

CHARTERED PUBLIC LIBRARIES POLICY

APPLIES TO: Established Reading Centers in STLS Service Region

The Southern Tier Library System, a regional consortium of chartered public libraries, works in partnership with its members to support and strengthen them through clearly defined, cost-effective services that make possible the coordination and sharing of resources, enabling all individuals in the five-county region to have equal access to excellent library services.

The intent of this document is to assist reading centers identify with public library best practices, and strive for standards set by the field of public librarianship.

In order to apply fair and equitable practices to all chartered public libraries, the STLS Board of Trustees has created formal requirements for services to the established reading centers of Arkport, Greenwood, Hector, Middlesex and Rushville.

In these days of transparency and accountability, the System requires each Reading Center meet most Minimum Standards for Chartered Public Libraries.

These standards, adopted by the NYS Education Department and Division for Library Development in 1994 require that all libraries:

- have a Board of Trustees of at least three (3) members;
- have Board of Trustees' meetings at least four (4) times a year;
- be governed by written By-Laws which outline the responsibilities and procedures of the Reading Center Board of Trustees;
- has Board-approved written policies for the operation of the Reading Center and oversight of its finances;
- has a Board-approved, written Long Range Plan of Service;
- presents a written budget annually to the appropriate funding agencies which would enable the Reading Center to meet or exceed these standards, and carry out its Long Range Plan of Service;
- annually present a narrative report to the community on the Reading Center's progress toward meeting its goals and objectives, as well as a statistical report to the Southern Tier Library System;
- periodically evaluates the effectiveness of the Reading Center's collection and services in meeting community needs;
- maintains a facility adequate to meet community needs, including adequate space, lighting, shelving, seating, and a restroom;
- compiles and maintains regular library records;

- maintains its collection with standard library classification and arrangement;
- provides equipment and connections to meet community needs including, but not limited to telephone, photocopier, telefacsimile capability, and microcomputer or terminal with printer to provide access to other library catalogs and other electronic information;
- distributes printed information listing the library's hours open, borrowing rules, services, location and phone number.

In addition, each STLS reading center must provide its community with:

- a Reading Center Director hired (implies paid) and trained in local library practices;
- open at least 12 regularly scheduled hours per week all year

Any Reading Center not meeting the requirements of this policy within three years will be placed on probationary status. Should the condition continue, STLS will withdraw its services from Reading Centers.

Communities wishing to create a reading center are ineligible for services from Southern Tier Library System. STLS will partner with local communities to create a new chartered public library under the Board of Regents. Charter applications for public libraries must meet all criteria outlined by the Board of Regents.

Southern Tier Library System will work with all reading centers to apply for, and leverage sustainable funds to provide services aligning with public library best practices. Reading centers will need to work within the scope of Minimum Standards for Public Libraries, chartered service areas and mechanisms prescribed in NYS Education Law to become chartered entities within five (5) years.

Adopted by STLS Board of Trustees July 21, 2015.