

## KENNEDY, MINISTER OF EDUCATION

policy document for school libraries which takes into account the expanded role for school libraries and teacher-librarians in the information age. A new document needs to take current research on the relationship between effective school libraries and student performance into account in order to address the role of school libraries in improving student achievement in literacy development, information literacy skills, and the use of information technology. This new document should also set provincial standards for school libraries so that Ontario's students have equitable access to program and resources.

2. The funding formula needs to be fixed and school boards need to be made accountable for how school library funding is used. The present funding formula is inadequate both in terms of the ratio of teacher-librarians per pupil and in terms of salary benchmarks. Funding needs to be changed so those school libraries are open throughout the school day and staffed by teacher-librarians with paraprofessional support. Because there are at present no clear policy or program standards for school libraries, school boards have in many instances used even the inadequate funding currently provided for other purposes. Provincial funding for school libraries needs to be con-

sidered as targeted funding so that school boards and individual schools are directly accountable for how these funds are spent.

3. School library collections need to be updated, augmented, and improved so that Ontario's students have access to quality resources. Targeted annual provincial funding for school library resources (separate and distinct from textbook resources) is required, and school boards and individual schools need to be made accountable for the spending of these funds.

4. The Ministry of Education needs to appoint central ministry staff to be responsible for school libraries. This staff would maintain provincial standards, give direction to curriculum development and program delivery, and collaborate with other provincial initiatives such as literacy, at-risk, and information technology programs so that the role of the school library is included in these initiatives.

OSLA looks forward to working with you to ensure that all students in Ontario benefit from quality school collections and quality school library programs. ■



## *dateline*

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