

Michigan Department of Education – Library of Michigan
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Good morning. Thank you for inviting me to speak before this joint subcommittee that includes one of our own Library of Michigan Board members, Senator Clark-Coleman. I am glad to have the opportunity to share with you what the Library of Michigan has been and what it will become under the implementation of the Executive Orders and Directive. In doing so, I hope to dispel some of the misunderstandings or fears that may have developed about the collections and programs that will have new situations as we move forward with the plan.

The Library of Michigan is older than the state of Michigan, having been established in 1828 as essentially the state’s “library of congress.” 182 years later we are still serving all branches of state government and all of the state’s two thousand or more libraries and the residents of Michigan.

In the Executive Order that eliminated the Dept. of History, Arts and Libraries, all Library of Michigan functions, assets, and staff were transferred to the Michigan Dept. of Education except for the two Census and State Demographer positions and the Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and its 9 staff members.

The Library of Michigan provides statewide services to libraries. This includes administering the annual state aid to public libraries appropriation and its distribution to the nearly 400 public libraries covering the state. (Note: this state aid to public libraries is in no way related to the state aid to public schools that you heard about yesterday.) We also collect statistics on public library services and usage as required by the federal government. The Library of Michigan is the state agency that receives the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) federal funds that are administered and distributed to states annually by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Almost all of these federal funds, typically hovering around \$5 million per year, are used by the Library of Michigan to administer and develop the Michigan eLibrary (www.mel.org), Michigan’s 24/7, any-time, anywhere virtual library, commonly referred to as “MeL”. MeL is comprised of several components, each of which provides a vast array of online resources at no additional cost to the user.

First, over 40 databases of commercially published online information, including millions of articles, mostly full-text, from journals, periodicals, magazines, etc., make up a “super online information resource” that costs about \$4 million annually and saves Michigan libraries of all types collectively over \$72 million annually – which would be the cost to them if they all had to duplicate the purchase of these informational databases on their own. During just the first quarter of fiscal year 2010, Michigan residents completed over 22 million searches of the MeL databases, accessing over 3.8 million full text articles not available freely through simple Google or Yahoo searches. Many of these resources serve residents looking for jobs; seeking help in designing resumes; taking practice tests for job certification; or starting new businesses.

Second, the Michigan eLibrary Catalog, or MeLCat, is the most visible public face of MeL today. Just five years old, this statewide resource-sharing system has nearly 400 libraries (public, academic, K-12, and some special libraries), all participating in the borrowing and lending of library materials from the U.P. to the southeast and southwest corners of the Lower Peninsula. This statewide library catalog contains searchable records for nearly 40 million library items with over 80,000 requests being made by Michigan residents monthly – to have books and other library materials from other libraries across the state delivered to them in just a few days for pick-up at their own home libraries.

The MeL Michigana component is still in its infancy at this point, but it already offers access to millions of digitized images of Michigan historical materials held by Michigan libraries all over the state.

And the newest part of the Michigan eLibrary fits perfectly within our new parent Dept. (MDE), although the development phase of the Michigan Online Resources for Educators (or MORE) started long before we knew we would be re-situated. MORE contains links to the resources within the MeL databases as well as links to thousands of freely accessible online resources, all linked to and searchable by Michigan's current curriculum standards. Teachers in Michigan's K-12 schools are already thrilled about the opportunity this provides to them for building effective and up-to-date lesson plans tied specifically to the grade level and high school content expectations they need to meet. Since MORE is part of MeL it is also available to parents, students, and non-students at any time of the day or night from anywhere a computer has Internet access.

The federal money we use to maintain the Michigan eLibrary is partially dependent upon our maintenance of effort numbers reflecting how many state general fund dollars are used to sustain library service in Michigan. Since the largest general fund contribution toward Michigan libraries and library service is the annual state aid to public libraries appropriation, state funding for public libraries is extremely important to the sustainability of MeL. It is also equally important, though, that the state's expenditures toward public library service help public libraries to fully utilize the statewide library resources, embodied in the Michigan eLibrary – for statewide delivery of shared MeLCat materials, covering costs of shared online library systems, and subscriptions for robust bandwidth and connectivity to the Internet to access any part of MeL. State support for public libraries to participate in these statewide services and enhance their local library service ultimately ensures access to all of the Michigan eLibrary services and the services of public libraries to all Michigan residents.

The Library of Michigan provides direct service to all branches of state government, mostly in the form of reference research for any government worker. When information is needed by legislative offices, the courts, the attorney general's staff, or someone in the Dept. of Education or Community Health or elsewhere – anyone in state government need only dial 3-1300 or email librarian@michigan.gov to ask for the information they need from our crack reference staff.

The collections we physically hold and those we access online enable us to do the research necessary. The Michigan Collection contains information on all things Michigan – local history, county atlases from a century ago to present day, literature published by Michigan authors or set in Michigan or about Michigan. The Library of Michigan Act (PA 540 of 1982) also charges us to collect, preserve and make permanently accessible all documents published by the state of Michigan (any branch or department). This record of the state’s publications includes printed publications, online documents, and websites of state government. Keeping up with the on-going stream of state government publications is a full-time, never-ending activity, but it is an essential responsibility of the Library of Michigan as the state’s library.

The State Law Library is also an integral part of the Library of Michigan’s core collections and services. The State Law Library is essentially the official record of the law of Michigan and includes up-to-date information and resources on Michigan law, as well as the historic record of the law from statehood forward. Law related reference research is conducted constantly in response to phone and email requests coming in daily, particularly from state government, but also from the general public.

Statewide programming for libraries of all types also emanates from our Michigan-focused collections. Every year we coordinate the selection of the 20 most notable Michigan books, around which the Michigan Notable Books Program has an evening author-recognition event and a statewide tour of the authors to scores of libraries around the state. Similarly, the Michigan Reads! one-state, one-children’s-book program features a children’s book by a Michigan or Great Lakes author or illustrator, and distributes the book and out-of-the box programming centered around the book, to encourage reading to children from birth through 2nd grade by parents, teachers, and caregivers. These two popular programs have been generously funded by corporate sponsorships and Michigan Humanities Council grants through the Library of Michigan Foundation.

The Martha W. Griffiths Michigan Rare Book Room opened on the fourth floor of the Michigan Library and Historical Center in 2003 and houses an extremely valuable and unique collection of rare materials collected over time since the inception of the Library in 1828. Its over 20,000 volumes include items that are extended parts of each of the other Library of Michigan collections – Michigan, Michigan and Federal Documents, and Law.

Besides some general non-Michigan/non-government collections we have retained over time, we are also the home to two very important non-Michigan collections and services: the Abrams Historical Foundation Collection and the Regional Federal Depository Program and Collection for the state of Michigan.

The Abrams Collection is the non-Michigan genealogy collection that is used by Michigan residents but also by people tracking their family history from all over the country and beyond. The Abrams Foundation has contributed over \$2 million through the

Library of Michigan Foundation in support of the collection and its programming over the past couple of decades. It is one of the top 10 genealogy collections in the country.

The Government Printing Office (G.P.O.) in Washington, D.C. runs the national federal documents depository program that ensures U.S. residents access to all federal publications, present and past, in each state of the union. Every state has multiple selective depositories that receive only limited, selected federal materials, and each state has a Regional Federal Depository, which for our state is currently the Library of Michigan. Under our agreement with the G.P.O. we house a continually growing collection of over 2 million federal documents, and we also work with the dozens of selective depositories in the state to ensure their active participation in the program under the guidelines set out by the federal program.

So, the Library of Michigan activities have been and continue to be quite expansive. In the past several years, though, our dwindling resources have made adequate coverage of all of our operations more challenging each year. We operate in this current year with an operations budget that was reduced by a full 10% from the year before. We had a minimal staffing level of 45 FTE when we transferred into the Michigan Dept. of Education in October, but even since then, our numbers have fallen off by another 8% (to 41 FTE). With the economic realities for the next several years looming, and in response to the Executive Orders and Executive Directive of last year, we have had to look long and hard at what we can effectively provide in collections and services as a state library into the future. The approach we took in that evaluation was to re-focus strictly on core state library functions and responsibilities, identifying what activities must be done by the state in order to ensure they are accomplished, and what non-core activities could be covered by non-state entities as their stewards and funding sources.

Hence, the Department issued a memo (attached to this printed testimony) late last week outlining the Library of Michigan Executive Order Implementation Plan by which we intend to ensure the sustainability of Michigan's state library, the Library of Michigan. The plan defines our renewed focus on Michigan materials and programs (including the Michigan, Michigan Documents, Law, and Rare Book Collections); reference research services for state government; and continued support of library services for libraries and their patrons statewide.

We acknowledge the importance and value of the Abrams Historical Foundation Collection of genealogy materials and the need for a Regional Federal Depository within the state of Michigan. However, both of these important collections and functions could be maintained and supported outside of state government. Our plan demonstrates our commitment to defining what resources, access, and staffing on the part of the new stewards of these collections would be essential, and to identifying those institutions that might be willing and able to meet those needs for the future. And, along with that, we are firmly committed to continuing to provide core state library services at the Library of Michigan within our given boundaries of staffing and funding levels.