

March 1, 2011

To: House Appropriations Subcommittee on Dept. of Education Representative Rogers
From: James C. Seidl, Chair Michigan Library Cooperative Directors
Subj: State Aid for libraries

I want to thank Representative Rogers and subcommittee members for allowing me to talk about **21st CENTURY COOPERATIVE LIBRARY SERVICES**

Michigan's Cooperatives were created in 1978 to assist the Constitutional requirement to support public libraries. Over the next eight months we are exploring options of streamlining our operations and reshaping the delivery of core services.

Cooperatives will work to maximize the most effective library service through the investigation of options available to libraries in funding crises. (Example: Troy Public Library which is closing on May 1st) Libraries will need assistance in developing funding models, including possible consolidation with other libraries or moving to a locally supported levy.

Cooperatives will expand statewide participation in collaborative purchases to maximize impact and purchasing power for:

1. Acquisitions of electronic, print and non-print materials (Example downloadable audio and E-Pubs)
2. Purchase of library specific supplies and consumables
3. Purchase of computer hardware and software

In addition, Cooperatives will develop and implement a standard set of paradigms which preserve and protect critical services universal to all patrons seeking library services such as:

Encourage preschool literacy programs and year round maintenance and enhancement of reading skills via summer reading and after school program support, which will help to achieve Governor Snyder and Superintendent Flanagan's goal of 3rd grade literacy skills.

Promote staff development and skill enhancement through continuing education to provide 21st century services through the use of the Learning Express Library and Job and Career Accelerator, both available in the MEL databases.

Increase usage of E-Rate reimbursement for telecommunication and Internet expenses.

Serve as the gateway to business startup through internet and data base access via training and information resources.

Promote healthy communities through program development and collaboration with health, social service and recreational providers.

Develop expanded collaborations between all types of libraries by expanding use of local and regional library automation systems for economies of scale (joint library automation systems such as Jackson District Library and Jackson Community College).

Sharing of local and regional resources to reduce duplication wherever possible.

The number of regional cooperatives has decreased from the original 18 created in 1977 to 11 cooperatives today. We are examining whether further consolidation will result in greater efficiency and cost savings. There are however, potential roadblocks to further consolidation of the regions:

1. Municipal Employees Retirement System pension program– 4 cooperatives
2. Union contract obligations – 2 cooperatives
3. PA 89 has no provision for merger or consolidation in the law.
4. Technological innovation and technical support for Integrated Library Systems (circulation systems) that provides computer services to 60% of state population at cost effective economy of scale.

Thank you for allowing me to share where we are headed and do you have any questions?