



To the Board of Trustees and Administration of Timberland Library:

The decision to remove staffing from the Naselle library is misguided and must be reversed. Without library workers, Naselle can no longer be called a library. The community deserves better than this, and we speak up now to reverse and prevent this unstaffed model from spreading to other branches.

We are a rural library district, providing a lifeline to places without many other services. Taking away library workers is devastating to those places. Imagine needing to print a resume, not knowing how, and no one is there to help. Imagine wanting to share how much your child enjoyed a book you borrowed, and no one is there to listen. Imagine a tourist finding the library is restricted to only those who register beforehand for a key card.

Worst of all, imagine that unhoused people and those with an unstable home situation can never access the Naselle library, since they cannot give the required address verification.

Having only key card entry to an empty building is a disservice to Naselle. The first sentence of Timberland's 2023 board policy reads in part "*Expanded Access Hours (EAH) increases services available to registered community members **without replacing full-service staffed hours...***" This indicates the Board's intention that expanded access not replace full-service staffed hours.

Naselle was staffed largely by only two part-time employees and a manager covering three branches. We acknowledge it costs money to have staff there. We believe the nature of our rural library district means that urban branches with very low cost per use generate the tax money needed to support lifeline libraries like Naselle. We are a district and we stand together. A staffed Naselle library benefits all of us.

We also question the overall impact on budget savings, as we see more money being spent on new positions, including two recent district positions that are not union-represented nor frontline. Those positions are necessary, AND so are frontline staff at Naselle.

When our community outreach is successful, it leads the community to want more from us, and we believe a staffed library branch is the more the community wants. It cannot be replaced by periodic mobile outreach services and a key card.

We call on the Board to get staff back in the Naselle library. Library workers are vital and necessary to all libraries. The Board must create and pass policies to ensure staffed library services continue in all branches. We believe the deep community impact of this unstaffed model means it should be a Board policy decision.

Our communities deserve traditional library buildings where they can be helped by trained, safe, and happy library workers. Without library workers there are no libraries. Thank you.