
**COMMUNICATIONS
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING – March 27, 2013

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. endorses the goals of the National Reading Campaign and advises the National Reading Campaign, in writing, of this endorsement (Communication a).

Background Information:

The National Reading Campaign (NRC) is a not-for-profit organization established in 2012. Prior to the formation of NRC, three national summits were held in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. The summits provided an opportunity to learn about national reading plans around the world, as well as innovative programs already in place in Canada. These examples were used as a base for developing the NRC's National Reading Plan.

The goals of the NRC are to:

1. Champion reading and policies to promote reading at all levels of government;
2. Research Canadian reading patterns, trends, demographics, impact of digital media and any other aspect that will support and inform the development of policy;
3. Develop policy proposals with respect to reading, best practices and standards in collaboration with leaders in the field;
4. Promote the National Reading Plan. Connect and inform Canadians about reading and reading promotion through technology, social media and other means;
5. Be a resource for and support the work being done by other groups provincially, regionally and municipally through research, forums for sharing ideas, and a national data bank/clearing house of existing programs/activities and ideas;
6. Work with existing associations, organizations and all levels of government;

7. Work with educators across Canada in recognition that schools are essential to ensuring that all Canadian children have equal access to becoming competent, joyful readers;
8. Work to ensure that people who, because of disability, ethnicity, country of origin, economic status or location, do not have access to full possibilities of becoming readers receive the support they need to become active readers;
9. Undertake projects from time to time that further the implementation of the National Reading Plan.

Information regarding the NRC and the National Reading Plan is attached.



NATIONAL READING CAMPAIGN CAMPAGNE POUR LA LECTURE

The National Reading Campaign is dedicated to the principle that reading is essential to the well-being and happiness of an individual, and to that person's capacity to act as a citizen in a democracy. For the past four years, through three summits across Canada, in working groups and other consultative initiatives involving hundreds of people involved in reading, we have developed a National Reading Plan. This plan addresses the reading needs of Canadians of all ages, the question of how to ensure access to reading of all kinds and in all platforms by everyone from babies to seniors, from rural to urban Canadians, to Indigenous Canadians and New Canadians. The National Reading Campaign is led by a rarely formed coalition of publishers, librarians, educators, parents and readers from across the country, all of whom have a passionate belief in the goals of the movement.

What is the mission of the National Reading Plan?

To make reading a national priority.

What is our vision?

To create, sustain, and grow a society in which each of us has an equal opportunity to become and remain a lifelong reader.

Underlying principles of a National Reading Plan

- Equal access for all to reading materials
- Freedom to read any content
- No distinction between types of reading materials or the different platforms
- Access to reading materials in mother tongue, official, and Aboriginal languages
- Promotion and access to Canadian-authored materials of all kinds. This is essential to our self-knowledge, culture, and democratic practice
- Early access to joyful reading is the right of all children and in a democracy schools and public libraries are the places where such access can be guaranteed

Who will be involved?

Readers, parents, young people, academics, librarians, educators, publishers of all media, booksellers, literacy organizations, writers, community organizations, business (both large and small), trade unions, elected officials, Aboriginal elders, child-care providers, NGOs/associations, all levels of government, and members of the community who care passionately about the power and pleasure of the written word.

Where do we start?

• **Joy of Reading in Schools:** While reading scores have increased in elementary schools, children's enjoyment of reading has gone down. The National Reading Campaign calls on the Ministry of Education, teachers, teacher librarians, parents and others concerned with how we teach reading in schools, to enter into a dialogue on how to ensure that children's love of reading is nurtured and reinforced by our school system and our families.

• **Join Us: CanLit for New Canadians:** We are creating a series of resource documents on Canadian literature for libraries and settlement service organisations to use in their programs for new Canadians. Canadian literature not only offers a pleasurable and exciting way to learn about the country, it can also help people develop higher level language skills.

• **Aboriginal reading:** The NRC is facilitating a series of three aboriginal reading policy round tables over the next three years. The round tables will bring together key leaders in the field to explore approaches and to create an effective agenda to promote access to reading on reserves for children and youth, and to create a much-needed common agenda to champion reading and reading policies for Aboriginal children.

• **Canadian Children's Book Reviews:** An independent weekly kids book review column in dailies & weeklies across the country to provide avid readers with access to new book ideas, inspire non-readers to considering becoming so, and to be used by schools, libraries and community centres in their programs.

And by asking, "What did you read today?"

"What did you read today?" is a three-year campaign to raise an awareness of reading's importance, and to encourage governments at all levels to take policy steps to make Canada a nation of readers.

How You Can Help

1. Sign up for our newsletter at www.nationalreadingcampaign.ca
2. Donate to the National Reading Campaign at www.nationalreadingcampaign.ca, or send us a cheque enclosing the donor form, which can be downloaded from our website.

The National Reading Campaign is grateful to the following for their support:

Our lead sponsor:



Our public supporters:



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SPECIFIC TARGET GROUPS

Families

All families should be supported in creating a reading culture at home. When families are reading together — parents reading to children, children enjoying reading, families discussing books — a regular pattern of reading is established. Everyone learns the joy that can come from reading. They also learn the skills of analysis and critical thinking. Programs that support families such as public health units and children's aid societies, pediatricians and general practitioners, booksellers and all possible community resources can work together to ensure that all children have equal access to the joy of reading.

Schools

Teaching reading skills is a fundamental aspect of schooling. It is best done by creating an environment in which reading is a joyful experience. To this end trained teacher-librarians and teachers with skills in reading promotion are essential. Schools should be judged by how well they succeed in encouraging children to want to read and to love to read. In a democracy schools are the one place where every child has equal access to the opportunity to become a reader and hence are a critical component of any national reading strategy.

Aboriginal Canadians

Reading in Aboriginal communities — urban, rural, on and off reserve — should be a major national priority. The Aboriginal community should control all such activities and be given the financial resources and training required as a matter of urgency. Where so desired by the community, materials should be provided in Aboriginal languages.

New Canadians

Current language and integration programs for New Canadians are almost completely lacking in reading promotion and support despite conclusive research showing that reading is the best way to learn a new language. Research shows that current practices are not producing acceptable mastery of Canada's official languages.

Canadians who experience barriers to reading

People living in poverty, some people with disabilities, many people living in rural or remote communities and people in social difficulty, such as prisoners or those struggling with mental health issues, have greatly reduced access to reading in any form. Special resources are required to ensure that all Canadians have access to the skills and materials that ensure a joy of reading.

Life-long readers

In this age of fragmentation, distraction, multiple technologies, etc., even confirmed life-long readers may have difficulty finding the time to read, sharing their reading experiences and/or finding the space to think and reflect on ideas. Public libraries, full access to e-books, book clubs, high speed Internet, blogs, websites, bookstores and all other places where reading materials can be accessed are essential in maintaining a life-long reading culture.

WHO AND WHAT IS THE NATIONAL READING CAMPAIGN?

Work on the National Reading Campaign began in 2008. We are a broad-based group of people from every region of Canada representing school and public librarians, parents, readers, educators, writers, students, book and magazine publishers, booksellers, reading promoters and anyone involved in reading in Canada. The group has held three TD National Reading Summits in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver (with distance participation from across the country) and organized working groups of more than one hundred participants. This plan is the fruit of all these people's labours.

In 2012 The National Reading Campaign was incorporated as a not-for profit organization. To learn more, to donate, and to participate in the conversation go to:

www.nationalreadingcampaign.ca

Spring 2012

NATIONAL READING PLAN FOR CANADA

WHY IS READING IMPORTANT?

- * Reading has an impact on every part of Canadian life. Our democracy, our economy and the quality of our daily lives are all enhanced by reading well and critically.
- * Reading is essential to the well-being of society and to our functioning as a democracy.
- * Reading is a life-long source of pleasure for individuals.
- * Reading empowers the critical thinking skills of every individual.
- * Reading can enhance empathy and lead to greater understanding of people different from ourselves. It increases our emotional intelligence and helps us to appreciate other points of view.
- * Reading is essential to being able to function. It helps reduce barriers to access. It allows people to make meaning of their world.
- * Reading is the foundation for future learning. It increases our self-worth.
- * Reading inspires. It is a trigger for the imagination.
- * Reading increases individual health and economic well-being.
- * Reading preserves the culture for the next generation. It creates a shared connection to the community.
- * It is important for society to have a large portion of the population engaged as readers so they can exercise power over their lives and understand how to make effective changes. Reading allows people to be active citizens.



NATIONAL READING CAMPAIGN
Creating a National Reading Strategy

{ THE NATIONAL READING PLAN }

MISSION

To make reading a national priority for Canada.

VISION

To sustain and grow a reading society in which everyone living in Canada has an equal opportunity to become and remain a life-long reader.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF A NATIONAL READING PLAN

1. Equal access for all to reading materials.
2. Freedom to read any content.
3. No distinction between types of reading materials or the different platforms.
4. Access to reading materials in mother tongue, official and Aboriginal languages.
5. Promotion of and access to Canadian-authored materials of all kinds. This is essential to our self-knowledge, culture and democratic practice.
6. Early access to joyful reading is the right of all children, and in a democracy schools are the place where such access can be guaranteed.

WHO WILL BE INVOLVED?

This initiative will involve everyone with a passion for reading, including readers, parents, youth, academics, librarians, educators, publishers of all media, book-sellers, literacy organizations, writers, community organizations, large and small businesses, trade unions, elected officials, Aboriginal elders, child-care providers, NGOs/associations, all levels of government, and the general public.

HOW WILL WE PROCEED?

We will undertake a three-year public awareness campaign themed “What did you read today?” The campaign will raise the profile of reading’s importance and move governments at all levels toward taking policy steps needed to make Canada a nation of readers.

OUR NATIONAL READING CAMPAIGN BOARD AND SECRETARIAT WILL:

1. Champion reading and policies to promote reading at all levels of government.
2. Research Canadian reading patterns, trends, demographics, impact of digital media and any other aspect that will support and inform the development of policy.
3. Develop policy proposals with respect to reading, best practices and standards in collaboration with leaders in the field.
4. Promote the National Reading Plan. Connect and inform Canadians about reading and reading promotion through technology, social media and other means.
5. Be a resource for and support the work being done by other groups provincially, regionally and municipally through research, forums for sharing ideas, and a national data bank/clearing house of existing programs/activities and ideas.
6. Work with existing associations, organizations and all levels of government.
7. Work with educators across Canada in recognition that schools are essential to ensuring that all Canadian children have equal access to becoming competent, joyful readers.
8. Work to ensure that people who, because of disability, ethnicity, country of origin, economic status or location, do not have access to full possibilities of becoming readers receive the support they need to become active readers.
9. Undertake projects from time to time that further the implementation of the National Reading Plan.

OUR PARTNERS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES WILL:

1. Promote the program.
2. Reach out to and broaden the engagement of others in their community.
3. Bring NRC materials into current programming.
4. Use their communication mechanisms like newsletters, blogs, talks and provide value-added activities like:
 - a. Obtaining local endorsements
 - b. Connecting with local celebrities
5. Provide access to what people are doing locally, regionally and nationally.
6. Use the campaign to support public libraries, schools and other institutions in making reading promotion one of their core activities.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENTS

Governments play a key role in establishing policy at all levels to promote the development of readers in all sectors.

Governments should be encouraged to do the following:

1. Support existing publishing-support programs.
2. Eliminate GST/HST on reading materials at all levels of the production and distribution chain.
3. Support translation into official languages and other languages where appropriate.
4. Enhance funding to public libraries.
5. Ensure that teacher education at all levels includes training in reading promotion.
6. Re-invest in school libraries and training teacher-librarians.
7. Support writers at all jurisdictional levels.
8. Support Canadian data bases.
9. Support e-book formats and their use in Canadian libraries.
10. Invest in programs that support reading and commit to incorporate reading into all government-funded activities in order to strengthen civil society and civic participation.
11. Commit to special measures for any Canadians who, for reasons of disability, ethnicity, country of origin, economic status or location, do not have access to full possibilities of becoming readers.
12. Assess all programs for their impact on reading.