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ISTC 601

Professional Organization Evaluation

Maryland Library Association is an organization that promotes leadership and professional development for anyone that is committed to libraries. It advocates principals at the state level and is a state member of the American Library Association. Anyone that is library staff, trustees, library school students, libraries, and friends of libraries are welcome to join and represent this chapter in Maryland.

One of the most exciting reasons to join is for their annual conference. For members this conference is at a lower rate. The conference this year takes place during April 21st-23rd at the Clarion Hotel. When looking through the sessions a lot of interesting topics were discussed. Ones that really caught my eye were “Graphic Novels with Tweens” and “Cataloging without the Book”. Some interesting authors were there but none of them were children’s authors so I was not familiar with them.

Another benefit is their publications. Four times a year they publish “The Crab”. This was also available online and had some beneficial articles that I found useful for my elementary area. There is also monthly publications about what is happening and division publications. There are many opportunities for networking through Association involvement.

However, I was a little disappointed with the different cost of membership. When applying you have to check off your salary and then your cost is based upon your salary. I found this very odd and kind of a turn off. It is nice when organizations just have a set cost and it is fair to all. For example for me to join it would be $108 but then in one category it says for MEMO Members it is just $20 and I am a MEMO member. When joining you have different choices of interest groups which I found beneficial. They were Retired, Health Information, Teen, Technology Team, or Student. The only one I wish they had was children.

This seems like a beneficial organization to join but I do enjoy my membership with MASL (Maryland Association School Librarians) because this focuses just on school librarians. However, you never know what other librarian options are out there and MLA could give other options and ideas.

One of my favorite organizations that I am a member of but I need to learn more about my benefits is MSET. The Maryland Society of Education Technology is an organization that focuses on the effective use of educational technology in the schools. They have workshops, grant programs, newsletters, and annual conferences.

When you have a membership you are eligible for MSET grants. This year I applied for one but I did not get it but I hope to next year. Only members are able to receive these grants and they can be for up to $700. They also have a lot of student and teacher contest. You can enter your students multimedia or graphic artwork for a chance to win. They also send out monthly Listserv which provides information on grants, special events, and other activities going on. The cost of joining is $25.00 a year.

Professional Development Workshops are offered each month with lots of different technology topics and tools. However, most of them are offered on the western shore so I have not attended any. Each year they have a Annual Conference in the Baltimore Convention Center for two-days. There are tons of sessions, workshops, presentations, featured speakers, exhibits, and networking. This is one of my favorite conferences to attend because I learn so much. Every year I leave with so many ideas for in the classroom.

MSET is an active association with approximately 2,500 members. This is a state-wide organization that has a common interest in education technology. I feel that this is an excellent organization to join and can only benefit us a professionals.