

May 31, 2021

<<NAME>> Director of Education,  
<<School Board>>

**RE: School Libraries & the 2021-22 Grants for Student Needs**

Last spring, the Ontario School Libraries Association (OSLA) reached out to you regarding the critical importance of school library commons programming and qualified library staff as you undertook your resource planning for the unprecedented 2020-21 school year. As we shared at that time, school library professionals are essential for delivering Ontario's primary and secondary curriculum with significant positive impacts on student achievement and preparedness. However, we know that many school boards have lost access to school libraries and library staff in the past two decades, as well as because of the ongoing pandemic and restrictions on in-person learning.

As we look ahead towards a learning recovery, there are encouraging signs that recognize the vital role that school libraries will play in helping our students succeed as they transition back to an in-person learning environment. On May 4, 2021, the Ministry of Education released its [2021-22 Grants for Student Needs \(GSN\)](#). Included in this year's GSN are new, enhanced reporting requirements for library staff funding:

- These reporting requirements are intended to provide the ministry with greater insight into how school boards are funding school libraries;
- They will apply to both the funding provided for library staffing through the Pupil Foundation Grant, as well as the enveloping provision of the Library Staff Allocation in the School Foundation Grant, which also remains in place.
- School boards that are not fully utilizing the funding provided for library staffing through both grants will be asked by the Ministry of Education to prepare and submit a multi-year plan highlighting their vision and next steps to address any underspending.

We are engaging with the Ministry of Education and look forward to learning more on the implementation of these new reporting requirements. We believe that this measure has the potential to have a significant positive impact on student success, literacy and post-secondary preparedness in every community across Ontario.

We recognize that every school board has unique needs and considerations that must be addressed in planning an effective school library commons program. One size does not fit all. OSLA is committed to working with you to ensure that students benefit from a tailored, board-specific approach to ensuring access to school libraries and library staff. If your school board does not currently have a resourced school library, or anticipates challenges in using this funding on school libraries, we are particularly interested in learning how we can support you. Successful school library commons programs have been implemented in schools of all sizes and local

circumstances, and we believe that strong school libraries can be achieved while respecting the independence of school boards as well as local priorities & flexibility.

OSLA shares your commitment to ensuring that Ontario students receive a world-class education. We would appreciate the opportunity for a virtual meeting with you and members of your team in the coming months as we better understand these new requirements and how we can ensure that students in << School Board >> are benefitting from a strong school library commons.

Sincerely,

**Maureen McGrath**, Ontario School Library Association President

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**Shelagh Paterson**, Executive Director Ontario Library Association

<<Name>> OSLA Councillor - <<Region>>