

## Resolution

Whereas East Central Regional Library (ECRL) is one of the two regional public library systems responsible for the governance of the multicounty, multitype library system Central Minnesota Library Exchange (CMLE) as established under Minnesota Statute 134.351 subd. 4 part b;

Whereas ECRL serves Aitkin, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Pine counties;

Whereas ECRL believes in utilizing public funds efficiently;

Whereas Minnesota Statute 134.351 gives responsibility for establishing the geographic boundaries of multicounty multitype systems to the Commissioner of Education;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Directors of East Central Regional Library, hereby requests the Commissioner of Education to examine the existing boundaries of CMLE and recommends establishing two multicounty multitype systems whose boundaries align with the existing regional public libraries systems of East Central Regional Library and Great River Regional Library.

Passed unanimously by the East Central Regional Library Board - 1/13/2020.

### Background:

As prepared for the East Central Regional Library Board  
C. Lydon, Executive Director

State of Minnesota currently has seven multicounty multitype library systems established as allowed by Minnesota Statute 134.351

### **134.351 MULTICOUNTY, MULTITYPE LIBRARY SYSTEMS.**

#### **Subdivision 1. Establishment.**

The commissioner of education, upon the advice of the Advisory Council to the Division of State Library Services, may approve the establishment of multicounty, multitype library systems and the geographic boundaries of those systems.

#### **Subd. 2. Services.**

Each multicounty, multitype library system is encouraged to develop services including, but not limited to the following: referral of users, intrasystem reciprocal borrowing, cooperative collection development, cooperative reference services, staff development, research and development, cooperative storage facilities, publicity and community relations.

#### **Subd. 3. Agreement.**

In order for a multicounty, multitype library system to qualify for planning, development, or operating aid pursuant to sections 134.353 and 134.354, each participating library in the system shall adopt an organizational agreement providing for the following:

- (a) Sharing of resources among all participating libraries;
- (b) Long-range planning for cooperative programs;
- (c) The development of a delivery system for services and programs;
- (d) The development of a bibliographic database; and
- (e) A communications system among all cooperating libraries.

**Subd. 4. Governance.**

(a) In any area where the boundaries of a proposed multicounty, multitype library system coincide with the boundaries of the regional library system or district, the regional library system or district board shall be designated as the governing board for the multicounty, multitype library system. In any area where a proposed multicounty, multitype library system encompasses more than one regional library system or district, the governing board of the multicounty, multitype library system shall consist of nine members appointed by the cooperating regional library system or district boards from their own membership in proportion to the population served by each cooperating regional library system or district. In each multicounty, multitype library system there shall be established an advisory committee consisting of two representatives of public libraries, two representatives of school media services, one representative of special libraries, one representative of public supported academic libraries, and one representative of private academic libraries. The advisory committee shall recommend needed policy to the system governing board.

(b) Upon recommendation from its advisory committee, a multitype library cooperation system governing board may choose to reconstitute the governance of the multitype system by the creation of a combined board which replaces the previous governing board and advisory committee. A combined board shall consist of five or seven citizens, not employed in library or information services, and four library or information service workers. The constituent regional public library system boards shall select the citizen members from the at-large population of the region. In any area where a multicounty, multitype library system encompasses more than one regional public library system, cooperating regional system boards shall appoint citizen members of the combined board members in proportion to the population of each cooperating regional system. The combined board members who are library and information workers shall be selected, one from each type of library: academic, public, school, and special. Governing board members of the combined board shall serve two-year terms for no more than three successive terms with the members of the first combined board serving one- and two-year terms as determined by lot with a simple majority serving for two years. Elections shall be pursuant to the adopted bylaws of the multitype system and may provide additional requirements to those in this section. New combined governing boards shall take effect at the beginning of the fiscal year, July 1, and shall continue the authority, ownership, and obligations of the previously constituted multitype system in its region.

CMLE Board governing board is comprised of eleven members (part b) as follows:

- Two appointees from East Central Regional Library Board
- Five appointees from Great River Regional Library Board
- 1 representative from each of the following types of libraries:

- Special
- Academic
- School
- Public

ECRL appointees and GRRL appointees have expressed for years concerns regarding the high cost of constituting a governing Board, conducting an audit and other administrative expenses for CMLE and the inefficiencies and confusion of having another structural layer to library services in the region.

ECRL appointees have also expressed concerns that CMLE, headquartered in St. Cloud, is geographically challenged to provide services to the counties that make up East Central Regional Library, resulting in less service and/or East Central Regional Library providing needed assistance. Some current examples include:

- ECRL provides delivery to Pine Technical College and arranges resource sharing for Anoka Ramsey Community College
- ECRL provides resource sharing with the library at the Rush City jail
- ECRL works with schools and school libraries to share its resources through institutional agreements
- ECRL works with school media specialists to provide training for staff and students on e-resources

Additionally, ECRL has staff in communities throughout the region, developing relationships and partnerships with school media centers, academic libraries and special libraries where they exist. ECRL is already poised and at the ready to offer other needed services to these libraries. Geographically, the needs of libraries in mostly rural East Central Minnesota are likely quite different than the needs of the more metropolitan area of St. Cloud, where CMLE is headquartered.

Resolution asks the Commissioner of Education, who has the authority to establish boundaries of MCMT system in statute, to examine the existing boundaries and recommends splitting CMLE into two MCMT systems. Statute also allows for the MCMT systems to merge with the regional public library system if the boundaries are contiguous. This has already been done in three of the existing MCMT systems in the state (Arrowhead, SELCO/SELS and Travers de Sioux).

**PROS:**

- Better services to all libraries in the counties of Aitkin, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Pine, resulting in better service to citizens in those counties.
- Efficiencies – elimination of separate CMLE Board and related expenses, elimination of overhead costs (audit, lease, etc.), reduction in staff cost of travel to member libraries.
- Eliminate confusion regarding library structure in the region

**CONS:**

- Funding – would need legislation (or another solution) to hold harmless other MCMT systems as the addition of another system would split existing funding resulting in losses to other systems
- Additional responsibilities for ECRL

