



:. ontario library association

June 25, 2019

The Hon. Stephen Lecce
Minister, Ministry of Education
438 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2A5

Via email: minister.edu@ontario.ca

Minister Lecce,

On behalf of the Ontario Library Association, I would like to offer my sincerest congratulations on your appointment to Cabinet as Minister of Education.

The Ontario Library Association (OLA) is Canada's largest library association. Our members include over 1,300 elementary and secondary school teacher-librarians, library technicians and school library consultants in cities, towns and rural communities across the province.

As a teacher-librarian myself, I know firsthand how access to school libraries and teacher-librarians has a proven positive impact on student achievement, and how critical it is to helping students prepare for college, university or a career in the skilled trades. Schools with trained library staff are more likely to see better reading outcomes on the Grade 3 and 6 EQAO assessments. Conversely, the steep decline in the percentage of Ontario children who report that they enjoy reading – from 76% in 1997 to 47% in 2018 – closely aligns with the declining presence of teacher-librarians in Ontario schools over the same period.

As an association, OLA is focused on ensuring that Ontario's students – including those living in rural and northern communities – continue to have effectively resourced and staffed school libraries.

We will be following up with you and your office in the near future to share further information on the rapidly increasing challenges facing Ontario's school libraries, as well as straightforward recommendations to ensure their sustainability, increase transparency and accountability, without the need for new provincial investments.

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As you begin your new role, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your team as we continue to work together to ensure that our students have the best chance of success, no matter where they live or what path they pursue. We will follow up with your office to coordinate the details.

We wish you much success in your new role.

Sincerely,

Richard Reid
President
Ontario Library Association

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The Ontario Library Association (OLA) is a centre of excellence for the library and information sector, with over 5,000 members who work in public, school, academic and special libraries. OLA members work to ensure that individuals have free and equitable access to information to support their work and life-long learning goals. Our members conduct research, and develop and participate in educational programs designed to provide exemplary library services. Signature OLA events include the annual Super Conference and the Forest of Reading® program.

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