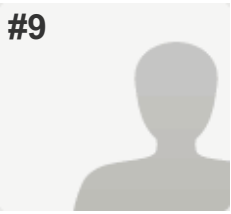


#9



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Q1: Please enter your first and last name.

First Name	Christopher
Last Name	Haskins

Q2: Comment:

My name is Christopher Haskins and I serve as Head of School at Paul Cuffee School, a K-12 independent public charter school serving just under 800 Providence youth and families. Students are selected by a blind admissions lottery process and last year we received 1598 applications for 106 open seats. Paul Cuffee is one school operating on three school campuses. Our student demographics represent the City of Providence in terms of race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. We have in common with the Providence Public School Department the percentage of students eligible for federal lunch, special education and English language learner services and we also bear similar relative costs as the sending district in terms of staff salaries and benefits including healthcare, retirement and transportation. As an aside, I feel that we have an excellent working relationship with the Providence Public Schools and I believe that to be in part because we share these items in common.

Where we differ from our sending district is in how we pay for facilities. The entire cost of acquisition, renovation, and repair for the Paul Cuffee School buildings has been paid through the per-pupil allocation. With perhaps one rare exception, this is not true for Rhode Island's non-charter school districts, where the costs for school acquisition rest with the municipality.

To put this into numbers, Paul Cuffee School, in 2002, acquired its Lower School in Promenade St with a \$1.4 million, 10-year note for purchase of the building shell, for which we paid a total of \$1,785,000 for the principal and interest, and a \$3 million, 30-year note for renovation of the building for which we pay approximately \$200,000/year in debt service. Unlike non-charter districts, this was paid though the school's per-pupil allocation. Also, unlike the sending district, which would receive 80% reimbursement for these costs through the state government's school housing aid, Paul Cuffee School receives only 30% reimbursement. Same citizens, same demographics, huge difference in how we pay for facilities.

Our school leases its middle school building for approximately \$90,000 a year and our Upper School leases costs us \$80,000 a year. These are triple-net occupancy leases, which means that the school pays for all maintenance of HVAC, roof, and windows, which is similar to what the districts pay yet, unlike the districts, because we do not own the buildings, none of these costs are eligible for housing aid reimbursement.

I understand that there are many complexities involved in making decisions about recommendations for the Fair Funding Formula. Allow me to draw one simple comparison relative to my point. In our own personal finances, the largest expenditure is often our home mortgage, or monthly rent. Imagine how much we could all save, or what more we'd have to spend, if we didn't have the expense of a home mortgage or rent. Mortgage and rent is a significant expense for charters, it is for Paul Cuffee School, and it's a significant difference that I think requires more information than what you have been provided in Issue Brief #3: School Housing, and I thank you for the opportunity to provide some context around it.

#EdFundingRI - Public Comment Submission

Q3: By submitting this comment, you understand and acknowledge that your name and your comment will become available to the public as part of the public record.

Yes, I understand that my name along with my comment will be part of the public record and will represent me when shared or posted online.
