

PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

As a matter of policy, the board hereby states its belief in an open and free society and affirms its intention to abide by all applicable sections of Title I, subchapter 1 of the Revised Statutes of the State of Maine which have to do with the public's right of access to the proceedings, actions and records of the school board.

Therefore, "Except as otherwise provided by statutes or by section 405 (Executive Sessions), all public proceedings shall be open to the public, any person shall be permitted to attend any public proceedings and any record or minutes of such proceedings that is required by law shall be made promptly and shall be open to public inspection." Further, "Except as otherwise provided by statute, every person shall have a right to inspect and to copy any public record during the regular business hours of the" school system office; "provided that, whenever inspection cannot be accomplished without translation of mechanical or electronic data compilations into some other form, the person desiring inspection may be required to pay" the school system "in advance the cost of translation and both translation and inspection may be scheduled at such time as will not delay or inconvenience the regular activities of the agency or official having custody of the record sought and provided further that the cost of copying any public record to comply with this section shall be paid by the person requesting the copy." In addition, persons who wish information gathered, compiled or produced in such form as is not readily available from existing records, shall pay full costs of gathering, compiling or producing such information provided further that time is available to do such work and that it will not inconvenience regular activities of school system employees.

Persons desirous of such information as described in the foregoing, except minutes of public meetings, shall be required to fill out a request form or forms provided in the school system office. Within ten days of such request, school system officials shall provide the information requested or reasons why it is denying a part or the whole request.

Quoted segments of the above policy are direct from the Maine Statutes.

Legal Reference: Title 1 MRSA SEC. 401 ET SEQ.

Cross Reference: GBJ - PERSONNEL RECORDS AND FILES

Approved Date: 06/26/95

Revised & 1st Reading: 1-4-11

Adopted : 1-18-11

PROCEDURES FOR REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The Millinocket School Department will provide access to public records in accordance with the Maine Freedom of Access law. The public is entitled to broad access to public records. Certain records, including but not limited to student records and many records concerning individual employees, are confidential by law, and the Millinocket School Department is obligated by law to guard against their release. These procedures will be applied in a manner to protect the public's right to access to public records as well as legally-recognized confidentiality interests.

Approved D1. Members of the public are encouraged to provide the administrative office as much advance notice as possible when requesting access to public records in order to minimize interference with the normal functions of the office.

2. The Superintendent's office staff are authorized to provide prompt, public access to all records which are clearly public records under the law, such as board meeting minutes, agendas, and board policies.
3. Requests for access to other records shall be approved by the Superintendent or designee to ensure that the records are public records and that employee, student or other confidentiality rights are not infringed.
4. The Superintendent or designee shall attempt to review such request promptly after they are made.
5. If all or part of the records requested is not public records under the law, the Superintendent will notify the person requesting access in writing within five working days after receipt of the request that access to those records that are not public will not be permitted.
6. All inspection and copying of records shall take place at the Superintendent's office.
7. Copies of public records will be made by the office staff upon request. Relatively small copying requests (20 pages or less) will ordinarily be fulfilled at or near the time of the request. Larger copying jobs may take longer, depending upon the schedules of office staff and the size of the copying job.
8. A fee of \$10.00 per hour will be charged for labor cost.
9. A fee of \$.25 cents per copy will be charged. This fee must be paid in full before the copies are released. Multiple copies of documents will not be provided.
10. Postage, if any, will be paid by the person requesting that the copies be mailed.

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