



British Columbia Library Trustees' Association

To develop and support library trustees to advance public library service in British Columbia

November 10, 2006

To: BCLTA Liaisons and Library Board Chairs
Please distribute this message to all trustees

BCLTA Meeting with Minister Bond – October 27, 2006

On October 27th I, along with two representatives from BCLTA (Shannon Daub – Vice President, and Maureen Black - Executive Director) met with Education Minister Shirley Bond to discuss issues of importance to library trustees. Also in attendance from the provincial government were Paige MacFarlane - Lead Director Intergovernmental Relations, Jacqueline van Dyk – Manager Public Library Services Branch, and Lisa Dominato – Executive Assistant to Minister Bond.

At the meeting we discussed the key issues that were presented in our written Brief and described in our October 25th letter to all Board Chairs. (You can view a copy of the Brief and the letter to Chairs on our website at www.bclta.org - click on "Trustee Development", then choose "Bulletins".)

The outcomes of our discussions on the main issues in the Brief were:

Related to provincial funding – i.e. making the 2006 one-time grants permanent and increasing provincial operating base grants. We believe that our request will be duly considered when the budget is prepared. When possible, the Minister prefers sustainable funding vs. onetime grants as well. In our follow-up letter to the Minister, we indicated that BCLTA has asked all library boards in the province to write to her over the next month describing how an increase in operating grants would be used around the province to further illustrate the local community benefits of increased operating grants. We would appreciate your board's support regarding this request - please send a copy of these letters to BCLTA as well, to aid in our on-going advocacy efforts.

Participation in the review of the Library Act. Minister Bond confirmed that trustees will definitely be "at the table" when the Act is reviewed. The review is set to begin in 2007 when a new Director for Public Library Services Branch is chosen.

Provincial support for Community Access Program (CAP) and Library Book Rate (LBR). The Minister assured us that the library

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community has her strong support for the continuation of these two programs. As well, she told us that she has already sent a letter to Ottawa expressing concern over the recent cuts to federal literacy programs and the process used to make these decisions.

The Minister also spoke generally about the important role that public libraries play with regard to adult literacy and the fact that libraries are perfectly positioned to help advance the literacy agenda of the province.

During the meeting the Minister also expressed her thanks to trustees throughout the province for their dedication to public library service in BC. The work of trustees is very much recognized and appreciated by the Minister. In this regard, the Minister committed to continued funding of our regional TOP workshops which will allow BCLTA to offer local trustee training, free of charge in 2007.

In closing, Minister Bond encouraged trustees, and the library community in general, to celebrate the tremendous progress that public libraries have made in recent years.

BCLTA and the provincial government are committed to maintaining an open dialogue and this recent meeting is an important part of this process.

Lawrence Lavender
President, BCLTA