



CANADIAN SCHOOL LIBRARIES

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March 1, 2021

The Hon. Cliff Cullen
Minister of Education
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Delivered by email: minedu@leg.gov.mb.ca

Dear Minister Cullen,

Canadian School Libraries (CSL) is a national organization dedicated to professional research and education in the field of the school library learning commons. We are the guardians of [Leading Learning: Standards of Practice for the School Library Learning Commons in Canada](#).

Just one year ago, CSL was honoured to present the first ever [Leading Learning Implementation Award](#) to the Pembina Trails School Division. The award honours and applauds school districts, provinces and territories who have successfully developed and/or enhanced their school library learning commons on a systemic basis founded on the tenets, principles and continuous growth and renewal focus of the five standards of *Leading Learning*. Pembina Trails exemplified this level of investment in the value of the library program to district goals for student success. The district's nomination for the award acknowledged the leadership role of teacher-librarians:

"Teacher-librarians in Pembina Trails have become very adept at integrating digital citizenship and leadership skills within authentic, inquiry-based projects where a variety of technology tools are used to learn, to demonstrate learning and to share learning with a wide audience. They are at the forefront of providing learning opportunities that encourage students to think, solve problems and make decisions."

Imagine then our concern and dismay when we learned that in its [draft budget for 2021-22](#), Pembina Trails has proposed to cut all teacher-librarian positions from secondary schools and reduce teacher-librarian staffing in the middle years. The draft budget explains their predicament, with the majority of funding coming from the province, and provincial directives to freeze the local tax levy, they have been put in the position of having to make difficult decisions.

We have seen many examples of school districts leveraging teacher-librarians' role as literacy leaders and inquiry coaches despite the constraints of the pandemic, and expect this to continue moving



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forward. We are very disappointed that Pembina Trails, so soon after receiving national recognition for their leadership with school library programs, has proposed to make these cuts. Should they be implemented, the cuts to teacher-librarian staffing will have a devastating impact on student well-being and academic success.

We do understand that these decisions are made by local school divisions and that the Ministry of Education is not directly responsible. We are asking, however, that the Ministry be proactive in ensuring that library services are delivered consistently to all students across the province, and to support the school division so that they do not have to make such a devastating decision.

Sincerely,

Anita Brooks Kirkland

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On behalf of the CSL Board of Directors

Anita Brooks Kirkland Chair	Carol Koechlin Vice-Chair	Richard Beaudry Director	Caroline Freibauer Director	Judith Sykes Director
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CC:

Ted Fransen, Superintendent of Education / CEO, Pembina Trails School Division

Kathleen McMillan, Chair, Pembina Trails School Division Board of Trustees

Brandi Bartok, President, [Manitoba School Library Association](#)

Maria Martella, Chair, [Save School Libraries Coalition](#)

