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August 11, 2020

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Michigan Association of Superintendents & Administrators
Chris Wigent, Executive Director
1001 Centennial Way, Suite 300
Lansing, MI 48917-9279

Dear Mr. Wigent and Members of the Board of the Michigan Association of Superintendents & Administrators,

The board and staff of the Michigan Library Association are writing to request continued support of all Michigan's 1.5 Million students by maintaining or increasing certified school librarian in all 894 Michigan school districts. We stand united with the Michigan Association of Media Educators (MAME) in our efforts to refocus attention on this critical and essential resource for our children.

During these unprecedented times of a global pandemic, Superintendents in each of our school districts have the ability and the authority needed to make significant changes to the downsizing of school libraries and librarians. We ask that as an association with a strong and robust membership base that you help bring focus and direction to this challenge through your own advocacy priorities. We ask that you maintain and increase the support in keeping libraries and librarians as a part of the school day.

Do you know what parents and students lose when school library positions are cut or reduced? In all of the research we have conducted we have learned that school librarians improve academic achievement; help to keep students safe and teach them to make responsible good decisions; support creative, engaged, collaborative, and socially well-adjusted students, and help prepare students for college and career.

Do you know that certified school librarians are critical in mitigating COVID-19 learning loss?

- There are many studies that point to access to books as a method of mitigating the Summer Slide. If we translate this to COVID-19 slide as well

as the current #BlackLivesMatter movement, the need for certified school librarians to provide access to diverse literature for our school communities is greater than ever.

- There are concerns that COVID-19 will widen achievement gaps. Yet, studies show that access to a certified school librarian is even more important for students who are economically disadvantaged, black, Hispanic, or have disabilities.
- There will be a need to differentiate and accelerate learning to mitigate the COVID-19 slide. Our teachers will need even more support from certified school librarians to collaborate with them to meet students' needs and to provide resources for differentiation.
- There will most likely be a continued need for hybrid and/or distance learning. Certified school librarians continue to be critical in supporting professional development for teachers in distance learning tools; supporting technology issues for the entire school community; and curating e-resources to best support learning.

In closing, we reiterate our united stance in maintaining or increasing certified school librarian in all 894 Michigan school districts. We believe strongly that librarians are a critical and essential resource for our children. We ask that the Michigan Association of Superintendents & Administrators advocate strongly to maintain and increase the support in keeping libraries and librarians as a part of the school day.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Deborah E. Mikula
Executive Director
Michigan Library Association

cc: Michigan Association of Media Educators, Cat Kerns, President