

From: Karen Farrell <kfarrell@sksd-ri.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 5, 2026 8:13 AM
To: SLegislation <slegislation@rilegislature.gov>
Subject: Bill S 2078

Dear Rhode Island Legislators,

I am writing in regards to the bill S 2078, the School Libraries Act.

I recently moved back to my hometown, South Kingstown, Rhode Island after working twenty years as an elementary school librarian in Massachusetts. I worked in several working class, blue collar towns in Massachusetts including Methuen and Billerica. I only ever had to work in one school. I saw my classes every week for 45 minutes. In MA, the trend is for libraries to also be MakerSpaces and spaces where technology is taught. I taught my k-4 classes how to code, how to use Google apps such as Google Slides, Google Sheets, Google Docs etc. By Christmas vacation, even the kindergarteners were able to login independently and navigate code.org and Google Classroom. I taught Project Based Learning to my classes, and students came up with real world solutions to everyday problems such as ways our schools could produce less waste. We also built and programmed robots in the classroom.

This year I was hired as an elementary school librarian in South Kingstown. Now I am the only elementary librarian in the district and I travel between three elementary schools. I see the students for only a half an hour every other week. I have 50 classes and almost 900 students. The kindergarteners don't know how to use technology at all. The rest of the classes barely have enough time to login before it's time to check out books and line up. If there is a holiday or an assembly, I might not see my students for a whole month! As it is, there is no continuity to our projects because by the time I see them again, they have forgotten what we were working on.

South Kingstown is one of the wealthier towns in Rhode Island, but you would never know it. The students are as capable as my students in Massachusetts, but they are not getting the opportunity to learn and practice what librarians can teach them.

Please consider funding RI school libraries; our students deserve it.

Sincerely,
Karen Farrell

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