

Joint MSA Site Council Meeting

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 2:00 PM

Smith Hall Conference Room, 615 Olof Hanson Drive, Faribault, MN 55021

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Informational Items**

3. **Interviews for the MSA Board Member of the
Public with Business, Administrative or Finance
Expertise Position**

3.A. 2:30 PM: Sheila Koenig

3.B. 2:50 PM: Anna Hakusembe

3.C. 3:10 PM: Christian Wernau

4. **Site Council Recommendation to the Governor's
Office**

5. **Adjourn**

Dear Governor Walz and MSA Site Councils:

I am seeking appointment to the school board of the Minnesota State Academies as a public member with administrative experience. My lived experience and professional career make me uniquely qualified to serve in this capacity. I hope to serve on this school board in order to advance the mission and vision of the academies, which will grow opportunities and possibilities for students with disabilities across Minnesota.

I am a professional with over 20 years of experience as an educator and administrator of youth services. I taught 9th grade English for 15 years prior to working at State Services for the Blind (SSB). I've been in my current administrative role for three years as manager of SSB's Youth Services department. In this role I oversee SSB's Pre-Employment Transition Services budget, supervise staff, evaluate program needs, and work to continuously evolve and maximize our programs.

Two of my core values are empowerment and education for young people. I have sought ways to live out these values in both my personal and professional life. For example, I was a mentor in the American Foundation for the Blind's Blind Leadership Development Program in which I provided coaching to new professionals. Additionally last year I graduated from San Diego State's National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute, in which my skills as a thoughtful and strategic administrator developed over the 9-month program.

I am fortunate to have come to know MSA through my professional capacity. I have collaborated on projects, worked on site council, and participated in school events. All of these allowed me to form genuine appreciation and care for all the students, families and staff in the MSA community.

I am eager to discuss the talents and expertise that I would bring to the MSA board. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sheila M Koenig

Sheila M. Koenig

Summary

I am a professional with 25 years of experience in rehabilitation and education, developing programs and opportunities for youth to prepare to enter today's workforce. As Manager of Youth Services at State Services for the Blind, I administer the 15% set-aside of our federal grant, supervise staff, and evaluate programming.

Specializing in

- Program administration, implementation, and evaluation
- Supervision, work direction and guidance to field specialists and agency partners
- Leadership in innovation and strategy development

Work Experience

Summary I have designed and implemented state-wide programs that adhere to federal regulations and policy to prepare students as they transition to college and careers.

Youth Services Manager, Minnesota State Services for the Blind March 2022-Present

- Conceptualize, oversee, and implement SSB's provision of state-wide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)
- Supervise staff who provide services to youth, and provide guidance to other agency leads regarding youth-related policies and programming.
- Plan and facilitate staff development activities as well as consult on trainings for community partners and other state VR agencies.
- Review and execute SSB's annual Pre-ETS Blueprint, which determines expenditure of federally mandated 15% set-aside budget and outlines provision of WIOA's required and authorized Pre-ETS services
- Manage and delegate SSB's representation on interagency committees and collaboratives related to Pre-ETS

Transition Coordinator, Minnesota State Services for the Blind June 2015-March 2022

- Develop and coordinate programs such as "Blind & Socially Savvy" to implement Pre-ETS activities to students.
- Provide outreach and resources to students and families across Minnesota.

9th grade English, South View Middle School, Edina, MN August 2000-June 2015

- Design and implement district-wide 9th grade Language Arts curriculum and professional development to prepare students for college and career readiness
- Supervise student teachers preparing for teacher licensure
- Foster positive relationships with a diverse population of students, families, and stakeholders at all levels

Leadership in Professional Development in Rehabilitation and Education

Summary I have shared my knowledge and expertise by facilitating professional workshops and trainings on an agency, state-wide, and national level.

Minnesota Department of Education blind/visually impaired advisory committee

- Help determine priorities for action and address technical issues on services for students with vision impairments.
- Provide advice to MDE's Special Education Division on procedures to address the needs of students who are blind-visually impaired related to special education program rules, priorities, procedures and funding.

American Foundation for the Blind, Blind Leaders Development Program

- Guide mentee in professional goal-setting and career development
- Build a national network of blind professionals

Various Publications and Presentations

- National Council of State Agencies for the Blind presenter, 2023
- Capacity Building Virtual Institute May 2021
- The Dignity of Work: Challenges and Opportunities Facing People with Disabilities Around the World, University of Minnesota, March 2021
- American Foundation for the Blind Leadership Conference, Arlington, VA February 2019
- Midwest Transition Institute for Youth who are DeafBlind, St. Paul, Minnesota, June 2019
- Various national webinars to Communities of Practice in Vocational Rehabilitation 2019-present
- Charting the C's "Rehabilitation + Education = Success after High School", Alexandria, MN April 2019

Education and Training

Masters in Education

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, May 2005

GPA: 4.0

Bachelor of Arts in Middle/Secondary English/Spanish Education

Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI, December 1996

GPA: 3.8

National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute, graduate

San Diego State University

December 2024

State of Minnesota Emerging Leaders Institute, graduate

March 2018

Anna Sidona Hakusembe
Rochester, Minnesota

[Date: November 6, 2025]

Board of the Minnesota State Academies
Minnesota Office of the Secretary of State

Subject: Application for Public Member – Business, Administration, or Finance

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

I am writing to express my interest in serving as a Public Member representing the Business, Administration, or Finance category on the Board of the Minnesota State Academies. With a strong academic and professional background in business administration, public sector management, and organizational operations, I am confident in my ability to contribute meaningfully to the board's mission of promoting high academic standards and equitable educational opportunities for all students, including those who are deaf or blind.

I hold a Master's degree in Business Administration (Public Sector Management) and a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration (Strategic Marketing). My career spans leadership and administrative roles in both the public and private sectors, including service as a Projects Administrator at the Namibia University of Science and Technology—where I managed externally funded academic and research programs—and as a current Clinic Operations Specialist at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. These roles have equipped me with deep experience in governance, budgeting, stakeholder engagement, and performance management within educational and healthcare institutions.

In addition to my professional background, I bring a personal commitment to inclusive education and human-centered leadership. My experiences as an educator, administrator, and community advocate have strengthened my belief in the transformative power of accessible education and strategic governance. I am particularly drawn to the board's role in ensuring that the State Academies for the Deaf and Blind continue to thrive through evidence-based policy, fiscal stewardship, and community collaboration.

I would be honored to contribute my administrative expertise, cross-cultural perspective, and results-driven mindset to support the board's oversight responsibilities and long-term vision. I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to serve Minnesota's diverse learners and to help shape policies that uphold excellence, accountability, and compassion in education.

Thank you for considering my application. I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss how my background aligns with the board's goals and how I can contribute to its mission.

Warm regards,

Anna Sidona Hakusembe
Rochester, Minnesota



Anna Sidona Hakusembe, MBA

Rochester, Minnesota | ■

Professional Summary

Dynamic and globally engaged administrator with over ten years of progressive experience in academic administration, research coordination, and operational management across higher education and healthcare environments. Proven expertise in fiscal planning, HR management, and grant administration, with a strong record of international collaboration through academic exchange programs and global conference participation. Adept at fostering inclusive, high-performing teams, streamlining processes, and supporting institutional goals through strategic and data-driven leadership.

Professional Experience

Clinic Operations Specialist – Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN | *May 2025 – Present*

- Oversee administrative workflows, patient scheduling systems, and cross-department coordination to enhance clinic efficiency.
- Support leadership in optimizing communication channels and service delivery within a multidisciplinary healthcare environment.

Operations Manager – Kum & Go, Rochester, MN | *2024 – 2025*

- Supervised daily operations, payroll, inventory control, and compliance in a high-volume retail environment.
- Led and developed staff through inclusive leadership, performance reviews, and professional development initiatives.

Projects Administrator / Project Coordinator (Postgraduate Research) – Namibia University of Science & Technology | *2016 – 2022*

- Managed multiple third-party funded research projects, primarily EU-funded, ensuring adherence to grant policies and financial accountability.
- Coordinated postgraduate research programs and facilitated faculty collaboration, reporting, and monitoring deliverables.
- Developed departmental budgets, maintained project databases, and served as liaison with international partners and funding agencies.

Marketing Officer – Meat Board of Namibia | *2014 – 2016*

- Implemented marketing plans promoting livestock products across Namibia's communal areas.
- Conducted stakeholder engagement activities, coordinated campaigns, and supported regional marketing strategies.

Office Administrator – City of Windhoek Municipality, Namibia | *2012 – 2014*

- Oversaw fleet administration and procurement under the Transformation and Fleet Department.
- Ensured compliance with municipal policy and procurement standards while supporting

departmental budgeting and planning.

Founder & Owner – Royal African Braiding LLC, Rochester, MN | 2023 – *Present*

- Established and manage a culturally inspired salon offering protective hair styling and community-based beauty education.
- Develop brand marketing strategies, oversee finances, and build customer relationships that celebrate diversity and empowerment.

Education

- **Master of Business Administration (Public Sector Management)** – University of Namibia
- **Bachelor of Business Administration (Strategic Marketing)** – University of Namibia

International Engagement & Conferences

- Participated in an Employment Exchange Program at **Flensburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany (Dec 2017)** – strengthening international project administration and research management competencies.
- Participated in an Employment Exchange Program at **University of Johannesburg, South Africa (June 2018)** – collaborating with academic leadership on public administration and development-focused initiatives.
- Served as a **Panelist at the Conference of Parties (COP 12) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)** held in **Ankara, Turkey (Oct 2015)** – contributing insights on sustainable development, climate action, and stakeholder engagement.

Core Skills & Competencies

- Academic & Administrative Leadership
- Strategic & Fiscal Planning
- Research Project Coordination
- Human Resources & Talent Development
- Policy & Compliance Management
- Stakeholder Engagement & Partnerships
- Cross-Cultural Communication
- Data Analysis & Systems Proficiency (PeopleSoft, EFS, HRMS)

Christian C. Wernau

November 07, 2025

Selection Committee
Minnesota State Academies

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

I am writing to express my interest in serving on the Minnesota State Academies Board as a member of the general public with administrative and financial expertise. My work as the Region 10 Low Incidence Facilitator for the Zumbro Education District has provided me with extensive experience in statewide systems leadership, fiscal oversight of multiple state and federal grants, and collaborative planning to strengthen educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

Throughout my career, I have been committed to advancing accessibility and equity for students across Minnesota. I believe that every child should have the opportunity to learn and thrive within their local community while also recognizing the importance of specialized environments where students can connect with peers who share their lived experiences. The mission of the Minnesota State Academies reflects both of these priorities, and I would be honored to contribute my skills in strategic planning, gov... I welcome the opportunity to bring a regional and systems-level perspective to the Board's work and to serve collaboratively in promoting inclusive, high-quality educational options for all students in Minnesota.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christian C. Wernau

Christian C. Wernau

Professional Profile

Collaborative and equity-minded special education administrator with extensive experience leading regional and statewide initiatives that strengthen Minnesota's educator workforce and improve access to high quality special education services. Recognized for fostering effective partnerships across agencies, higher education, and state systems to advance inclusive practice and support sustainable professional development.

Professional Experience

- Region 10 Low Incidence Facilitator

Zumbro Education District, Kasson, MN | 2011–Present

Provide leadership and direction for state and federally funded special education initiatives across southeast Minnesota. Oversee and manage multiple grants through the Minnesota Department of Education, including: Minnesota Low Incidence Projects (Region 10), Regional Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (RCSPD) federal grant, Regional Interagency Early Intervention Committee (IEIC) grant, Special Education Teacher Pathway grant, Grow Your Own grant for People of Color and American Indian educators, and the Region 10 Special Education Mentoring grant. Serve as a liaison between the Region 10 Directors of Special Education and the Minnesota Department of Education to align policy and practice. Provide technical assistance, professional learning, and collaborative leadership that strengthens service delivery and educator support across the region. Chair the Charting the Cs statewide special education planning committee and lead TeachSpEdMN, a cross agency partnership with MDE and higher education designed to attract, prepare, and retain special education teachers in Minnesota.

- Special Education Coordinator

Pine Island Public Schools, Pine Island, MN | 2006–2011

Directed district wide special education services for preschool through age 21, ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations and implementing consistent service delivery models. Facilitated the development of innovative transition programming and interagency collaboration.

- Title I Coordinator

Pine Island Public Schools, Pine Island, MN | 2006–2011

Coordinated all aspects of Title I and Basic Skills programming, including compliance, planning, and stakeholder engagement.

- Special Education Teacher

Rochester Public Schools, Rochester, MN | 2000–2006

Developed and implemented individualized programming for students with developmental, multiple, and autism spectrum disabilities.

Leadership and Service

President, Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children (MNCEC)

Board Member, Minnesota Special Education Leadership Foundation (MNSELF)

Chair, Charting the Cs statewide special education conference committee

Founder and leader, TeachSpEdMN (cross agency partnership supporting special education leadership and teacher development)

IEIC Coordinator supervision (Regional Interagency Early Intervention Committee)

Education

Principal (K–12) and Special Education Director License, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, 2010

Master of Arts in Special Education, University of North Dakota, 2002

Bachelor of Science in Special Education and Elementary Education, University of Mary, 2000

Minnesota Teacher License File Folder: 390720