



∴ ontario school library association

March 1st, 2024

*Sent to all Ontario Directors of Education and School Board Trustee Chairs.*

**RE: Ontario's school libraries and supporting student success in 2024-25**

The Ontario School Library Association (OSLA) would like to bring awareness to the critical role that teacher-librarians and school library professionals play in your school communities. With their professional expertise in collection development, school library professionals work to provide much-needed equitable and diverse school library resources that support student learning outcomes.

As you move forward with your 2024-2025 budgeting processes, OSLA urges you to carefully consider the critical role of school library funding and staffing, particularly teacher-librarians, in achieving our collective goals for student achievement and well-being.

Through the Grant for Student Needs (GSN), every public school board in Ontario is allocated the funding for one full-time teacher-librarian for every 763 elementary students and one full-time teacher-librarian for every 909 secondary students. As less than 5% of school library funding is enveloped by the Ministry, OSLA recognizes that school boards are often faced with the decision to redirect such funds to cope with budgetary constraints – meaning that many students and school communities lose access to these important skill sets, a well-curated school library collection, and the innovative, dynamic resources that are required to provide learning opportunities with 21st century competencies in mind.

Students are more successful with teacher-librarians in their schools who are available to provide rich, diverse and equity-based library programming. These literacy experts and on-site instructional coaches are perfectly positioned to help lead their school communities with the new language curriculum changes, best pedagogical practices, and innovative technologies to help support student success.

The reallocation of school library funding ultimately results in direct impacts on student success. Research has shown that the presence of trained teacher-librarians in a school improves EQAO scores.<sup>1</sup> A study showed a sharp decline in students who expressed a joy of reading, from 76% in 1997 to 47% in 2018, just over 20 years later. This decrease closely aligns with the declining presence of teacher-librarians in Ontario schools over the same period.<sup>2</sup> This trend is alarming, as a love of reading not only has a positive impact on literacy scores, but also bolsters success in core curriculum areas and students' social and civic engagement.

Beginning last year, the Ministry of Education now requires that all Ontario school boards report to the Ministry on their library spending as per the GSN funding and the provincial funding formula. The OSLA has been in consultation with the Ministry over the past year to improve the accuracy and transparency of this reporting process. The Minister and Ministry of Education continue to indicate their shared commitment to the

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<sup>1</sup> People for Education & Queen's University Faculty of Education. [School Libraries and Student Achievement in Ontario](#). Toronto: Ontario Library Association, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Children & Youth Services. [Gearing Up: A Strategic Framework to Help Ontario Middle Years Children Thrive](#). Toronto: Government of Ontario, 2017. & People for Education. [Reading for Joy](#). Toronto: People for Education, 2011.



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importance of school libraries, demonstrated in the implementation of these enhanced reporting requirements, as well as the greater emphasis placed on [the role of the school library](#) in the updated 2023 Language and English curricula.

The OSLA urges you to ensure that the funding provided for school libraries by the Ministry of Education is invested in school library resources and staff that support equitable, diverse, and inclusive school library programming that can directly support the achievement of student success objectives. The OSLA would welcome every opportunity to be part of a collaborative, solution-focused dialogue to achieve the optimal allocation of funding for students. Every student deserves a fully-staffed and fully-funded school library in order to reach their goals and learning potential.

Yours truly,

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Jenn Angle  
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Attachments: OSLA - Who We Are 1-pager; 2023 School Library Advocacy postcard