

**Testimony of Superintendent Peter P. Horoschak regarding Mayoral Academies**  
**Intended for the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education**

On Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, the Warwick School Committee approved a Resolution opposing the most recent Achievement First Mayoral Academies application.

First and foremost, the Warwick School Community is opposed to redirecting state and local revenues intended to support Warwick's public school students to a private entity, as is Achievement First Charter Schools. In the case of Warwick Public Schools, the financial loss will be at least \$12,600 per student, and more if the student is eligible for either free or reduced lunch status. As with most Rhode Island school districts, ours is coping with reductions in revenues, a threat to the quality of our educational offerings. Redirecting our resources to a private entity will be at the expense of our public school students.

Of course, there are many other factors which led to the Resolution of Opposition approved by the Warwick School Committee. What stands out most is the lack of communication about the submission of the Achievement First application with the governing school committee in Warwick by any of the proponents of the charter school mayoral academy movement. Of special concern is that the Rhode Island Department of Education did not notify our school district authorities of the application. We learned of Achievement First's submission from the superintendent of the Cranston Public Schools. Furthermore, the application seems to be headed on a fast track to approval without even a public hearing scheduled to be held in Warwick.

As superintendent of Warwick Public Schools, I have ample reasons to question the Achievement First program's applicability to Warwick Public School students. No one from the Achievement First organization nor the Rhode Island Mayoral Academies (RIMA) staff consulted with us or, most importantly, even told us that Warwick Public School's students were targeted in the application and how they were to benefit.

In Warwick we have a dedicated and competent staff of teachers and administrators who are continually working to improve their practice. That, I believe, can be attested to by the Rhode Island Department of Education. Our students are progressing according to state standards and we have numerous enriching programs and services to meet their needs. We, of course, find it offensive to be branded as "bureaucrats" and "protectors of special interests" by the Rhode Island media. What we want is to continue to provide educational programs and services that we have protected from elimination despite declining resources.

I hope that the Board of Regents will not approve the Achievement First Mayoral Academies application based on accusations emanating from those who believe they occupy the higher ground of educational reform. We, your Rhode Island professional educators, are dedicated to improving public school education and student achievement and believe we have the dedication and ability to do the job. Please do not hamper us by taking an action that could further diminish our financial resources.

Therefore, we ask the Board of Regents to seriously take account of the issues raised in the Warwick School Committee "Resolution of Opposition to Mayoral Academies."