

# REPORT OF RICHARD REID

## 2019 PRESIDENT, ONTARIO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



Serving as president of the Ontario Library Association this year has been an amazing experience. Working with the Board and members of the organization has been an honour. It has been extremely gratifying to watch our libraries effectively responding to the challenges faced by our community. I've seen first-hand what libraries can do to make the world a better place and their importance on

our futures. I would like to share some high points of the last several months with you.

**Government Relations and Library Advocacy** have been a high priority for this year's board. Over the past year, OLA Board and Divisional Council representatives partnered with the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries to meet with ministers and ministerial staff. We discussed how libraries are essential to people and families across Ontario. We requested an increased investment in public libraries, and to mandate allocation of school library funding at the local level. The 2019/20 provincial budget revealed reductions across ministries, including reductions to Southern Ontario Library Service and Ontario Library Services North, impacting libraries. Moving forward, OLA will continue to engage and seek a greater investment for libraries.

OLA and the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA) working with **Counsel Public Affairs**, examined with Ministry of Education officials, the value of the school library learning commons. Numerous narratives showcasing the power of school libraries across Ontario have been shared with ministry officials. The OLA and OSLA will continue to dialogue with government and provincial boards of education outlining the distinct landscapes of library service in our schools across Ontario, as well as the positive impact trained library staff have on student achievement and well being.

The new **OLA Advocacy toolkit** launched at Super Conference 2019. It is now available to members for their advocacy needs.

In 2017, the OLA Board created and approved a robust **Strategic Plan** with the goal of promoting growth and innovative practices in Ontario's Libraries. We move closer to its conclusion. Many of the objectives have been successfully completed with mandates to provide our members with the empowerment to build creative and informed library-centric communities that participate in research, education and advocacy. In 2020 our next board will consider revisions, updates and additions to that strategic plan.

We close our year with the Annual General Meeting. Our AGM will bring forward important resolutions that will guide our organization into the future in an innovative, proactive and inclusive manner. I look forward to seeing the membership at the AGM during Super Conference.

The work of the 2019 OLA board will conclude with our annual Ontario Library Association Super Conference. This year's theme is *Dream Here / Rêvez ici*.

Libraries are places where dreams, both small and large, are nurtured. Libraries are dream factories, fuelled by knowledge and powered by creativity. *Dream Here / Rêvez ici* will be a place to explore ideas, learn from others, be inspired and encourage our delegates to take action in shaping library communities today, tomorrow and into the future. Our members, speakers, presenters, convenors, vendors, and attendees are all our dreamers. It's your dreams that will make great things happen. You all play key roles in our annual signature event's success. Please attend and be part of it!

Finally, I must express thanks.

To our current OLA Board - your dedication to Ontario libraries is unwavering. Please continue to advocate for libraries. It's been a joy working with each of you.

A huge thank you to the entire OLA staff. Your tireless efforts keep our organization strong.

Super Conference would not be possible without the dedicated members of our OLA Super Conference Planning Team. This dream team is what makes our annual event so incredible. Thanks so much.

And to our members - Thank You! Please continue to love libraries. It is the collective power, heart and vision of every one of you that will keep our libraries vibrant, dynamic and necessary institutions.