Support for Teacher Librarians in Elementary Schools in Ontario

NEWS RELEASE

TORONTO, ON (October 20, 2017): In celebration of Canadian School Library Day, October 23rd, the Ontario School Library Association applauds the recent resolution passed by the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) calling on the Ontario Government to amend the education funding formula to specify proportional staffing of teacher-librarians based on student population, with a minimum allocation of a 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) Teacher-Librarian in each work site.

Further, ETFO calls for a dedicated learning commons budget to ensure students and teachers have access to relevant physical and virtual resources.

“Parents are often unaware that in many parts of the province, students no longer have access to a comprehensive school library program,” comments Kelly Maggirias, president, Ontario School Libraries Association. “A resourced and staffed school library is proven to increase reading comprehension, EQAO test scores, and digital information literacy skills. We are encouraged by ETFO’s recognition of the need to return to properly resourced school libraries.”

The ETFO motion underscores the challenges faced by schools over the last decade in their ability to provide comprehensive school library programs to students across the province. The most recent People for Education report reveals that only 52% of elementary schools in Ontario have a teacher-librarian (full or part-time), and only 11% of schools in northern Ontario have a teacher-librarian.

“This means that less than 50% of children outside of the GTA are getting the same educational opportunities as children in urban areas, because they do not have access to a comprehensive school library program that includes Teacher-Librarian staffing and library resources,” says Shelagh Paterson, executive director, Ontario Library Association.

Ensuring greater access to teacher-librarians and library resources for school libraries is a key part of the enhanced, sustainable funding relationship that Ontario’s libraries need. Strengthening Ontario’s support for libraries will also enable greater accountability for school boards to demonstrate that Ministry of Education funds designated for school libraries are being used effectively.

Providing consistent access to library resources in school libraries will ensure that all students will benefit from equitable, world-class library resources and support at school, no matter where they live.

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About the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA): OSLA membership includes more than 1,000 Teacher Librarians and Library Technicians. Members promote, develop and advocate for student achievement by calling for strong, equitable school library programs
throughout the province. OSLA is a division of the Ontario Library Association which represents more than 5,000 members who work in or govern libraries.

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