

BCLTA REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD

September 2015

The BCLTA mission is “to support and represent trustees in advancing public libraries.” The organization strives to provide a range of services to trustees and boards. It fulfils an important strategic role, providing organized representation to local, provincial and federal governments on behalf of library trustees. Also, it undertakes advocacy work to raise the profile and resolve the issues facing public libraries across British Columbia.

The BCLTA held its annual conference and general meeting in Richmond, BC in May. Chair Catherine Lord and I, as ORL delegates, attended the business meeting and several seminar sessions. As well, I was successful in my campaign to be elected as a director of the provincial board of the association.

Three sessions stood out for me: Rod Allen, Superintendent of School District#69, who discussed how schools are embracing changes in education and the new school curriculum; Ken Roberts who is now consulting for and with us on our strategic planning process; and Mari Martin, the newly appointed Director of Library Services, who spoke on the transformation coming in both public school education and libraries. We used to think libraries are about consuming knowledge, space for resources, information, and answers, etc. Now the focus is on producing, groups, space as a resource, meaning, questions, understanding, learning and inspiration.

As well, Catherine and I participated in a roundtable discussion with our regional counterparts from the Fraser Valley Regional Library (FVRL) and the Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL). As trustees from our three systems are elected representatives, there are issues and concerns that are not shared by other regimes governed under the Library Act. Although it is important to stress our communality of interests with other library systems, we need to discuss matters specific to our regionals. We will continue to advocate for a scheduled time at the Annual Conference.

The BCLTA president and representatives from other library associations will be meeting with Education Minister Bernier during UBCM. The focus of the meeting is to find ways for the education and library components to work better with and complement each other. This follows the signing of a document produced jointly with the ABCDBC. The BCLTA will also have a booth at the UBCM Trade Show.

The board meets in person twice a year and by telephone conference each month. The semi-annual meeting is being held in Richmond immediately after UBCM on September 26. This will be an all-day learning and planning session. We are pleased that Mari Martin, newly appointed by the Ministry of Education as the Library Services Director, has enthusiastically accepted an invitation to participate.

The Director seems keen to have a dialogue with us about some big questions e.g., what do library boards need (tools, mindset, support) to be able to respond to the big changes in education? What are the implications? What changes might this organization and the trustee boards need to consider? These are only a couple of examples. Ms. Martin appears to be interested in a high level conversation and in our questions. It will be helpful to know what Libraries Branch is thinking as we continue build our relationship with them.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Zanon