**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** **CONTACT**July 18, 2018 Jo-Ann Schofield

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**WARWICK SCHOOL COMMITTEE
CUTS MENTOR PROGRAM,
ELIMINATES SUPPORT FOR 160 STUDENTS**

**WARWICK, R.I.** – MENTOR Rhode Island today expressed outrage regarding a last-minute Warwick School Committee vote to eliminate the Warwick Mentor Program. The program, which reaches 160 students annually, has been operated by MENTOR RI and funded by the Warwick Public Schools for over three decades.

“While we recognize difficult decisions have to be made to balance the school budget, MENTOR Rhode Island is devastated by the thought of ending 30 years of providing high quality, one-to-one mentoring relationships to Warwick students,” said MENTOR Rhode Island President & CEO Jo-Ann Schofield. “Mentoring is not a nice to have program. It is a need to have program.”

**The Warwick Mentor Program:**

* Started in 1990 and costs $102,000 annually to operate
* Worked with 160 students for the 2017-2018 school year
* Enlisted countless mentors from about 24 Warwick businesses and organizations
	+ MENTOR Rhode Island would serve more students, if there were more volunteers
* Logged 6,400 mentoring hours for 2017-2018

“The mentor program is invaluable to Winman and our students,” said **retiring Winman Junior High School Principal Joanne Pelletier in a recent year-end survey**. “The number of needy students increases each year. So many are living with grandparents or relatives or just have stressful lives. I don’t know what we would do without your added support.”

“We recognize budgets are tight, but we look forward to advocating for Warwick students and their mentors. We will continue to work with the Warwick School Committee, Warwick City Council and Mayor Joe Solomon on ways to restore this critical youth program,” continued Schofield.

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