

To: Senate Education Committee
From: Katherine O’Kane
Support 2026 -- S 2078
Date: 3/4/2026

Dear Senate Education Committee,

My name is Katherine O’Kane, and I am in support of The School Libraries Act (2026 -- S 2078) that would ensure a certified Library Media Specialist and access to a well-funded library.

I am in support of this bill because, as a current Library Media Specialist in a Title I public elementary school in Barrington, I know how essential our curriculum is. According to a literature review conducted by Keith C. Lance and Debra E. Kachel, several studies show that properly staffed and equipped libraries correlate with higher standardized test scores and graduation rates. We also teach skills that are not covered in other disciplines, like digital citizenship. In today’s increasingly complicated online world, learning how to be safe, responsible, and respectful when using technology is a crucial skill. Students in all districts deserve to have access to these lessons, and many more.

Additionally Library Media Specialists curate and share diverse texts with students to help them see the world beyond their classroom. Students learn about different cultures and life experiences through the lens of characters who are different from them or they feel affirmed and connected by reading about characters who make them feel less alone in their way of life. We also organize digital resources on our websites to support research both in the classrooms and in the library.

Finally, libraries serve as a safe space for all students. In my elementary school library, many students elect, with the permission of their guardians, to come to the library to participate in biweekly Book Clubs and avoid a recess that is overstimulating to some. Students experiencing mental health crises or unique family struggles, come to the library for comfort, connection, and perhaps a supportive read aloud. Ravenous readers and researchers visit the library daily to check out books from the collections with suggestions from their Library Media Specialist. Libraries also serve as a haven to students who are fasting for religious holidays during lunchtime.

Libraries and Library Media Specialists serve a unique role in helping students to thrive academically and socially. All students deserve the right to access this education and the resources in the library, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Thank you for your consideration.

Katherine O’Kane
Providence