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To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of my first grade class as well as my school in regards to the Dirigo Reads Program. This program should stay in place for many different reasons. The most important being to foster a love of learning in children. Also, not everyone is able to access or afford high quality books.

There are so many things out in the world for parents to worry about and books should not be one of them. Parents can count on these high quality books to engage their children, help them build their vocabulary and their imagination.

My students look forward to their new book every month and often open them before the end of the school day. I also have students ask if they can still get a new book every month even though they are not in first grade anymore and are very disappointed when I tell them that it is for first grade only.

RSU 74 is a low income area. Many of my student's families do not have access to high quality children's books. Use of a car is not always available for all families. Usually the money for gasoline is reserved for trips to and from work. That money for gasoline would not be used to buy books or for travel to a bookstore. In our rural community, high speed internet is not always available either especially with our low income families.

Reading is vital to all children's learning. High quality books help them grow and learn. Unfortunately, not everyone knows what a high quality book is, where to find one and can afford to buy it. Please keep this great program going for as long as possible!

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Solon Elementary School's First Grade.