2021 Legislative Priorities

Minnesota Library Association (MLA) and Information Technology Educators of Minnesota (ITEM)

Support Lifelong Learners by Improving Minnesota School and Public Library Services

• Provide adequate funding to the regional library systems so that libraries across the state have sufficient capacity to support students and citizens attain educational equity and economic recovery through digital inclusion. Specifically, the legislature should increase funds for Regional Library Basic System Support and amend the distribution formula to stabilize revenues to the 12 regional public library systems.
• Incentivize school districts to increase student and classroom teacher access to licensed media specialists with state matching funds. Access to licensed school media specialist services has a demonstrable positive impact on student academic achievement.

Assist Communities in securing quality library facility and cultural programming

• Maintain Local Government Aid (LGA) and County Program Aid to help local governments maintain library services.
• Provide state bonding dollars for construction and remodelling of public library buildings through the state’s authorized dollar-for-dollar matching program to ensure safe, accessible, and welcoming library spaces for Minnesotans.
• Support Arts & Cultural Heritage funding for regional public library systems at the same level as in previous biennial budgets to support arts, arts education, and arts access, and to preserve Minnesota’s history and cultural heritage.

Expand Broadband and Digital Access to All Minnesotans

• MLA-ITEM supports the efforts of the MN Rural Broadband Coalition and their legislative requests for community broadband access. Equitable access to broadband, internet, and technology is vital for all Minnesotans to achieve economic success in today’s digital society.
• Maintain resources for the E-Library of Minnesota that enables every library and school in Minnesota to have access to the highest quality online resources, including research databases, career prep tools, and more.
• Maintain funding for Minitex and provide bonding support for public Higher Education facilities that improve access to library and digital learning space.

Intellectual Freedom and Network Neutrality

• MLA-ITEM supports intellectual freedom and legislation requiring internet service providers to abide by ‘net neutrality’ principles.