

Hello,

My name is Shannon McCloud, I am a public school teacher here in Providence, and I serve as the VP of High Schools for the Providence Teachers Union. I am writing to you today in support of H5488, a bill to provide a school librarian in every library.

As a high school English teacher, I can tell you firsthand how vital a library is for students. The library is where I take my students when we have research papers. Librarians are experts in research, and can teach students how to assemble research. Frequently, as adults, we assume that because teenagers are well versed with their phones, they know how to do anything when it comes to technology. I can attest to you that isn't true, and having a professional school librarian teach students how to navigate EBSCO gives them skills they need now, and later in college.

Libraries are often the heart of the school, and our library in our school is no exception. Students visit the library for books of course, but sometimes just for a quiet place to work. Teachers utilize it for small group instruction at times. We are so fortunate to have the librarian we have, as in the time I have been here she has arranged three award winning authors to visit our school to meet with students, through programs she runs in the library. Most recently, Jason Reynolds visited our school and teenagers from the district's high schools enjoyed a Q & A session with him, and then met him through a book signing. Our librarian was also able to secure free books for the students for this to happen. When I tell you this was a powerful day, I am not being hyperbolic. And this all happened because of school librarians.

In a climate where reading and school libraries are under attack, let's be ahead of the curve, as RI has often been, by supporting a school librarian in every school.

Thank you,
Shannon McCloud