

Summary of Public Comment on RIDE's Proposed Revisions to Rhode Island's Charter School Regulations

Public Comment Period:

- RIDE hosted a public comment period from November 25, 2025 – January 9, 2026.
- RIDE hosted 2 public comment hearings:
 - December 9, 2025 | Providence, RI | RIDE PAFF Auditorium | 5-6 PM
 - December 10, 2025 | Woonsocket, RI | Woonsocket Public Library | 5-6 PM
- Public comment was accepted via mail, email, or in-person at either public hearing.

Overview of Public Comment Received:

- RIDE received a total of 5 public comments in the proposed revisions to the Charter school Regulations.
 - Hearing #1: 0 Comments
 - Hearing #2: 2 Comments
 - Written Comment: 3 Comments
- All 5 public comments are in opposition to the proposed revisions.
- All 5 public comments were received from members of the Woonsocket School Committee.

Summary and Rationale for Change/No Change

1. Public Comment stated that Rhode Island law does not authorize a mayoral academy to convert into an independent charter school via a “major amendment”.
 - a. **No Change** as this regulatory revision intends to provide clarification that this process is allowable, and no existing Rhode Island law or statute conflicts with this intent.
 - b. RIGL § 16-77.4-3.a, for Mayoral Academies, RIGL § 16-77.2-3., for district charter schools, and RIGL § 16-77.3-3.a, for independent charter schools, task the Commissioner with developing regulations for amending an approved charter. The current charter school regulations, prior to the proposed changes in Section 2.3.1.A., state that schools may request a major amendment if there is a change in organizational structure.
2. Public Comment requested that in order to change charter type, a mayoral academy must meet the statutory requirements of the type it is changing to.
 - a. **No Change** as this regulatory revision requires that any charter intending to convert from one type to another will be required to meet all the statutory requirements of the new type of charter. This was verbally clarified and

confirmed by RIDE and the K-12 Council at the March 31, 2026 K-12 Council meeting.

3. Public Comment referenced the regulatory revision as it relates to a single charter school (RISE Prep).
 - a. **No Change** as this regulatory revision is not specific to an individual charter school and would allow any independent charter to transition to a mayoral academy or for any mayoral academy to transition to an independent charter.
4. Public Comment stated that the proposed changes would have a negative fiscal and educational impact on Woonsocket public schools.
 - a. **No Change** as this regulatory revision still requires that the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education (K-12 Council) take into account 1. the fiscal impact on the sending school district, 2. the programmatic impact on the sending school district and 3. the educational impact on the students served by the sending district when considering a major amendment to an existing charter. This was verbally clarified and confirmed by RIDE and the K-12 Council at the March 31, 2026 K-12 Council meeting.