

RE: Support for S 2078 – Rhode Island School Libraries Act

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Tess Alexandre, and I am a school librarian in East Providence. I split my time between two elementary schools, each serving approximately 250–275 students. I am writing in support of S 2078, the Rhode Island School Libraries Act, and I urge you to support this important legislation.

Our nation is in the midst of a literacy crisis. Increasing access to school libraries and librarians benefits not only students, but entire communities. Because my time is divided between two schools, I am only able to see most classes for 45 minutes once a week. Some students I do not see at all if they choose chorus or band in fourth and fifth grade. When I am not in the building, students walk by a closed library door and know they have lost access to its books and resources.

If our goal is to foster a community of engaged, lifelong readers, we must ask ourselves: why are the doors to our libraries closed so often? A significant portion of our school community cannot regularly access the public library, which means students depend heavily on their school and classroom libraries for reading materials. Ensuring consistent access to these resources is essential.

We are also facing a growing digital literacy crisis. Students need guidance in how to read, interpret, and evaluate the information they encounter online. Librarians are trained professionals who provide this specialized instruction. We teach students how to evaluate sources, practice safe and responsible online behavior, and care for their digital well-being. While Generation Alpha is growing up surrounded by technology, digital literacy is not an innate skill; it must be taught and practiced.

I recognize that this bill represents a significant financial commitment for school districts during an already challenging fiscal climate. However, we must view this not simply as a cost, but as an investment- an investment in our schools, our communities, and our future. The long-term benefits of strong literacy and information skills among our students will pay dividends for years to come.

Trust librarians to support students as they grow into confident readers and informed citizens. Vote to strengthen our schools, empower our students, and invest in the future of our communities. I urge you to support S 2078.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Tess Alexandre

