



September 30, 2020

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Hon. Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education  
438 University Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5

Delivered by email: [minister.edu@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.edu@ontario.ca)

Dear Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the Association of Canadian Publishers (ACP) to express our deep concern about decisions made by numerous Ontario school boards to reassign school library staff and close access to school libraries as part of their fall re-opening plans.

We know that these are extremely challenging times and that your Ministry and Ontario school boards are working hard to ensure students have a safe and successful learning experience this year. Whether that learning takes place in physical classrooms or online, teacher librarians and school library collections (print and digital) will contribute to academic success and achievement. This essential infrastructure helps foster students' love of reading, which has been proven to contribute to build competency in other areas, including science, math, research, and information literacy—all critical skills Ontario will need to thrive in a post-pandemic world.

Experience in the early months of the pandemic showed that school libraries are instrumental to successful implementation of online learning, and teacher librarians supported students, teachers, and parents as they adapted to this new form of instruction. We do not believe that the need for this support has diminished during the current school year; instead, we anticipate that it will become even more important as the province responds to the pandemic. This will demand continuous adaptation and innovation on the part of all partners in education, including the Ministry, boards, educators, and publishers. Our shared goal is to equip K-12 students with the skills they will need to succeed, not only during this academic year but over the long-term. Investment in school library infrastructure today will generate returns for years to come.



We stand in full support of the recommendations put forward by the Ontario Library Association and Ontario School Library Association, (1) that the government work with school boards to revise their re-opening plans to ensure that students and teachers will continue to have access to school library programs, and (2) that the province take steps to ensure that funding for school libraries is protected.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Edwards  
Executive Director

c.c. Ms. Shelagh Paterson, Executive Director, Ontario Library Association  
Ms. Holly Kent, Executive Director, Ontario Book Publishers Organization