

BC Public Library Professional Development Framework

Last Updated: August 2024

Preamble

In July 2024 Executive Directors and Managers of organizations that support public library workers in British Columbia met to determine how they would coordinate efforts to deliver professional development in the province. This builds on an environmental scan conducted in 2023 which identified a keen interest among these organizations to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of professional development delivery through greater collaboration.

The following framework details how the group will collaborate, specifying participating organizations' roles and responsibilities, as well as processes for decision-making and communication. Designed to be long-standing and sustainable, this framework relies on agreement and action. Participating organizations commit to adhering to this framework as long as it continues to meet the group's needs.

Participating Organizations

Association of BC Public Library Directors
BC Libraries Cooperative
BC Library Association
BC Library Trustees Association
IslandLink Library Federation

Kootenay Library Federation
North Central Library Federation
North East Library Federation
Northwest Library Federation
Public Library InterLINK

The Coalition

In the context of this framework, participating organizations will work as a coalition to coordinate professional development. This coalition will be referred to as the Public Library Professional Development Coalition (the "PLPD Coalition" or "the Coalition").

Definitions

Professional development (PD): Learning activities and efforts – formal and informal – by which individuals seek to upgrade their knowledge, attitudes, competencies, and understanding. Professional development includes but is not limited to webinars, training, guidance, courses, conferences, orientations, and mentorship.

Public library workers: Includes public library staff (including librarians, library technicians, library assistants, library administrators), volunteers, and library board members or trustees.

Framework Purpose

The BC Public Library Professional Development Framework exists to provide a collaborative structure for the PLPD Coalition. This framework enables the Coalition to efficiently and effectively coordinate resources, so that relevant professional development is available to public library workers throughout British Columbia.

Principles of Collaboration

The PLPD Coalition's decisions, actions, and processes are guided by the following principles:

1. Respect and Autonomy

- Must respect individual organizations' inherent value and autonomy.
- Must respect both the unique and the overlapping jurisdictions of each organization.
- Must not supersede the governance decision-making of any individual organization.
- Must be flexible and responsive to ad hoc needs.

2. Equity and Transparency

- Must be equitable.
- Must be transparent, candid, and honest with one another.
- Must be equitable to learning needs.

3. Improvement and Growth

- Must be an improvement on the current state, however the Coalition decides to measure that.
- Must respect failures as opportunities for learning and growth.

4. Financial and Workload Balance

- Must not create financial hardships for any organization.
- Must not create undue pressure, strain, or added workload for any organization (unless agreed to by that organization, e.g. as part of an expanding portfolio).
- Must be sustainable.

5. Group Agreement

- Must make decisions by consensus, i.e. all organizations agree. Outside groups may advise, but final decision-making rests with the Coalition.

Responsibilities

Members of the Coalition will be advocates for this framework. They will inform their respective boards of the framework's purpose and their organization's role within the Coalition. They will provide updates as necessary when the framework and Coalition's activities evolve.

All ten organizations in the Coalition are responsible for strategy development; Executive Directors (or equivalents) of each organization are expected to be involved in creating, approving, and taking action on a shared strategy for delivery of PD to public library workers in the province.

Coalition members are not all necessarily responsible for PD delivery. Strategy development will lead to decisions (made in alignment with the aforementioned principles) regarding which organizations are best positioned to deliver specific PD offerings. For example, procurement and/or delivery of PD programs may rotate based on capacity and needs, which could shift and evolve over time.

Strategy Development

The Coalition acknowledges that, separate from this framework, a time-bound strategy is needed for effective PD delivery and innovation.

The strategy should include:

- Decisions regarding what PD will be targeted over the span of time (e.g. 3 to 5 years).
- Clear understanding of which organizations will take on specific aspects of the work (e.g. PD delivery, allocating funds, promotion, etc.).
- An operational plan that details timelines, duties, and how resources will be allocated.

In addition, the strategy must take into consideration and work alongside PD initiatives that are already underway by members of the Coalition.

Strategic development should be iterative. This a suggested process:

1. Gather and review relevant information. Information may include any of the following:
 - a. needs assessments
 - b. input from Public Libraries Branch, organizations' Boards, and/or other external partners
 - c. historical documentation
 - d. data analysis
 - e. guidance from adult education, learning design, and/or subject matter experts
 - f. identification of short and long-term trends

2. Decide which areas of learning to target with professional development, which organization(s) will lead delivery, and any supplementary projects that advance PD.
3. Create an operational plan that details goals, responsibilities, and timelines.
4. Implement the plan.
5. Gather feedback on progress and adjust plans as needed.

Decision-Making

Coalition decisions will be made:

1. in alignment with the principles of collaboration listed above.
2. by consensus. Consensus is defined as general agreement. Organizations do not need to have the same level of enthusiasm for outcomes, but the group will not move forward on a decision if one or more organizations reject the idea.

If a PD-related suggestion is made to a member of the Coalition by an external party (e.g. Public Libraries Branch, an organization's Board), the suggestion will be brought to the Coalition for discussion and decision-making.

Communication

The PLPD Coalition operates on trust and openness. Members are encouraged to err on the side of transparency when deciding what to share with the group. For example, a Coalition member may share information not for decision-making but because other members may benefit from learning about the practices and processes in use.

Meetings

The Coalition will hold a recurring, virtual, 1.5 hour meeting every two months. Members will take turns leading the meeting and recording actions. A standing agenda will be developed to structure these meetings, e.g., check in, new initiatives, challenges, actions. External experts or groups may be periodically invited to join these meetings.

Listserv Communication

A listserv will be available for Coalition members to communicate between meetings, e.g. when an update needs to be shared, or a quick decision is needed. Listserv members will be the Managers/Executive Directors of the Coalition member organizations.

Documentation

The Coalition will maintain a Google Drive of relevant historical documents as well as meeting notes.

Framework Review

An informal check-in will be a standing item on Coalition meeting agendas. The Coalition views feedback and iteration as beneficial and emphasizes creative problem-solving if one aspect of the framework is not working.

The Coalition will undertake an intentional review of this framework in one year (i.e. confirm continued agreement with the framework's purpose, principles, etc.).

Conclusion

This framework represents a novel approach to collaboration among the ten Coalition members. While there remains work to be done in developing a time-bound strategy and making operational decisions to enhance the efficacy of professional development delivery, this framework serves as a foundational document on which to build that strategy. It lays the groundwork for future initiatives and fosters a unified vision for collective progress.

Endorsements

Endorsed by the Association of BC Public Library Directors Board on June 26, 2025

Endorsed by the BC Libraries Cooperative Board on September 18, 2024

Endorsed by the BC Library Association Board on September 13, 2024

Endorsed the BC Library Trustees Association Board on October 3, 2024

Endorsed by the IslandLink Library Federation Board on November 14, 2024

Endorsed by the Kootenay Library Federation Board on November 13, 2024

Endorsed by the North Central Library Federation Board on October 21, 2024

Endorsed by the North East Library Federation Board on November 4, 2024

Endorsed by the Northwest Library Federation Board on October 18, 2024

Endorsed by the Public Library InterLINK Board on September 24, 2024