



# Andrea Horwath

Leader, Ontario New Democrats

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Michael David Reansbury,

Ontario Association of Library Technicians / Association des bibliotechniciens de l'Ontario

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Dear Mr. Reansbury,

Following is the NDP response to the OALT ABO provincial election questionnaire.

1. The place of school libraries in elementary and secondary schools and the staffing of school libraries.

**The number of school librarians has been declining in Ontario. In 1997-98 80% of elementary schools had a teacher librarian; today only 56% do – and four in five of those are part-time. Libraries play a crucial role in the development of information literacy in the 21st century. School libraries need to evolve into hubs for information literacy. We will work to ensure adequate staffing of school libraries, drawing in part on our commitment to hire 500 specialist-teachers over the next four years. In addition, we will work to ensure that the remaining funds from the McGuinty government's 2008 promise for books and library materials are delivered.**

2. The maintenance of public libraries as public institutions as well as their funding.

**New Democrats recognize the vital importance of public libraries. In communities across this province, public libraries promote literacy, provide access to computers and learning materials, offer a space for social interaction, and provide a range of affordable educational programs. Provincial funding for public libraries was cut in 1996-97 by 40% and has remained at that level. It is the lowest provincial**





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per capita funding in the country. This has led to an overreliance on municipal support for libraries. Municipalities are strapped for funding and find it difficult to meet the financial needs of libraries and other services. The NDP has made a number of commitments to ease the financial pressure on municipalities (e.g. continuing the upload of provincial services and providing new funding for transit, childcare, housing and roads). We will work in partnership with library organizations and municipalities to ensure adequate funding of these critical community resources.

Thank you for your questions.