

Debbie Hayden
Committee Clerk
401-222-2381

Re: <https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText26/SenateText26/S2078.pdf>

To whom it may concern,

My name is Julie Gendron and I am the Library Media Specialist at Hamilton Elementary School in North Kingstown, RI. I'm writing this letter to seek your support for School Libraries Act S2078. School libraries are essential hubs of learning in all schools, and Rhode Island's schools need their libraries and their school librarians. School libraries with full time certified school librarians play an integral role in educating children for the future. I am writing to you today because I want to ensure that our students will be able to benefit from the power of school libraries now and in the future.

My elementary school is quite large, with 450 students. I am lucky enough that I am full time at this school only this year, but last year I was placed at another school two mornings a week and was not able to get all of my work done. Librarians are not just reading books to children, teaching lessons, and checking books out. We need time in our schedule for other duties, such as: collaborative planning with classroom teachers, curating resources for teachers, collection development (selecting, budgeting, ordering, and weeding books to ensure the collection is current, accurate, and reflects the student body), cataloging books, supervision of parent volunteers and student helpers, and maintaining the library website to keep families and students informed.

Libraries are where students learn to find, analyze, evaluate, interpret and communicate information and ideas--skills they will need as adults to live and work in an information-based society. Certified school librarians facilitate academic success and personal growth and foster a culture of reading for all students. For many students, the school library is their only source for selecting the books they want to read, encouraging them to become life-long readers.

I am asking you to support school libraries by guaranteeing that school libraries and certified school librarians will continue to be essential parts of our schools through legislation and executive action.

Sincerely,

Julie M Gendron, MLIS