time for action, not silence.”

The School Committee’s letter to the Mayor and Budget Commission requests that the City specify in writing by October 31, 2025, whether it will:

1. Appropriate the \$2.1 million required to balance the FY 2026 budget; or
2. Direct the Budget Commission to initiate a Caruolo action in Rhode Island Superior Court to obtain the necessary funds.



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Background

- On October 8, 2025, the Warwick School Committee formally requested action from the Mayor, City Council, and Budget Commission regarding the \$2.1 million shortfall.
- On October 21, 2025, RIDE issued Declaratory Order D.O. 25-01A, confirming Warwick Public Schools' obligation to submit its FY26 budget file under state law, regardless of funding status.
- The district continues to operate without a certified, balanced FY26 budget — a violation of Rhode Island law.

The Warwick School Committee remains committed to transparency, fiscal responsibility, and full compliance with all state and local laws.

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