



The Annapolis Valley Regional Library Board (AVRL) invited all candidates in our region to answer a few questions of vital interest to the library community for a Virtual Forum. Here are the responses that we received, in no particular order.

AVRL wishes to thank all candidates who took the time to respond.

Stephen Schneider
NDP Candidate, Kings South

How valuable is the public library to our community? The NDP believes public libraries are a vital cornerstone of our communities. They provide opportunities for learning, community-building, skill development, promotion of arts and culture, education on social issues, and much more. They are accessible spaces where community members of all ages can access information, knowledge, computers and Internet, groups and programs, events and social activities—all at little to no cost. They promote intergenerational and cross-cultural sharing, and are often the birthplace of new and innovative ideas that benefit the public. In addition, they employ over 800 staff in urban and rural communities. In short, libraries are a common treasure that need more support in Nova Scotia!

Will libraries receive better core funding under an NDP government? Yes, that should be the outcome of the process we outline below. We believe Nova Scotia's public library system needs to be better funded. The current funding system is inadequate and variable. Funding for rural libraries is insufficient, in part because of a population-based funding formula.

Under an NDP government, *funding for the public library system would first be stabilized*, and we would initiate a process for *implementing equity of library services*. After a careful review of the 2008 Department of Education Task Force report and the 2013 Library Boards Association of Nova Scotia report, we would *engage in a process of consultation* with LBANS, the Council of Regional Librarians, regional libraries, and the Nova Scotia Provincial Library.

As an academic who administers a mentoring program for youth at risk, I know very well the essential role libraries play. I look forward to continuing the conversation with you about how to make the most of this invaluable community resource.

The responses below are on behalf of Premier Stephen McNeil, Honourable Leo Glavine, Keith Irving, Chuck Porter, and Geof Turner.

This election is about which party has the best vision for the province. By providing us with the opportunity to connect with your membership, we feel we can best highlight who we are and where we stand on issues that are important to your organization's membership. Only together can we build on a stronger Nova Scotia.

How valuable is the public library to your community, and in what ways?

Libraries are more than a collection of books and computers. They are accessible places where people can gather to explore, interact and imagine. Branches in the Annapolis Valley provide a valuable service for those who are unable to travel to a library by allowing residents to register to borrow books by mail and items are mailed with return postage paid. The after school and evening sessions for children and youth provide creative and safe opportunities for children and youth in our communities.

Will you and your party commit to increased core funding for public libraries?

We understand the challenges libraries face across this province. A re-elected Liberal Government will continue to work with regional library boards and the chief librarians for the purpose of building a long term, sustainable funding plan.

Joel Hirtle, Candidate Kings South Atlantica Party

How valuable is the public library to your community, and in what ways?

Our public libraries allow a free and open conduit to the wealth of world knowledge. My family has benefits from the services of the libraries, as well as many other members of our community. My wish is to maintain the level of service to support the community.

Will you and your party commit to increased core funding for public libraries?

At this time and with the available information we have not assessed the need for an increase in spending to library. The Atlantica Party does not make unsustainable promises of increased spending as you will find the status-quo parties do. We are in full support of relocating spending with the current budget, and encourage increases in efficiency with the current systems in place. This policy is not strictly made for libraries, since we recognize them as valuable institutions, but as an overall guiding principal so that we may lower the debt burden place on the shoulders of all Nova Scotians by the previous parties before us.

John Lohr
PC Candidate Kings North

The Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia supports sustainable core funding for public libraries. When elected, Jamie Baillie's PC government will review the current core funding model and implement something that is sustainable, and modern, to keep our libraries open. Libraries are an important part of our community's infrastructure. Libraries would also be eligible for grant funding through the new Environmental Reclamation and Community Enhancement Fund.

Colin Sproul, NDP Annapolis West

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In response to your question, we believe Nova Scotia's public library system needs to be better funded. The current funding system is inadequate and variable. Funding for rural libraries is insufficient, in part because of a population-based funding formula.

Under an NDP government, funding for the public library system would be stabilized, and we would initiate a process for implementing equity of library services. After a careful review of the 2008 Department of Education Task Force report and the 2013 Library Boards Association of Nova Scotia report, we would engage in a process of consultation with LBANS, the Council of Regional Librarians, regional libraries, and the Nova Scotia Provincial Library.

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