Massachusetts LIBRARY SYSTEM

March 19, 2025

Dear Superintendent Keegan:

I am writing to provide a summary of the benefits for member libraries within the Massachusetts Library System (MLS). While there is no charge for membership in the MLS, all members must meet our eligibility requirements; including compliance with a requirement for an on-site certified school library teacher and established and posted hours of service. Most MLS services are provided at no charge and are not provided to libraries that fail to meet membership requirements.

The benefits of having a certified school library teacher available to students and faculty are endless. Library teachers support faculty and student learning on a variety of essential topics including research skills, college and career readiness, and collaboration skills. I encourage you to read Norwell's Elementary Schools' websites to learn more about the critical work being provided by your school libraries:

Grace Farrar Cole Elementary School: https://cole.norwellschools.org/welcome
William G. Vinal Elementary School: https://vinal.norwellschools.org/library

MLS Services:

OverDrive K-12 Shared Sora Collection (Commonwealth eBook Collections): MLS manages the statewide eBook program, Commonwealth eBook Collections for a very reasonable assessment. Specifically, school libraries join the OverDrive K-12 Shared Sora Collection, consisting of 250,000+ eBooks, audiobooks, and magazines across all genres and formats aimed at a K-12 audience. The estimated cost for a school to recreate this collection on their own would exceed $500,000.00.

Online Content and Databases: Access, customized library links, training, and support for many hundreds of online magazines, journals, and newspaper titles including the Boston Globe archives from the 1980s and a large suite of online Encyclopedia Britannica resources. The average retail value for a library to purchase these services on their own would exceed $60,000.

Training events and conferences are provided throughout the Commonwealth and online at no charge. MLS hosts hundreds of events each year with thousands of attendees. We estimate the retail price for such events to range from $150-$250 per event. These events provide an invaluable opportunity for members to build relationships with colleagues to strengthen their job knowledge and resources. MLS also provides consulting and referral services on a wide variety of topics including space planning, weeding, and strategic planning to members at no charge.

MLS offers a group-purchasing cooperative for library materials like books and media and library supplies. This service provides members with $13.5 million in annual savings on library necessities.

We support the sharing of resources in several ways. When a library needs an item that is not available locally, be it a book, CD, or article, MLS can almost always find it and have it shipped to the library. The library is responsible for returning the item to the lending library. Libraries that ship many items may be eligible to join our courier service at no charge. Our contractor delivers 11 million items each year to libraries across Massachusetts.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sarah Sogigian
Executive Director
508-357-2121 x311