

March 4, 2026

Dear Senate Committee on Education,

My name is Shannon McLoud, and I am an ELA Department Leader for Providence Public Schools, and the Vice President for High Schools for the Providence Teachers Union. Today, I am writing to express my strong support for Senate bill 2078. This bill will require public schools to fund libraries, as well as have a certified school librarian assigned to every school.

You could say that as an English teacher I am a tad biased when it comes to reading and promoting literacy. And it's true, I love books and libraries, which started with my own school librarian when I attended Hope Elementary. The library was a safe space, and a space that had unlimited books I could borrow and read. Today, as a high school teacher, I see the same experience with my own students. In fact I frequently say that the library is the heart of the school. Today's public school libraries not only have books, and technology, but they have maker spaces, social emotional tools like coloring and tactile games, and a quiet place to gather your thoughts in a busy, loud world.

As a teacher, thanks to my school librarian, our students have met authors like Elizabeth Acevedo, Jason Reynolds, and Huda Fahmy. As a teacher, thanks to my school librarian, I have been able to bring in the Rhode Island Poet Laureate for collaboration on my poetry unit. And of course, thanks to my school's librarian, my students have been able to research, analyze, and write lengthy research papers, preparing them for college.

Fully funded public school libraries should not be treated like a luxury, but a necessity. For the future of education in Rhode Island, you must pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Shannon McLoud

Vice President of High Schools, Providence Teachers Union