



# Rhode Island General Assembly

Office of the House Minority Leader

## NEWS

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **Rep. Mendonça Calls for Improved School Safety in Rhode Island**

STATE HOUSE -- Representative Kenneth Mendonça (R-District 72 Middletown, Portsmouth) will introduce legislation to reimburse public schools for conducting a security evaluation to determine the best ways to keep children safe.

Security evaluations assess how prepared a school is for any type of emergency, such as a fire or active shooter scenarios, and make recommendations for how they can be improved. These services typically cost around \$1,500 and are performed by a certified security assessment company. The evaluation offers a guide for improving security protocols and infrastructure that fit the needs of each individual school.

The Rhode Island Public School Safety Evaluation Program Fund would allocate \$650,000 from the state's general fund to reimburse schools for conducting security evaluations. The program would last one year and would be overseen by the Rhode Island Department of Education. Municipalities that have already conducted a security evaluation during the prior year would also be able to apply for reimbursement.

The timing of this legislation is critical because school districts and municipalities are beginning to draft their new budgets for the coming year. This would give them enough time to allocate funds to perform school security evaluations and take steps to implement the recommendations offered.

“This program would give public schools in Rhode Island the resources they need to make real change in improving security for students and staff. Being able to speak with industry experts and determine what strategies work best is crucial for keeping our schools safe, but with many struggling to fund basic programs it is a luxury few can afford. We must ensure that every school is safe and this bill would be a step toward that end goal,” stated Rep. Mendonça.