



∴ ontario library association



∴ ontario school library association

OLA Endorses “CSL Statement on Alberta’s Announcement Regarding Possible Book Bannings”

The Ontario Library Association (OLA) endorses [Canadian School Libraries \(CSL\)’s Statement on Alberta’s Announcement Regarding Possible Book Bannings](#), which emphasizes the need for trained professional input in the selection of school library resources. While the [Albertan Government seeks public input](#) on “new standards for how Kindergarten to Grade 12 school library materials are selected and managed,” the OLA strongly recommends that this process also directly engage with experts in the selection and management of school library resources – i.e., school library professionals.

As outlined in our Ontario School Library Association (OSLA)’s [A Guide to the Selection and Deselection of School Library Resources](#), “school library professionals receive special training in developing and curating the library collection. Some credentials include a Bachelor of Education (including Additional Qualifications as a Teacher-Librarian), a Master of Library and Information Science, and a Library Technician Diploma. School library professionals are central in informing board policy on library selection policy and processes.” The OLA is deeply concerned that [Edmonton Public Schools and Calgary Board of Education were not consulted](#) prior to the [announcement by the Alberta Minister of Education and Childcare](#), suggesting that school boards, educators, and library professionals were not given the opportunity to provide input on by whom and how materials are selected.

The OLA also endorses the following from the [Library Association of Alberta \(LAA\)’s Statement](#):

“We are delighted to hear the government is invested in ensuring exceptional school library collections, and **we urge it to invest in the system and in the professionally trained library staff required to curate balanced and responsible access to a broad range of library materials for all students.**” [emphasis added]

Along with these endorsements, the OLA reaffirms its position as outlined in its 2023 [“OLA on School Boards Banning & Restricting Books” Statement](#):

“It is the position of OLA that all young people deserve to not only see *themselves* reflected in the books they read, but to also be exposed to the worldviews and lived experiences of *others*, particularly those of marginalized and equity-deserving groups. Reading a diverse selection of books offers an opportunity for young people to broaden their understanding of the world, building empathy and compassion, and preparing them to become proactive members of society.

In attempting to restrict access, or outright ban, literary or artistic images, ideas, and/or information, under the guise of “protecting” children, school boards inevitably create an unsafe environment by erasing the history and lived experiences of others. Such censorship also ultimately undermines the bridge of understanding being built among children of diverse backgrounds and identities, depriving them of the opportunity to learn how to navigate differences and develop critical awareness of their environments.

The OLA denounces any attempt to ban or restrict age-appropriate books on the grounds that they do not align with the personal beliefs and biases of school board members.”

Censorship based solely on discomfort with certain identities or experiences sets a dangerous precedent in society, and deprives students of valuable learning opportunities.

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