



:. ontario school library association

April 19th, 2023

Rachel Chernos Lin, Chair  
Toronto District School Board  
5050 Yonge Street  
Toronto, Ontario M2N 5N8

*Send by email: [Chair@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:Chair@tdsb.on.ca) | [Rachel.ChernosLin@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:Rachel.ChernosLin@tdsb.on.ca)*

**Re: Toronto District School Board's decision to reduce 7.5 FTE Teacher Librarians**

Dear Ms. Chernos Lin,

The Ontario Library Association (OLA) and the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA) write to express their concern over the Toronto District School Board (TDSB)'s decision to reduce the number of Teacher Librarians from 229 (2022-2023) to 221.5 for the next school year (2023-2024), resulting in the loss of 7.5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions.

As leaders in the province in resourcing excellent school library programs, we understand that the TDSB's decision is based on meeting the Ministry of Education's current benchmark for Teacher Librarians, as outlined in the Grant for Student Needs (GSN), and attempting to develop a more equitable model of staff allocation, whereby Teacher Librarians will be allocated based on a school's projected enrolment for 2023-2024, weighted ESL enrolment, and Learning Opportunities Index (LOI)<sup>1</sup>. The OLA and OSLA commend the TDSB for ensuring that Teacher Librarians are more equitably distributed across its school district.

Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind the impact of cutting 7.5 FTE positions at the local, school level. Teacher Librarians are literacy leaders and provide support and expertise to the entire school. School libraries, especially at the elementary level, foster students' love of reading, which has a positive impact on literacy scores, success in science and students' social and civic engagement. By reducing the number of Teacher Librarians available, schools are at risk of not being able to support the effective operation of a School Library Learning Commons on a day-to-day basis. In particular, we are concerned that smaller schools may be most impacted by this new allocation criteria, receiving less than a 0.5 allocation and being hampered in their ability to

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<sup>1</sup> [School-Based Staff Allocation 2023-2024: Non-Classroom and Support Staff. TDSB](#)



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maintain a school library at the same levels as schools with larger populations. Schools that receive less than a 0.5 Teacher Librarian will have less library programming and less access to a school library professional, along with all the skills they bring to the school community.

With the Ontario government announcing its investment of \$180 million to boost math, writing and reading skills<sup>2</sup>, it is clear that the province recognizes the urgency to address the decline in these fundamental literacy competencies. Ontario is expected to invest in almost 700 educators to support literacy development amongst students. School library professionals are critical to meeting this objective and ensuring that all educators have the resources and materials needed to realize the government's priority.

As TDSB continues to make difficult decisions with regards to staffing and funding, we hope that school libraries continue to be a major priority, as they always have been, and that future decisions on the allocation of school library staff are carefully weighed against the long-term consequences for both learners and educators.

Sincerely,

Johanna Gibson-Lawler  
President 2023  
Ontario School Library Association

Shelagh Paterson  
Executive Director  
Ontario Library Association

cc: Michelle Aarts, Chair, Finance, Budget & Enrolment Committee, TDSB

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### **About our organization:**

Founded in 1900, the **Ontario Library Association** (OLA) is the oldest continually operating non-profit library association in Canada. With more than 5,000 members, the OLA is the largest library association in the country. We offer opportunities for learning, networking, and providing input into public policy. The **Ontario School Library**

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<sup>2</sup> [Ontario Launches Plan to Boost Math, Writing and Reading Skills \(April 16, 2023\)](#)



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**Association** (OSLA) is a division of OLA consisting of 1,000 members who work in Ontario's school libraries.

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