



March 10, 2024

Dear Chair Cwodzinski and members of the Education Policy Committee,

We are writing in support of SF 4545, a bill to provide an exemption of certain hiring requirements for MELSA under the regional library governance rules. SF 4545 will allow MELSA to recruit and hire from a larger pool of qualified leaders.

We, the MELSA Advisory Committee, recommend broadening the education and experience for the position of Executive Director of MELSA. This change, reflected in SF 4545, will allow MELSA to attract the most qualified candidates, both from the library community and other relevant sectors including, for example, government, education, non-profit and philanthropy.

Unlike other regional library systems, the MELSA executive director does not administer libraries; the library directors of the seven metro area counties and the city of St. Paul are responsible for managing libraries in the metro area. The executive director is not expected to develop or deliver library services. In fact, MELSA does not offer centralized library services and operates more as an intergovernmental agency which makes it different from the other regional library systems. The primary responsibilities of the MELSA executive director are to facilitate and manage two boards, administer a budget, and advocate for and represent the needs of MELSA libraries in numerous forums.

By supporting this expansion of qualifications, we are not suggesting this is the correct approach for all Regional Library Systems, merely that it is the best approach for MELSA. Additionally, this does not mean Master of Library Science holders are no longer eligible, but rather that other leaders who will help our field grow and adapt, are also eligible and welcome to apply.

We thank you for your consideration of SF 4545, and we encourage your support of this bill.

Sincerely,
Scott Duimstra, Director, Hennepin County Library
Jodi Edstrom, Director, Carver County Library
Maureen Hartman, Director, St. Paul Public Library
Colleen Haubner, Director, Anoka County Library
Jennifer Schultz, Director, Scott County Library
Margaret Stone, Director, Dakota County Library
Scott Vrieze, Executive Director, MELSA

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