

OLA BEST BETS COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mandate:

The goal of the OLA Best Bets committee is to highlight excellence in Canadian literature for children and young adults; to assist in collection development for public and school libraries; and, to build relationships with Canadian publishers.

This committee is responsible for finding and evaluating as many eligible titles as possible for a given calendar year. Each title is added to a reading list, and members are responsible for reading and evaluating as many titles as possible. A single title needs to be read by at least 4 members who agree for it to be considered for selection. The evaluation and selection of the 'Best Bets' is entirely under the direct authority of the committee, and is outside and apart from any other factions that may influence similar decisions.

At the end of the calendar year, the committee narrows down their selections and creates a list of Best Bets for Junior Picture Books, Junior Fiction¹, Junior Non-Fiction, and Young Adult Fiction². The committee aims to have 10 in each category; however, if there are not ten titles of sufficient quality, the committee may create lists that include fewer than ten titles. The committee may also include Honorable Mentions for each of the categories, in addition to the Top Ten.

The OPLA Council is responsible for the Committee and as such, the Committee is required to report to Council committee activities and get approval for any budget needs. OPLA Council designates a Councilor to be liaison with the committee.

Council liaison will:

- Represent Council at Committee meetings

¹ If there are enough Junior Graphic Novels that are worth highlighting, the committee may add a separate category, otherwise it falls under Junior Fiction

² The Young Adult category was added to the Best Bets lists as of 2006

- Report back to Council on important decisions and directions that the Committee is recommending
- Seek Council approval for annual budgets and major initiatives
- Conduct work on behalf of the Committee

Responsibilities/Objectives:

- All committee members will read and review as many Canadian³ materials as possible for children and teens published in the current calendar year.
- An agenda and minutes are recorded for each committee meeting; there is also a shared document where members are expected to record their votes.
- The Chair or Co-Chairs (when applicable) are responsible for creating documents such as the final Best Bets lists and the vote recording document.
- The Chair or Co-Chairs (when applicable) are responsible for reporting committee activities to the OPLA liaison.
- The Chair or Co-Chairs (when applicable), and assigned committee members are responsible for contacting publishers to request and receive review copies of current and forthcoming publications for the current year.
- The Chair or Co-Chairs (when applicable) will notify publishers if their title(s) has been selected for the list.
- The Chair or Co-Chairs (when applicable) will submit a workshop proposal to the OLA Super Conference call for proposals.

Deliverables:

- A finalized list of selected titles by an early January meeting.
- A presentation at the OLA Super Conference.
- A finalized listing of the Top Ten and any Honorable Mentions posted to the OLA website and distributed at the OLA Super Conference.
- Attendance at the Festival of Trees, the Child & Youth Expo, and other OLA / OPLA events to promote the Best Bets lists, as appropriate,.
- Brainstorming and working with publishers, libraries, and OLA to find new ways to promote the Best Bets titles.

³ Canadian materials are defined as works that have been written and/or illustrated by Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada.

- The committee will seek to find cost effective measures of distributing titles from the publishers to members outside the Greater Toronto Area who are unable to attend meetings in person
- The committee will seek out ways to promote titles throughout the year, to build an audience and utilize the expertise of the members in evaluating literature for children and teens.

Composition:

- Members of the committee must be either currently working as Librarians or Library Technicians, who are employed by a library, and belong to the OPLA division of the Ontario Library Association.
- It is expected that members of the committee be actively involved in the organization, management or provision of public library service to children and/or youth.
- The committee will have a Chair, or two Co-Chairs. Members will be selected from across the province. As vacancies arise, focus will be placed on recruiting new members who represent Northern Ontario, smaller rural library systems, or other special interests.
- Members will be expected to attend meetings in the Greater Toronto Area. If members are unable to attend in person, they will arrange to call into the meeting.
- Vacancies on the committee will be advertised via OLA communications.

Resources and budget:

Identify the resources required to meet the various objectives of the committee/task force – equipment, materials, rooms, funds and administrative support.

- The committee requires the use of a suitable room for its monthly meetings.
- All of the materials (book titles) are provided by a combination of publishers, libraries, online galleys, and members' own collections.
- The committee uses a shared Google account for maintaining documents and files, and members use their work or personal emails for communication between members.
- Members are expected to pay for their own travel expenses to and from meetings.
- The Chair or Co-Chairs (when applicable) will submit a budget request to OLA/OPLA in August, for a budget year of September to August. The budget request will be for items deemed necessary by the committee members for the work of the committee.

Timelines and Requirements

- The Committee sends quarterly reports to the OPLA Council and is in email contact with an OPLA Council liaison for day-to-day communication.
- The Committee will meet, either in person, as a teleconference, or a combination of both, no fewer than 5 times per year. In person meetings will be in the Greater Toronto Area.
- Committee members are required to be at all meetings, and to read and contribute votes regularly. Members missing more than 2 consecutive meetings, and/or have not been reading, without good reason, may be required to vacate the Committee at the discretion of the Chair or Co-Chairs. The Chair or Co-Chairs (when applicable) will monitor attendance and reading participation.
- The committee typically does not meet in July and August, though exceptions can be made. The Committee recognizes that it may be more difficult to attend a summer meeting. An absence during these months will not reflect on a member's standing.

Type of Committee:

OLA Best Bets is a Standing Committee.

Term of Appointment:

- Committee members will serve for a minimum of one two-year term.
- The positions of Chair or Co-Chairs are to be determined by the Committee and will serve a minimum two year term, with the option to serve additional terms if the Committee approves it.

