

## **Happy New Year from the BC Public Library Partners!**

The BC Public Library Partners (BCPLP) work to increase awareness of the positive impact of BC public libraries and influence provincial public policy and funding impacting libraries and their communities. The BCPLP is comprised of representatives from the Association of BC Public Library Directors, BC Library Association, the BC Libraries Cooperative, and the BC Library Trustees Association.

2018 presented the BCPLP with significant opportunities to elevate the profile of libraries within the Ministry of Education and beyond. Here are some of the highlights from 2018:

### **A Unified Message**

With a strong foundation, a year of experience working closely together, and some great comradery we were able to hit our stride by creating a framework for unified messaging to the provincial government. This framework highlights how libraries contribute to making life more affordable, deliver services people count on, build a strong sustainable economy, and work to honor the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. As part of this messaging, the BCPLP identified a goal to seek out support from the provincial government that would help BC libraries to be the most highly accessed in the country.

### **Future Focused**

On September 12, the Partners hosted *Future Focused* at the Union of BC Municipalities conference in Whistler. The event, co-sponsored by Fraser Valley Regional Library and Whistler Public Library, showcased cutting-edge technology and the potential of the modern library. Conference delegates had the opportunity to unplug from the convention over appetizers and drinks and plug into virtual reality, robots, and green screens while meeting with library leaders and expert staff. The event was highly successful, with the Minister of Education and members of his staff spending over an hour learning how libraries are currently supporting and could further support government priorities while taking in the breadth of technology on offer.

### **Digital Literacy Proposal**

In November, the BCPLP presented the Deputy Minister of Education with a one-time digital literacy proposal designed to lessen the digital divide throughout the province. The proposal requested a lump sum of over \$2M toward grants to support the diverse technology needs of libraries and their communities. This project would be the first significant investment of its kind in BC in over 15 years, demonstrating this government's awareness of the importance of public libraries to society.

### **Other Work**

In addition to the projects above, the BCPLP provided coordinated feedback to the next iteration of the Libraries Branch strategic plan. This feedback will contribute to a communication plan that supports the Branch and stakeholders in working openly and effectively to build robust and resilient libraries across the province; to clearly defined actions to support proposed strategies; and to collaboratively identify resources necessary to achieve the plan's goals.

As we embark on 2019, the BC Library Partners will continue to focus on presenting a unified voice for public libraries and highlighting the work that libraries are doing to support government objectives. The BCPLP are currently working on an advocacy plan. We are also collaborating on sessions for the BC Libraries Conference (May 10th), the Public Libraries Summit: *Future Focused Public Libraries: value, investment, and results*, (May 11th) and the September 2019 UBCM Convention and Tradeshow. Working together with the BCPLP, ABCPLD is strongly communicating the value of public libraries to the provincial government and our communities.

Sincerely,

The BC Library Partners

Scott Hargrove, Chair, Association of BC Public Library Directors

Elizabeth Tracy, Vice Chair, Association of BC Public Library Directors

Annette DeFaveri, ED, BC Library Association

Shirley Lew, President, BC Library Association

Dana McFarland, Board Chair, BC Libraries Cooperative

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