The library card is the smartest card in your wallet.

2017 MLA/ITEM LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

The Minnesota Library Association (MLA) and the Information and Technology Educators of Minnesota (ITEM) support state funding for the following programs that sustain library services in Minnesota:

1. **Basic funding for libraries**
   - Regional Library Basic System Support (RLBSS): increased funding from $13.57 million to $16.57 million annually with a corresponding formula change to provide stable funding for all regional public library systems across the state
   - Multicounty Multitype Library Support: increased funding from $1.3 million to $2 million annually to support communication, resource sharing, staff development, and collaborative programming connecting all types of Minnesota libraries

2. **Legacy funding for libraries**
   - Appropriation of a $4.25 million annual allocation of Arts and Cultural Heritage Legacy funding for regional public library systems to provide high quality arts, history, and cultural programming in every corner of Minnesota

3. **Broadband access across Minnesota**
   
   Minnesota’s libraries play a critical role in providing convenient, reliable broadband access to enhance economic development, college career readiness, and e-government services. K-12 schools use media-rich online educational content to support and enhance their learning environment. MLA and ITEM support:
   - Increased annual funding for K12 Broadband Equity Aid from $3.75 million per year to $9.75 million
   - Continued annual funding of Regional Library Telecommunications Aid (RLTA) at $2.3 million

4. **Bonding**
   - MLA and ITEM support the appropriation of $10 million over the 2017-18 biennium for construction and remodeling of public library buildings through the State’s currently authorized matching program (M.S. 134.45)
The following efforts enhance library service to Minnesota’s students and citizens. We support:

- The Minnesota Department of Education’s inclusion of school library media programs in the plan to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Effective school library programs (including a licensed school media specialist at every school) increase literacy, academic achievement, and information literacy skills that make Minnesota home to the world’s best workforce.

- Funding for Minitex, the Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM), the Minnesota Digital Library (MDL), and MNLINK, the statewide interlibrary loan system.

- The continued growth of Ebooks Minnesota, a collaborative effort between the Minnesota Department of Education and Minitex, to provide much-needed access to ebooks for libraries and school media centers.

- After-school and community programs that recognize the essential role libraries play to foster early literacy and provide out-of-school learning opportunities that reduce the achievement gap.