

GENERAL STATEMENT ON POLICIES

APPLIES TO: STLS Board of Trustees and Executive Director

References: STLS Authority of the Board Policy
Handbook for Library Trustees for New York State

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to establish and maintain written policies to ensure the effective operation of the Southern Tier Library System. Policymaking is an important part of a Trustee's job, requiring a thoughtful study of the issues involved and a deep understanding of the System's mission. The STLS Board is required by the NYS Commissioner's Regulation 90.2 to create certain policies as part of the minimum standards set by the Board of Regents for libraries and systems. These policies are intended to be used by the Board of Trustees for its own functions. The Board of Trustees is responsible for reviewing and revising these policies on a timely basis as well as ultimately enforcing them with the assistance of the Library System staff.

This policy Manual included the STLS By-Laws, policies that deal with board operations and external policies that deal with issues concerning member libraries and, to a lesser extent, the public. The STLS Policies Committee will seek input from the Executive Director when developing new policies or revising existing policies. The Policy Committee will establish procedures that apply to board functions. The Executive Director will implement those operations procedures necessary to comply with approved policies.

Policies established by the Board must comply with current laws and regulations and be consistent with the System's mission, goals and plans. Every effort has been made to have each policy be clearly written, easily understandable and enforceable without undue burden on System staff. Each policy in this manual has been formally adopted by the Board of Trustees, and the date of the latest revision noted.

Each policy under development or review will be presented to the Board at one meeting for review and possible discussion, and presented to the Board at the next meeting for Board action.

The Policies Committee of the STLS Board of Trustees will undertake to review and, if necessary, revise each policy once every five years from the date of adoption or latest revision. New proposals for policies must be presented to the Policies Committee for approval before being presented to the Board of Trustees for adoption.

Keeping the master records of the Policy Manual will be the responsibility of the STLS Board Secretary. Each Trustee will be given a complete copy of the Policy Manual and copies of the Policy Manual must be on file at the System Headquarters, and be easily accessible by staff and public.

Committee reports are agenda items and minutes of the most recent committee meeting will be included in the board packet. The committee chair or designee may give an oral report. Any board action items on the agenda stemming from a committee recommendation will automatically proceed to discussion and vote. The committee recommendation is the motion and no second is needed.

As stated in the STLS Bylaws, and in accordance with New York State Law the requirement for a quorum at full Board meetings is eight.

The quorum for the Executive committee is three; all other committee meetings will have a quorum of "a majority of the enrolled members."

Committee meetings are subject to the Open Meetings law. However, informal committee discussions and conferring by telephone or e-mail is acceptable as long as any decision made is confirmed by a formal vote in open meeting.

Closed meeting or Executive Session:

First, a motion must be made during an open meeting to enter into executive session;

Second, the motion must identify the ‘general area or areas of the subject or subjects to be considered’; and

Third, the motion must be carried by a majority vote of the total membership of the public body.

There are eight areas that may be discussed behind closed doors are:

- (a) Matters which will imperil the public safety if disclosed;
- (b) Any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agency or informer;
- (c) Information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offence which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed;
- (d) Discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation;
- (e) Collective negotiations pursuant to Article 14 of the Civil Service Law (Taylor Law)
- (f) The medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation;
- (g) The preparation, grading or administration of examinations;
- (h) The proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or the sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value thereof.

A public body may never vote to appropriate public monies during a closed session. Although most public bodies may vote during a properly convened executive session, any vote to appropriate public monies must be taken in public.

Note that item (f) is often referenced as “personnel,” even though that term does not appear in the grounds for holding executive sessions. Only when the discussion focuses on a “particular person or corporation” in relation to one or more of the topics listed in that provision is an executive session permitted.

*ADOPTED by the STLS Board of Trustees on April 17, 2012.
Revised by Board Approval on November 17, 2015.*