



To support and represent trustees in advancing public libraries

TO: The BCLTA Board of Directors
FROM: Babs Kelly, Executive Director
DATE: October 29, 2019
SUBJECT: BCLTA Board Retreat Report

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide the BCLTA directors the Board Retreat Report from the facilitator, Daphne Woods, with additional information for context as well as comments from the BCLTA President, Mike Gagel and the BCLTA Executive Director.

This report includes:

1. Facilitator's Report: Daphne Wood
2. Executive Director's Comments
3. Executive Director's Recommendations
4. Portion of the EDs September 2, 2019 report "Board Retreat: ED Report".
 - a. The selection is to point to the background that was recommended for an informed discussion for September 28th and for any further discussions and direction for staff work.
5. Emails to ADM McCrea
 - a. These emails are included to document the process of including the ADM and to share with the Directors the intent of inviting the ADM to develop a shared vision and next steps for supporting BC public library governance.

1. Facilitator's Report: Daphne Wood

BCLTA Shared Vision Summary

To: BCLTA Board and BCLTA Executive Director Babs Kelly

From: Daphne Wood, facilitator

Date: October 19, 2019

On September 28, 2019 members of the BCLTA Board, the BCLTA Executive Director and Jennifer McCrea, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education met at the Central Library of the Vancouver Public Library for a collaborative discussion. The objective of the meeting was to contribute to a shared vision for their relationship, and to identify opportunities to work together in support and advancement of libraries.

As an active participant in facilitated individual and group exercises, Ms. McCrea shared several valuable observations that will assist in the ongoing development of a shared vision with BCLTA. These observations are listed below, in bullet form, for consideration:

- ✦ The term Pro D is associated with BCTF and leads to confusion when used by library trustees
- ✦ Avoid acronyms (e.g. "TOP" training)
- ✦ Given its expressed importance at the meeting, make it clear that training is the number one priority for trustees
- ✦ A clear message was received at the meeting: Ministry must support the community leaders in the library sector
- ✦ Greater clarity is needed re: roles and responsibilities and how trustees differ from school trustees. (Key difference: library trustees are *volunteers*)
- ✦ Ideal state: partnership between BCLTA and Ministry would be a shared commitment, co-constructed with shared ownership, staying true to vision, focusing on the long game. Actions and values are discussed throughout process.
- ✦ Question: could BCLTA invite other boards to attend their governance workshops? Would this be a revenue stream? Is there interest/need from municipalities?

After the workshop, Ms. McCrea summarized what she heard and what she proposed would be the next steps for future collaboration:

- ✦ BCLTA and the Ministry needs to act with intent of purpose, with focus and clarity.
- ✦ Everyone needs to work together

- ✦ Question: what are the key BCLTA priorities? 1) standards and the professionalism of trustees; 2) ongoing learning for trustees. *BCLTA must clearly demonstrate actions to advance two (no more than three) priorities over the next three years.* A MOA could result with the Ministry – but recommend moving forward with priorities
- ✦ The meeting clarified understanding: there is intense pressure on trustees as volunteers
- ✦ Ministry is committed to a creating a new strategic plan for public libraries. The BC Library Partners and the Ministry are going to work together
- ✦ Suggested trustees look at the “Educated citizen” concept in the education portfolio – it is important community context for libraries.
- ✦ Heard request for a mandate letter to include libraries and to include libraries as essential for citizen success. Students exist in an ecology. Libraries are the centre of lifelong learning.
- ✦ Heard that BCLTA feels the Ministry is taking the contributions of trustees for granted. Trustees are playing a vital role in society
- ✦ Heard that there are significant rural library challenges – operational funding and support for governance.
- ✦ Agree there is a misunderstanding of library language – specific but not limited to the term “trustees”
- ✦ Recognition: *trustees do they do their work with heart*
- ✦ Offered to receive questions and to seek legal counsel for what could change about the BC Library Act. This is a no cost item.
- ✦ Nothing is off limits for discussion.

A summary of notes describing the feedback from workshop participants is also attached. Given the positive dialogue and frank discussion regarding issues of mutual concern, there appears to be significant goodwill and interest in building a strong relationship. The elements of a shared vision could be described as follows:

- ✦ The partnership between BCLTA and the Ministry of Education is far reaching, values-based and founded on a mutual commitment of respect. Through dialogue and consultation, volunteer trustees and the Ministry plan the future together: a future that includes libraries at the centre of lifelong learning and community wellbeing.

It was a pleasure to join you for the day as your facilitator. I hope you feel that the time we spent together was productive and will help to advance your essential leadership role in the library community.

Sincerely,
Daphne

2. Executive Director's Comments

- The report captures the positive energy and ideas that were shared throughout the day.
- The report does not reflect BCLTA's Purpose and Convictions and strategic priorities and is not an accurate reflection of BCLTA work and BC public library governance (Library Act through to board work). As such, the day missed the opportunity to champion BCLTA and our membership to the Ministry and the growing impact of our work.
- The report reflects a rapport with the ADM that needs to be continued for a shared understanding and vision.

3. Executive Director's Recommendations

1. That the ED and the President continue to connect with the ADM as per the October 1, 2019 and October 26, 2019 emails.
2. The ED continues to create opportunities with the Libraries Branch and in the ADM's Public Library Advisory Group meetings to further a shared understanding of the role and value of public library boards and the importance of supporting their development and capacity.
3. That the ED review her notes and the summary provided by the facilitator and bring back to the board for their review and discussion a vision statement from the day and suggested next steps.
 - a. The BCLTA President would then ask the ADM and Minister to meet to discuss the vision and ask for a statement of support for a shared vision.

4. Excerpt: Board Retreat, ED Report (September 2, 2019, included in September Board Package)

10:00	Mike	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome and territorial acknowledgements• Introductions
10:20	Mike Daphne facilitates discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Success and benefits of current partnerships (the Partners and BCSTA)• Highlights of how BCSTA works with the Ministry and what BCLTA may learn from this model• The mutual benefits for a more active strategic partnership between BCLTA and the Ministry
10:50		Break
11:00	Daphne	Shared vision for BC public library board governance excellence that leverages and strengthens the shared responsibility and distinct

		roles of the Ministry (the Library Act) and the BCLTA (governance support and development)
12:30		Lunch / visit the library and rooftop garden
1:15	Daphne	Review/complete draft of shared vision
1:30	Daphne	Actions that would honour this shared vision such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCLTA executive and Minister/DM/ADM meetings to discuss public library board development needs and outcomes • Reliable resources and support for board development
2:30		Break
2:45	Daphne	Review/complete draft of actions
3:15	Daphne	Review of day and next steps
3:30	Mike	Closing remarks

Retreat Prep Work

Please review from the BCLTA website:

- BCLTA Purpose and Convictions
- BCLTA Strategic Framework to 2025
- BCLTA and BCSTA Letter of Understanding
- BCLTA Policy Manual
- BCLTA By-laws
- Other areas of the website to be familiar with the work of BCLTA include the Advocacy section, particularly the \$20 Million in 2020, TOP, Board Discussion Starters, Trustee Orientation Checklist, and the *Bulletin*

Please note that on September 11, 2019, the ED will send a reminder email that will include the ED report, *TOP Outreach and Use*. This will be of importance for the Friday portion of the retreat.

5. Emails to ADM McCrea

June 27, 2019

- Follow-up from 2 in person conversations with the ADM regarding the September Board Retreat

Hi Jennifer,

The recent PLAG meeting was both enjoyable and productive and BCLTA is very excited about this new era of working with the Ministry on behalf of our membership, the 69 BC public library boards.

The BCLTA Board of Directors annual retreat will take place on Saturday, September 28th at the Vancouver Public Library Central Library. The retreat is a time for strategic frank discussions and for setting the direction of work and priorities for the association. BCLTA is keen to explore new ways that we can work with the Ministry regarding our shared interest in, and responsibility for, effective, transparent, and accountable public library governance.

I would like to discuss the retreat with you and possible scenarios for the day that may involve the Ministry, specifically you.

Would you have time for a quick phone call over the next week or so to discuss this?

Babs

cc: Mike Gagel, BCLTA President

July 29, 2019

- follow-up after ADM McCrea returned from vacation – Peter coordinates ministry executive meeting schedules

Hi Peter and Jennifer,

I don't know about you, but I'm a bit startled by how August is almost here!

Just thought I'd do a check-in on any possibility of a quick call, maybe in the next week or so, to talk about the BCLTA board retreat invitation below.

As the BCLTA ED I have an enjoyable and productive working relationship with Mari at the Libraries Branch and my board is keen to see that operational relationship continue to grow.

Beyond that relationship the BCLTA Board of Directors wishes to explore new ways that BCLTA might work with the Ministry regarding our shared interest in, and responsibility for, effective, transparent, and accountable public library governance. We are inspired by our colleagues at BCSTA as to the positive difference this would make to public library boards and the communities they serve across the province.

Jennifer, I look forward to you and I talking about what is possible for this discussion and the BCLTA Board Retreat on September 28th.

Kind regards,
Babs

August 27, 2019

- follow up after phone meetings with Tim Winkelmanns – Director of Early Years and part of the ADMs ministry portfolio

Dear Jennifer,

The BCLTA Board of Directors is very pleased that you will be joining them for the Saturday portion of their board retreat. Below is a high-level agenda for the day.

Mike Gagel, the BCLTA President (cc'd) will be starting the day with background as to why this conversation is important and Daphne Wood, who is the Director for Planning and Engagement at the Greater Victoria Public Library, will be facilitating the day's conversations and work. I will be there to take minutes and to provide any needed support.

There will be morning and afternoon light refreshments and a lunch catered by Cedar Feast House. Please let me know if you have any dietary or comfort needs that I can see to so that you have an enjoyable and successful day with BCLTA.

You know a bit about us through our work with the Partners and you may be interested in visiting our website, particularly our Strategic Framework and our Convictions. You may also be interested in reviewing the Trustee Orientation Program and recent issues of the Bulletin (let me know if I may subscribe you to the Bulletin).

BCLTA Director photos and bios are here.

Perhaps you would like to schedule a quick call so that I might be able to answer any questions that you have about the day or the work of BCLTA?

Kind regards,
Babs

October 1, 2019

Dear Jennifer,

The BCLTA Board greatly appreciates the time you took on Saturday to attend our Board retreat. We trust that you left engaged with the work of BCLTA and public library trustees and with the importance of excellent and professional governance of public libraries across BC.

Your contributions to a shared vision for public library governance and to initiatives that BCLTA could lead with provincial support, made a positive difference to how BCLTA sees its mandate and work. Importantly, you also shared with us your excitement and interest in seeing these initiatives grow for the benefit of public libraries and the communities they serve.

We met with Mari Martin on Sunday to discuss the growth and impact of our governance development services and resources. The meeting included two of our volunteer workshop facilitators and Pawatsqwachiitl Haiyupis, a member of the Ahousaht First Nation and trainer in the Art of Hosting. It was an exciting day as we reviewed the impact of our services, our stewardship of Ministry funds (\$20,000 in 2019) for developing and delivering resources and services, and the strong effective working relationship between the BCLTA Executive Director (Babs) and Mari.

We are committed to keeping the conversation of our shared commitment to excellence in public library governance with you open and ongoing.

Would you be interested in having us come to Vancouver or Victoria to deliver a mini (1 hour rather than 7 hours) BCLTA Governance Workshop to demonstrate our work to the Ministry?

This would be an excellent opportunity for the Minister, Deputy Minister, and others to learn more about public library governance and the difference that public library boards make in their communities. This would also be a time for us to have a follow-up conversation about what is possible for supporting BC public library trustees.

Our continued work with you is important to us.

Kind regards,

Mike and Babs

October 28, 2019

Hi Jennifer,

The September retreat discussions with you were inspiring. As you know we have a strong board development program and the funding we have received this year (\$20,000) from the Libraries Branch has made a tremendous difference to getting this program to our members.

Mike and I would be honoured to come to Victoria or Vancouver early in the new year to meet with you, the Minister, and others, to deliver a mini (1 hour rather than 7 hours) BCLTA Governance Workshop to demonstrate our work to the Ministry. Another option would be if the

Minister and others have upcoming meetings in Prince George, we could meet during that time at their convenience.

This would be an excellent opportunity for the Minister and others to learn more about public library governance and the difference that public library boards make in their communities. This would also be a time for us to have a follow-up conversation about what is possible for supporting BC public library trustees to meet their fiduciary responsibility and duty of care as outlined in the Provincial Library Act, and as administered by your Ministry.

I have mentioned this idea to our partner association, the Association of BC Public Library Directors (the direct employees of the boards) and they thought this was an excellent idea and would like to be there to support our work, as they do everyday in their role defined in the Library Act as Chief Librarians.

Again, thank you for your interest in public library governance and the consideration you have shown to our members, the nearly 700 volunteer trustees and elected officials who govern BC public libraries.

Please let me know if I can answer any questions or provide further information about our work.

Best regards,
Babs