# **Country Report For Canada**

**International Council on English Braille**

**Mid-Term Executive Meeting**

**Dublin, April 2018**

## **An Update From Braille Literacy Canada**

Since the 6th General Assembly in 2016 Braille Literacy Canada (BLC) has implemented the following:

* A UEB listserv where subscribers can post questions related to the code. Phyllis Landon has agreed to be our subject matter expert.
* A bi-monthly e-newsletter containing articles on braille-related topics.
* Bi-monthly teleconferences on topics such as refreshable braille technology and UEB technical material (which was facilitated by Lorraine Banks).
* Online surveys to get more input from members and non-members.

Late in 2016 we finalized the French translation of the UEB rule book. Unfortunately, the organization that had initially offered to create the brf files is not currently in a position to do so. That portion of the project is on hold for now.

The federal government has been working to develop national disability rights legislation, and in 2017 BLC held a consultation and prepared a submission that emphasized the importance of braille and the rights of braille users.

We are continuing to run the Brailler Bounce Initiative, which we first launched in 2015. In this program we take unused or unwanted Perkins braillers, refurbish them and make them available to individuals who need them. We have provided braillers to people of all ages across Canada, from beginning braille readers to lifelong users.

BLC recently revitalized our Teaching and Learning Committee. In the past this committee (chaired by Dr. Cay Holbrook) conducted numerous research projects related to braille instruction, such as the ABC Braille Study. Now under the leadership of Natalie Martiniello, the committee is looking at possible research projects, some of which are related to UEB technical material.

Another ongoing initiative in which BLC is involved is a working group with organizations across Canada to investigate a national standard or certification of braille proficiency geared specifically to teachers. We are also participating in mainstream literacy events whenever possible, to increase awareness of the value of braille. One such event is Word Vancouver, which is held each year in September.

At this time we are in the process of revamping our web site. There have been some glitches along the way, but we are hoping to launch the new site before our Annual General Meting (AGM), which will take place in Ottawa on May 26th. At the AGM we will be hosting a workshop on pairing braille displays with iOS devices. We are also planning a workshop on BrailleBlaster, the free transcription software developed by the American Printing House for the Blind.

## **Other items of Note**

* CNIB celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. A number of events and activities are taking place across the country.
* On January 24, 2018, Darleen Bogart was made an Officer of the Order of Canada for her invaluable contribution to braille.
* Every two years the Canadian Vision Teachers host a national conference for educators of the blind and visually impaired. This conference, called Seeing Beyond the Horizon, takes place this spring in Edmonton, Alberta.
* The Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA), formerly the CNIB library, will be launching a program called Braille On Demand. Future titles produced as brf files will only be embossed when requested. Patrons do not have to return these hard copies to the library.
* The National Network of Equitable Library Service (NNELS) is a repository of content owned and sustained by Canadian Public Libraries that provides books in accessible formats. They are investigating ways to make more titles available in braille.

I would like to close this report by noting that I am finishing my last term as president of BLC. At our upcoming AGM we will elect my successor. It has been an honour to serve BLC in this way.

Respectfully submitted,

Jen Goulden, President of Braille Literacy Canada

Ottawa, Ontario

March 1, 2018