

# President's Report

**W**riting this, my first report as President of OSLA, I can't help but reflect back to just a year ago when I took a giant leap to the role of Vice-President at the OLA Superconference! Where did the year go? What have I learned? And more importantly, what have I gotten myself into?

The past year spent on OSLA council has been a very positive experience. I've learned that many people are working hard to keep school libraries, and the staff connected with them, alive and thriving in our province. This feat comes in the face of many challenges, including budget cuts and competing priorities for spending.

The OSLA welcomes several new members to the Council for 2012: Rick Budding for West Central, Joel Facca for the Northern Region, Barb White from the Southwestern area, and Isabelle Hobbs from Durham who will be Vice-President of OSLA, and sit on the OLA Board of Directors. I'm looking forward to working with this thoughtful and productive team, to problem-solve, and forge ahead in these times of change.

Despite obstacles and challenges, great things are still happening in school libraries across the province! This was evident in the number of entries we received for OSLA's first Video Contest, depicting stories of what happens in school libraries and showing how valuable they are. Nothing tells it better than a student's voice. If you haven't done so already, please take a moment to check out the winners at: [http://www.accessola.org/ola\\_prod/OLAWEB/OSLA/2011\\_OSLA\\_Video\\_Contest\\_Winners.aspx](http://www.accessola.org/ola_prod/OLAWEB/OSLA/2011_OSLA_Video_Contest_Winners.aspx) and prepare to have your heart warmed!

Some projects we are working on for the coming year include revisions to the Evidence-Based Practice Toolkit, (kudos to Diana Maliszewski for obtaining a grant from OSSTF/FEESO to do this), and moving forward to implement *Together for Learning*. As you know, the *Together for Learning* document was launched two years ago at the Ontario Library Association (OLA) Super Conference. Following the launch, copies were mailed to every school in Ontario, including Directors of Education, and partner organizations. The full pdf is available on the OSLA website and on the special website constructed to support its ongoing implementation: [www.togetherforlearning.org](http://www.togetherforlearning.org).

ca. Since then, the writing team has recognized several next steps to further realize this whole-school approach to learning, and the OLA has granted funding to help support the project and its continued growth.

Anticipating the Ministry's Financial Literacy initiative, launched in September, 2011, OSLA's Roger Nevin applied for, and received, funding for an online resource to support educators and students with this new literacy. He is currently adding the finishing touches, so please stay tuned.

On December 6, 2011, at University of Toronto's Hart House, Kevin Sylvester, Toronto-based illustrator, writer and broadcaster, hosted Crisis or Opportunity, a public panel sponsored by The Book & Periodical Council to discuss school libraries. The event was well attended, with almost every seat taken. Mr. Sylvester posed questions to the panel which included Diana Maliszewski (OSLA), Annie Kidder (co-founder, Executive Director of People for Education), and Patsy Aldana (Publisher, Greenwood Books).

Several members of the audience took advantage of the opportunity to ask questions and add comments, making the energy and enthusiasm in the room truly palpable.

Some key messages I took away from that evening include the need for teacher librarians to:

- continue to embrace technology;
- encourage others such as parents and co-educators to support and speak up about the value and importance of school libraries;
- keep demonstrating what school libraries and teacher librarians can do and be.

Further to People for Education's Spring 2011 School Library Report: The state of school libraries in Ontario (<http://studentslearn.wordpress.com/2011/10/18/people-for-education-ontario-school-libraries-and-information-literacy/>), People for Education released its Annual Report in December 2011. In an excerpt from this entitled: "School Libraries & Information Literacy," a continued decline in support for the role of school libraries was noted. There is confusion among many principals as to whether or not their schools