



∴ ontario public library association

OPLA Election Candidates

OPLA Vice President / President Elect (2 year term)

Grant Munroe



Through my work as an OPLA councillor, public services manager for the Essex County Library, and senior fellow for the Centre for Free Expression at Toronto Metropolitan University, I've been inspired by the resilience and passion of library workers during the challenges we've faced over the past several years. Sadly, these challenges aren't behind us. Many threats are growing. As your OPLA Vice President / President Elect, I would champion the important work carried out by our Association - especially

defending all Ontarians' freedom of expression, lobbying the government in support of public libraries, and building an inclusive coalition of partners that fight for the principles of our profession.

Thank you for your support.

Kelly Nielsen



I'm Kelly Nielsen, and I am excited to be considered as your next OPLA Vice President. Over the past decade, I have been a dedicated leader and advocate for public librarianship, driven by the belief that public libraries are essential in fostering strong, healthy, and engaged communities.

Professional organizations like OLA play a crucial role in cultivating the next generation of authentic, responsive library leaders. This position offers an exciting opportunity to apply my experience and insights to advance OLA's mission through key initiatives:

- Strengthening our membership base by offering innovative opportunities that empower and develop confident leaders.
- Equipping leaders to articulate the value of libraries while building meaningful relationships with key stakeholders and decision-makers.
- Encouraging libraries to become platforms for community conversations on issues of local and global importance, fostering inclusive and engaged communities.
- Promoting alignment between library values and job expectations to enhance workplace wellness and prepare our sector for new challenges and evolving demands.

I am committed to supporting OLA's efforts to strengthen public libraries and build a future where we thrive at the heart of our communities. It would be a pleasure to represent



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Ontario's diverse collection of public libraries, ensuring their perspectives and experiences are represented.

OPLA Mid-Central Region (3 year term)

Melissa Robertson



My name is Melissa Robertson, and I hope to represent the Mid Central Region on the OPLA Divisional Council.

I am a visual artist and library director with over 20 years of professional practice in non-profit cultural organizations across Canada and abroad (academic and public libraries, art galleries, and cultural institutions). I work as Director of Corporate and Operational Services at Orillia Public Library, where I am accomplished in developing and fostering community relations with various stakeholders for advocacy and collaboration; championing for our services, representing our work, and supporting our community. For the past three years, my focus has been on improving the safety and wellbeing of library staff and patrons while maintaining equitable practices and inclusive spaces/programming.

I am currently pursuing an MBA, and I wish to expand on my learning by committing to a professional volunteer role with OLA. I hope for the opportunity to share what I have learned about acquiring and working collaboratively with medical/mental health professionals in a mid-sized public library. I have much to contribute to this conversation and am excited about learning opportunities that a Council term would afford me.

Shannan Sword



My name is Shannan Sword and I am hoping to serve on the OPLA Council representing the Mid-Central Region.

I have worked in public libraries for 25 years in large and small communities and at all levels from Reference Assistant to CEO. Whether in a small rural community or a large city, I've seen the power of the public library and the people who work in them. As a warm or cool space to rest, read, research, attend programs, access the internet, or even get life changing assistance through our services and outreach to at-risk residents, libraries, and the people who work in them, serve our fellow community members.

Working in public libraries in two Provinces and two US States I've grown as a public librarian and seen the value of our institution in communities large and small, different and the same.



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I've been an active member of the library profession presenting at three different association conferences and have previously served as chair of the organization and bylaws committee of the American Library Association's Young Adult Library Services Association. More recently I've volunteered for OLA's Mentor Match and with the Forest of Reading.

I'm eager to advocate for our public libraries and public library librarians and staff through the OPLA Council and continued membership and involvement in our association.