

Lakeland Regional Library

2017-04-02

Mr. Don Morgan

Minister of Education

Rm. 361

Legislative Bldg

Regina, Sask.

Dear Mr. Morgan:

I am writing to you as the Board Chair of Lakeland Library Region.

As you are aware, slashing the funding to regional library regions has had a devastating effect of our ability to provide service to our library branches. In a recent interview, you spoke about finding “new and innovative ways to move forward”. The term “moving forward” implies a movement to something better or improved. The harsh reality of the recent budget is that we are not moving forward; we are moving backward. The question for our region (and I would presume all regions) is not whether or not we will move backward but how far we have to move backward.

Our region, like most other regions I’m sure, is in crisis management mode. We have revised our budget, laid off staff, reduced service and will close branches. All of these measures are, at best, short term. Even with these stop gap measures, Lakeland will have a large deficit for 2017.

We cannot make any long term decisions about our future without some idea of what the government vision is for Libraries. You told us that the government is “no longer interested in brick and mortar libraries” and patrons should find their information from “on line or alternate sources” Does this mean that the government is no longer interested in funding the SILS consortium? Does this mean that the government will continue to slash funding to the regions? Is the government’s vision of libraries in Saskatchewan a return to the 1950’s model of independent, totally municipally funded institutions? Is this massive reduction a short term solution to government shortfalls? Can we expect a return to adequately funded regional centers? All of these questions need to be answered. We need to know what your government is planning for libraries in this province and we need to know quickly so that we can plan accordingly.

Your vision of libraries in this province has a direct and lasting impact on our regional plans. Might I respectfully suggest that you call a special meeting of Directors and Board Chairs ASAP to outline what

you envision the future of Libraries to be so that we, as regions, can begin the process of salvaging what is left of the Regional system and begin to develop a long term survival plan?

Respectfully

Dennis Taylor

Lakeland Board Chair.

Cc Brad Wall, Scott Moe, Herb Cox