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Maryland State Library Agency

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Response to the Analyst's Review

Senate Education, Business & Administration Subcommittee
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House Education & Economic Development Subcommittee
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The Maryland State Library Agency (MSL) welcomes this opportunity to share with the Committee some of its success stories and to address information in the analysis.

During the 2017 Session, the General Assembly unanimously passed historic legislation establishing the Maryland State Library (MSL) Agency and the Maryland State Library Board during the 2017 Session (Senate Bill 587/House Bill 1094). These changes to the Maryland Code created a new independent State agency and placed libraries on equal footing with K-12 and higher education. It gives public libraries a distinct identity within the Education Article, parallel to the structure within counties, where public schools and public libraries have separate governing boards, resulting in strong and successful education partnerships.

Governor Hogan signed this bill into law on April 18, 2017 with the effective date of July 1, 2017. The State Librarian administers the agency with oversight by the newly formed State Library Board. The Board is the successor to the Maryland Advisory Council on Libraries, effectively carrying over the terms of the current 7 members and transferring the duties and responsibilities of the Council to the State Library Board.

The State Library Agency offices were relocated in June 2017 from MSDE headquarters to temporary space in the basement of a shared facility with the non-profit Maryland Library Association in Baltimore, resulting in a loss of 3,000 square feet of workspace. MSL, working with the Department of General Services, has signed a lease and will move to a more suitable permanent location in late spring.

MSL continues to administer State and Federal funds to support Maryland libraries in their mission to offer outstanding resources, programs, and excellent customer service. The agency provides leadership to promote planning and innovation in the development of library programs, encourage the ongoing development of staff expertise through education and training and promote resource sharing among all types of libraries. Responsibilities include oversight of: the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Maryland's Public Libraries, the State Library Resource Center, the three Regional Libraries, the Library Capital Grants Program, and the Deaf Culture Digital Library.

The **Library Capital Grants Program** assists in the funding of public library capital projects. The grant program continues to meet the goal of geographic diversity in the distribution of awards. Since fiscal 2008, twenty two (22) public library systems have received grant awards for capital improvements. The current request includes recommended funding for the Calvert County Library System. If approved, this will bring the total number of library systems to 23.

Upon completion of current projects through FY 2019, **the State's investment of \$55,025,000 will have generated more than \$300,000,000 in local matching funds since the inception of the program.** Five (5) new state of the art library facilities are currently underway in Anne Arundel, Cecil, Frederick, Montgomery and St. Mary's Counties with support from the State.

The State Library Resource Center (SLRC) Phase II Renovations are included in the State's Five-Year Capital Improvement Program (FY 2017– FY 2021) recommendation. The estimated cost of the project is approximately \$102 million in State funds plus a substantial amount provided by Baltimore City and the EPFL Foundation. This project is expected to be complete by spring 2019.

The **Maryland State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH)** is a statewide library program serving 8,000 blind, visually impaired, physically disabled and reading disabled Maryland residents. This library is the primary source of books, periodicals and other information in formats such as Braille, large print, and recorded books. Over 200,000 items are borrowed per year. LBPH offers an ambitious series of programs including tactile tours of the Walters Museum and other fine arts programs, technology programs, poetry readings, and outreach to various public library systems and health related organizations throughout the state.

LBPH represents the State Library's most visible success story over the last year in terms of outreach. LBPH has begun targeting outreach opportunities that are focused on the health care providers, caregivers, and families of citizens with print disabilities. LBPH will be tracking its return on investment in its participation in these events. LBPH has also increased its social media presence in the hopes of reaching those health care providers, caregivers, family members, and potential patrons. LBPH was not expecting an immediate increase in new patrons, as it takes one to two years for a new marketing plan to show results. While attendance at outreach activities is higher, not all of those people are eligible for services themselves.

The analyst has done an excellent job of highlighting these changes. From fiscal 2013 through 2018, the overall number of programs provided has increased substantially from 31 in fiscal 2013 to 126 in fiscal 2018, a 75.4% increase. This increase correlates with increased funding in fiscal 2016 and the filling of several important positions within LBPH, including an outreach librarian.

With the increased number of outreach programs offered by LBPH, there has been a corresponding increase in the number of individuals attending a LBPH outreach program. The number of individuals attending LBPH outreach programs increased by 703% from fiscal 2013 to 2018, going from 1,845 to 14,808.

The **Public Libraries and State Networking Branch (PLSNB)** provides leadership in the area of library development to meet the library and information needs of all residents. Through statewide collaborative assessment, staff identifies library needs and provides for research and the distribution of findings, provides technical and professional assistance, collects and reports public library statistics, and coordinates marketing and outreach for libraries throughout the state.

PLSNB has oversight of and coordinates the **Maryland State Library Network**. The network provides Maryland residents with access to information through interlibrary loans; direct lending of resources through public, academic, special, and school libraries; technical assistance, staff training, and the coordination of marketing and outreach activities. The network encompasses: Maryland's public libraries, the State Library Resource Center and the three regional libraries.

Maryland's Public Libraries ongoing efforts to continually transform to meet society's changing needs have proven to be very successful. Our libraries are a community place, a place for collegial learning and community engagement. It is imperative to ensure that Maryland's libraries have the capacity to evolve to maintain their status as 21st Century Libraries capable of ensuring access to the expanding world of resources through collections of traditional and digital content, employing highly-trained, customer-oriented staff, providing cutting-edge technology infrastructure and, maintaining a physical presence in the community and a virtual presence on the World Wide Web.

Satisfaction remains high at Maryland's public libraries as they transform to meet society's changing needs by deepening their engagement within their communities in many ways, addressing current social, economic, and environmental issues, often through partnerships with governments and other organizations. With more than 190 physical locations in communities of all sizes across the State, public libraries make powerful partners in bridging the digital divide. They are essential providers of public internet access, computers, and training that community members need to compete in today's digital world.

The function of libraries as community centers is readily recognized. Librarians have been referred to as "ad hoc social workers and navigators" who "help local people figure out the complexities of life." This role is especially evident, and never more essential, than in times of crisis. Librarians respond in such times by delivering direct services and creating resources to help children and families cope.

Nurturing from a loving parent or caregiver in the early years of a child's life supports healthy brain development that forms the foundation for success later. Public and school libraries are taking a proactive approach toward engaging caregivers in supporting children's early literacy development. Maryland libraries participate in the Every Child Ready to Read program, an excellent tool to ensure significantly greater engagement of parents and caregivers in the libraries that used this program.

Low health literacy is a major source of economic inefficiency in the U.S. healthcare system. Nine in ten adults have difficulty understanding and making use of the health information they encounter every day. Library staff help people understand these issues. Maryland's Public libraries work closely with community partners to help find ways to address the national opioid crisis.

Maryland's Public Libraries continue to be among the best in the nation, ranking near the top in most measures of library effectiveness. While total circulation is down slightly overall, there are several changes since last year that start to tell the story of how residents are using libraries differently than they have in the past. More people see the value of libraries and are registering for library cards. Maryland Libraries created more programming and purchased more eBooks, and the attendance at these programs and the use of eBooks has gone up accordingly. More people are using computers at the library, and Wi-Fi use continues to increase. Investment in libraries is also growing. There was an overall increase in funding to libraries last year, and a large investment in new building projects and retrofitting library facilities. Staffing levels increased, and reflect the ongoing pursuit of bringing in highly trained new talent who reflect the communities they serve.

The 2017 library statistics show that:

- 3.6 million, or **59% of Maryland residents, have library cards** (up from 56% in the previous year, a 5.4% increase) and are eligible to borrow from any public library in the State to meet their information and reading needs.
- **Total registered users** increased by 5.13%.
- Maryland residents borrowed a total of just under **57 million items** — 15.7 items per registered borrower. **Total eMaterial circulation** increased by 18.57%.
- **Total programs** offered by libraries increased by 3.25% while **total program attendance** increased by 4.62%
- **Total library collections** increased by 5.67%, with **total E-material holdings** increasing by 43.66%.
- **Over 26 million Marylanders visited** the library in 2017.
- Librarians across the state **answered 8.2 million questions**.
- 100% of Maryland **public library systems are connected to the Internet**. Approximately **5,200 computers are available to the public** through the 190 branch libraries and more than **5.6 million computer sessions** were conducted in 2017. All Maryland library systems provide Wi-Fi access, and across the state, there were **more than 15 million Wi-Fi logins in 2017**.

A significant portion of the funding for the Maryland State Library is received from the Institute of Museums and Libraries (IMLS) through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). This funding is integral to programming in Maryland libraries. In addition to ongoing statewide programs such as Ask Us Now, One Maryland One Book, the Library Associate Training Institute, and the Summer Reading Program, LSTA funding allows the State Library to provide funding for staff development grants (often the only source of funds most libraries have to ensure ongoing training and development of their staff); STEM programs; eBooks; statewide data analytics support, and tuition reimbursement to provide staff with a bachelor's degree the opportunity to get a Master's of Library Science degree (the national accreditation standard of

the Maryland State Library and the American Library Association (ALA). This funding also supports Competitive Grants to provide the opportunity to promote innovation, collaboration and partnerships among public libraries and other library types like school or community colleges; youth services programs and services targeted to birth – grade 12; services to target populations (programs and services that target specific groups (e.g. seniors or English language learners) and; research and community assessment that enables libraries to understand users and their needs.

Public libraries continue to be a cornerstone of our democracy, serving the needs and interests of the community. They are deeply appreciated, especially for their role and impact in the community. Libraries are seen as having a mandate to take on an expanded role in public life and most parents highly value libraries as a resource for their children.

Fiscal 2019 represents the first year that the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) has operated as a totally independent State agency, having received financial and human resource services support from the Maryland State Department of Education in fiscal 2018. This last year, we have been working with the Department of Budget and Management and other State agencies to set up independent oversight of personnel and financial management. We upgraded an existing PIN to create the new position of Administrator III, Finance and Support Services. The 2 new positions provided to the agency in the 2020 allowance will enable MSL to better handle the fiscal and human resources responsibilities of LBPH, Maryland's Public Libraries, the State Library Network, the Library Capital Grants Programs, and the Deaf Culture Digital Library for which MSLA is now responsible.

The Maryland State Library accomplishments over the last year include the development of the Chart of Accounts for the agency, including updated subprogram information and sub-object codes; set up of MSL credit card accounts; and the set up of FMIS, including customized FMIS security access. The agency worked with Central Payroll and DBM to set up the new agency and transfer the payroll from MSDE to MSL, the General Accounting Division (GAD) to ensure that State Aid was administered in a timely manner, the Maryland State Retirement and Pension (MSRP) system to ensure that State Aid, Retirement Aid, and Optional Retirement Aid were processed. In addition, MSL developed the FY2020 Capital and Operating Budgets for submission to the Governor; and administered facilities updates at LBPH and MSL headquarters,

Again, we wish to thank the General Assembly for their support of the Maryland State Library Agency.