

5165

Denise Andreozzi
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February 20, 2025

Members of the House Education Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Denise Andreozzi. Jennifer Boylan is my state representative. I live in Barrington and work as a middle school special education teacher at Barrington Middle School. This is my 30th year in Barrington and as far back as I recall, teaching has always been my passion. I never envisioned myself in any other field. My career has been measured through many successes and it has been rewarding to witness my students recognizing their own potential, contributing to make society as a whole better. To bear witness to students working actively to reach for their dreams and as a learning community celebrating our differences. There is no greater measure than for students to recognize that the obstacles along the way are a means for learning and growth?

That being said, our students have truly changed. The students sitting in front of me are very different from those when I started my career. While we believe COVID has some blame in this, this crisis was beginning well ahead of COVID. Our students are facing social and emotional struggles and are ill-equipped without the skills to deal effectively. This results in a mix of emotions that can be confusing for the students and equally frustrating for teachers trying to educate these children.

While I have had some background in classroom behavior management and conflict resolution, I do not have the training of a school social worker or other specially trained professional. It is an uphill battle to manage classroom behaviors while also teaching the rest of the classroom.

While it may seem easy to have the student check in with the guidance counselor, they are overwhelmed with these referrals, with emergencies that develop daily and simply do not have enough resources.

Our administrators are equally overwhelmed with providing our children with the best supports for this rising crisis. We need to work together with our district and administrators to develop the best steps in combating this crisis, to empower our students to meet the demands in this ever-changing society.

Personally, I believe the majority of our students are struggling with social and emotional concerns and it is clear that some students need more skills taught to them in order to manage the realm of the thoughts, to learn effective skills. In order for this to happen, we need more educators trained in this exact area. More professionals who can work collaboratively on policies and solutions. More state support to combat these struggles.

While I haven't thought too much about my retirement since it is so many years away, one wish I have always had is that I am able to truly enjoy the rest, enjoy the memories of those working years. Just the thought of increasing mental health concerns during these years is concerning.

As a member of our community and a representative with the power to influence positive change, your support is crucial in supporting the mental health crisis our children are facing. Vote to make a change. Take this opportunity to make schooling more manageable for students and teachers. Partner with them to make teaching an investment in childrens' futures.

Your Support for the legislation is vital. I am here to personally support legislation, H5165 to support our students and educators who are challenged daily with the mental health crisis. They need our help. Please support our students. They are our future.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Denise L. Andreozzi, M.Ed.".

Denise L. Andreozzi, M.Ed.
Special Education Teacher
Barrington Middle School