Michigan Library Advocacy Day – Summary of Issues

State Aid to Libraries
The 396 public library systems in Michigan continue to use State Aid to Libraries (currently at $15.1 Million) wisely and effectively in the delivery of their programs and services to all Michiganders. Michigan libraries serve millions of patrons and continue to innovate, expand and evolve both in-person and virtual programming. In 1977, the legislature stated that 50 cents per capita for library funding was achievable. Only last year, in 2022 (45 years later) did we finally hit this goal. Libraries are the heart and soul of every community throughout Michigan, so we continue to ask for increased funding in FY23 for these cultural institutions. Governor Whitmer has proposed flat funding for FY23, MLA proposes asking for additional funding for libraries. State Aid to Libraries is an essential resource in providing needed services for communities, and libraries continue to step up and contribute to the thriving and dynamic place our citizens want to live, work and visit.

Open Meetings Act
Establishing a permanent remote meeting option would provide citizens with a safe and accessible means to provide valuable feedback to library leadership. MLA and our membership across the state strongly urge the Michigan Legislature to indefinitely extend the ability to meet remotely with global amendments to the Open Meetings Act. MLA is in support of HB5689 introduced in January 2022 by Representative John Damoose which adopts a permanent change to the Open Meetings Act to allow libraries and cooperatives to meet remotely. MLA is in the beginning stages of promoting a committee hearing at the House Committee on Local Government and Municipal Finance.

Headlee Amendment and Proposal A Reform
It is the position of MLA that in an economic downturn, when values are decreasing millage rates should be allowed to go up at the same rate of inflation. MLA supports legislation to reform Headlee and Proposal A and help to stabilize library revenues during an economic downturn. MLA is in support of HB5337 introduced in September 2021 by Representative Jim Ellison which strikes language to make any rollbacks permanent. It has been referred to the Committee on Local Government and Municipal Finance but hasn’t gained any momentum at this time.

School Librarians
All of Michigan’s students need school librarians who provide access to diverse resources, improve student achievement, prepare students for college and career, and support technology integration. We call on Michigan lawmakers to support and enact bills HB4663, HB4664, and HB4665 that were introduced by Representative Camilleri, Representative Koleszar, and Representative O’Neal to ensure that no child is without access to a certified school librarian and that schools in Michigan be required to have a school library.

Open Education Resources (OER)
Michiganders deserve equitable access to learning opportunities. The use of open education resources (OER) in colleges and universities impacts the success of students and makes obtaining a college degree more accessible for all. The Michigan library community supports state assistance that could be used for the implementation of programs or services which reduce the cost of required educational materials for colleges and universities.