March 1, 2019

Dear Members of the 2019 Appropriations Committee:

Scholastic Library Publishing, which provides digital and print products to Public and School Libraries, has long served Connecticut residents through the services of the Connecticut Library Consortium (CLC).

Scholastic Library Publishing has a statewide contract with CLC for our digital products—Scholastic GO!, ScienceFlix, TrueFlix, FreedomFlix, and BookFlix—which provide children in K-12 with our best educational databases in a vetted, safe environment. Our large catalog of print books—many tied to the core standards of the schools—also has contracted pricing with CLC. More children are reached through the combined buying power of the Connecticut Library Consortium as they leverage the large numbers of their members. Without the Consortium each library would have to negotiate the contract and price of each product, resulting in higher costs, most likely, and therefore more money spent by the state to provide these same resources to their residents.

As the role of libraries has evolved to where they have become Community Resource Centers, the value of consortia like CLC becomes even more evident. By managing the contract, payment, setup and many other administrative tasks, the CLC gives back valuable time to the library staff. Libraries now provide Family and Community Engagement Programs, Early Childhood initiatives, Summer Reading, Homework help, services for seniors, help for non-English language citizens, job searches, classes for everything one can think of, and in some cases, they are a refuge for those without support in our communities. How many of these initiatives will be impacted if the library has no centralized entity to help with purchasing, conferences, professional development, and grant seeking services—to name only a few?

Scholastic Library Publishing, which has headquarters located in Danbury, is a strong supporter of libraries and recognizes how vital the Federal, State and Community funding is to assure our citizens access to information. Libraries are where learning lives in our society, where our children grow through access to the excellent resources, guidance and help that our libraries and their staff so willingly give.

We are well aware that there are always budgetary constraints, and there are many worthy programs and organizations that need additional funding, but on behalf of Scholastic Library Publishing, I wanted to share the value we see in what the Connecticut Library Consortium
provides and hope that this honorable committee sees that value as well. We ask that the funding for the Connecticut Library Consortium will be restored to $332,500 as requested by the State Library. I say this regardless of whether the Consortium ever enters into another contract or spends another dollar with us, because we have seen first-hand the good that the Consortium does for not just Connecticut’s libraries, but Connecticut’s communities as well.

Yours sincerely,

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