

Abigail Thompson
Rangeley Lakes Regional School
LD 360

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on

Education, I am writing to voice my support for LD 360.

I am the PK-12 School Librarian at the Rangeley Lakes Regional School in Rangeley, ME and coordinate the distribution of the Dirigo Reads book to our first graders. Over the past four years of participation in this program, every single first grade student looks forward to their new books and are thrilled to explore, read, and share their “books to keep”. Receiving a new book every month (or every other month as the case has been for the 24-25 school year) gives students something personal and tangible to connect them to reading. For many students, these books open doors to worlds they might not otherwise have explored, engaging their curiosity and sparking imagination.

Dirigo Reads helps ensure that every child, regardless of background or financial circumstance, has access to high quality, age-relevant books. We all know the stats about the critical importance of reading to children throughout their earliest years, that access to books in the home is the single biggest indicator of academic success, and more. The Dirigo Reads program helps to address those gaps by building a mini library for first grade students, a time when many students unlock reading. Living in a rural corner of the state, many RLRS students do not have easy access to the local public library, and access to a bookstore is even more limited. Thanks to Dirigo Reads, students have equitable access to the type of books which help them build essential reading skills, support them in becoming confident readers, and develop a lifelong love of books and reading which will serve them for years to come.

Thank you for supporting this essential program.

Abigail Thompson
PK-12 School Librarian/Media Specialist
Rangeley Lakes Regional School
Resident of Rangeley, ME