



March 4th, 2024

Senator Steve Cwodzinski  
Chair, Senate Education Policy Committee  
Senate Office Building  
St. Paul, MN

Dear Chair Cwodzinski, and Members of the Committee,

The Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA) is one of twelve regional library public library systems in the state of Minnesota. The MELSA Board of Trustees is embarking on a search for a new Executive Director. As we look to the future of the organization, we want to ensure that the leadership of MELSA is equipped to lead us in forging the next generation of public library services. Accordingly, the MELSA (Metropolitan Library Service Agency) Board of Trustees is asking for the committees' support for SF 4545 (Kunesh).

Section A of the Rule states the following as a requirement for a Regional Library System Director:

- A. Employment of a chief administrative officer who has had at least two years of public library administrative experience and has received the master's degree in library science from a library education program accredited by the American Library Association.

The MELSA Board of Trustees feels strongly that the community is best served with a broad, inclusive, and diverse candidate pool for this important position. We propose posting the Executive Director position in which the MLS/MLIS degree was a *preferred, rather than required*, qualification for potential candidates. Insisting on the MLS/MLIS degree results in the exclusion of a larger candidate pool for this position. We have experienced challenges in filling senior positions in many libraries due to limited candidate pools, and we would like to get a broad spectrum of highly qualified candidates for this executive position.

A board member noted that only 6% of Master of Library Science degree holders are from underrepresented groups. Accordingly, this request is in keeping with MELSA's strategic goals of fostering diverse opportunities in our hiring practices, especially for leadership positions.

Metropolitan Library Service Agency  
1619 Dayton Avenue #314  
St. Paul, MN 55104



Because of the unique nature of MELSA, the Executive Director role here differs from the qualities of a traditional library director, especially in comparison with our local system directors or those regional directors in other areas of the state. Executive and leadership roles in other fields translate well into the qualifications needed for this position. We feel strongly that broadening that candidate pool will result in a more robust and creative hiring process that will serve our libraries well.

For these reasons, the MELSA Board of Trustees is requesting your support for SF 4545 (Kunesh), which revises the requirements for a Regional Library System Director outlined in Minnesota Rules 3530.1000.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Udermann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Matt Udermann  
President / Chair  
MELSA Board of Trustees