

## **PINES Policy Change Request - Institutional Accounts**

### **Policy Environment**

In 2014, PINES allowed libraries to create institutional accounts. Though the purpose of these accounts was not stated in the original proposal, PINES libraries have extended these accounts to schools, daycares, prisons, senior centers, and other organizations. The vast majority of these accounts are schools. Out of 466 Institutional Accounts in PINES, 157 are registered to WGRSL (34%).

Many Georgia schools have limited funding for school media centers, and often do not have trained media specialists. Additionally, media centers are facing an increasingly restrictive legislative environment. Georgia students, whose literacy skills are crucial to the future of Georgia's citizenry and workforce, may find themselves with limited access to vital reading materials without the assistance of their local public library. For students in disadvantaged school districts, this lack of access is particularly damaging.

### **Current PINES Institution Account Patron Permissions:**

Privilege limit is 1 year. This user will be blocked if a total of \$10 or more is owed. User is not billed overdue charges, but is billed for Lost, Damaged, and Long Overdue items. User may have up to 50 items checked out at a time. User may have up to 50 holds at a time. Circulation period is 42 days with no renewals [2015.05]. Note: The 42-day circulation period was implemented 5/4/2015. Items checked out prior to this have a 30-day circulation period.

### **Policy Challenges**

1. The current circulation period does not match with school curriculum needs. Most public schools in Georgia use 9 week unit periods (approximately 63 days), leaving more than 3 weeks in each period that schools are unable to utilize this partnership to support crucial literacy needs.
2. Medium to large schools that wish to implement full grade level reads or to supplement state curriculum novels cannot achieve those goals with a 50 item limit.
3. Georgia as a whole has approximately 2,240 schools. WGRSL alone has 104 schools in its service area. The 1 year privilege limit for these accounts means that public library staff incur significant time in contacting each and every school and assisting in account renewal.

## **Response to Challenges**

WGRLS is requesting the following Permission Group changes to Institutional Accounts:

1. Lower the circulation period from 42 days to 30 days. Allow for one renewal, so the maximum total circulation period is 60 days, matching GLS and Homebound Patron Group permissions.
2. Raise the concurrent checkout limit and concurrent hold limit from 50 to 100 items.
3. Raise the privilege limit from 1 year to 2 years, matching the privilege period for individual accounts.

## **Expected Outcomes**

1. The above changes to the circulation period, to the checkout limit and to the hold limits will better conform the circulation period to school curriculum needs, increasing the ability of Institutional Accounts to serve a vital segment of our population. Additionally, these changes should increase the overall circulations of these accounts.
2. Institutions, by their nature, serve multiple individuals. By raising the concurrent checkout and hold limits, we are aligning these limits with the group nature of these accounts. Limiting Institutional Accounts to the same checkout and hold maximums as individual accounts does not make categorical sense.
3. Raising the privilege limit from 1 year to 2 years will save library staff time and school representative time, as well as bring the privilege limit into alignment with individual patron, GLS, and Homebound Patron Group permissions.
4. Lowering the circulation period and allowing for a renewal will allow greater flexibility for schools and libraries. Lowering the circulation period from 42 to 30 days should increase the earlier return of materials that schools do not require for the full 9 week periods, while the renewal will allow use of those materials for the full 9 week periods when necessary. As a side effect, allowing renewals should also increase the circulation counts for these accounts.
5. Library staff may have concerns about annual staff turnover at schools and other institutions. While invariably some school media specialists will turnover year to year, public library staff can ensure responsibility for materials at the end of the school year (May/June) before most turnover occurs. Public library staff can update the representative/contact information for schools that have had turnover at the beginning of the next school year (August). The process would be similar for other institutions,

including prisons, daycares, and senior centers. Updating account information when turnover occurs, rather than for all institutions every year, is a more efficient use of staff time. Raising the privilege limit to 2 years should halve public library and school media staff time in renewing accounts.