

## **PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW/FREEDOM OF ACCESS**

The Board recognizes the importance of a well-informed public to the operations of the school unit. The Board will comply with all applicable sections of Maine's Freedom of Access Act. Except as otherwise provided by statute, all Board proceedings shall be open to the public, any person shall be permitted to attend, and any records or minutes of such proceedings that are required by law shall be made promptly and shall be open to public inspection.

Board agendas and minutes, proposed and approved Board policies, annual budget reports, student handbooks and Board member Freedom of Access training documentation/certificates shall be available for inspection and/or copying in the Superintendent's Office. Requests for all other public records shall be made, preferably in writing, to the Superintendent, specifying the records desired for inspection/copying. The Superintendent/designee may request clarification concerning which public record or records are being requested.

The Superintendent/designee shall acknowledge receipt of a request for inspection and/or copying of public records within a reasonable period of time.

If the request is denied, the Superintendent/designee shall inform the requestor in writing within five working days of the request and shall state the reason for denial. Otherwise, inspection and/or copying may be scheduled to occur within a reasonable period of time following the request at a time that will not delay or inconvenience the regular activities of the school unit.

### **FEES**

Except as otherwise provided by law or court order, RSU 29 may charge fees as follows:

- A. A fee of \$1.00 per page to cover the cost of copying.
- B. A fee of \$10.00 per hour after the first hour of staff time per request to cover the actual cost of searching for, retrieving, and compiling the requested public record. Compiling the public record includes reviewing and redacting confidential information.

- C. If translation is required, a fee to cover the actual cost of translation.

No fee shall be charged for inspection of public records.

As required by law, RSU 29 will provide the person making the request an estimate of the time necessary to complete the request and of the total cost and, if the estimated total cost exceeds \$20.00, will inform the requestor before proceeding. If the estimated total cost is greater than \$100.00 or if the requestor has previously failed to pay a fee assessed for access to the District's records, the requestor may be required to pay all or a portion of the estimated cost prior to the search, retrieval, compiling, translation, and copying of the public record.

The Superintendent is directed to develop and implement such administrative procedures as may be necessary to carry out this policy.

Legal Reference: 1 M.R.S.A. § 401 et seq.

Cross Reference: BEC – Executive Sessions  
GBJ – Personnel Records and Files  
JRA – Student Educational Records

Adopted: November 10, 2008

Revised: February 1, 2016

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

As a public institution endeavoring to serve the educational needs of the community, it is important for RSU 29 to disseminate information to the public concerning activities and problems in our schools. In order that this publicity be given wide coverage and be coordinated into a common effort and purpose, the following procedures shall be followed in giving official information to the news media:

- A. The Board Chair shall be the official spokesperson for the Board, except as this duty is delegated to the Superintendent.
- B. News releases that are of a system-wide nature or pertain to established policy are the responsibility of the Superintendent or a member of the administrative staff whom he/she may designate.
- C. News releases that are of concern to only one school or to an organization affiliated with one school within RSU 29 are the responsibility of the Superintendent or designee of that school.
- D. All statements made to the media must be cleared with the Superintendent.

Although it is impossible to predict how news releases and other information to the media will be covered, the Board, Superintendent, Principal and other staff members shall strive to obtain coverage that will create and maintain a dignified and professionally responsible image for RSU 29.

Adopted: February 1, 2016

## **DISTRIBUTION OF NON-SCHOOL MATERIALS**

The Board wishes to minimize intrusions on the teaching and learning time of students and staff. While there are many worthy activities in the communities served by RSU 29 that are sponsored by various non-profit organizations, the Board believes that students should not be used to distribute or carry home flyers, brochures, or other materials that are not directly related to school programs, school curriculum, or school-related activities.

Only the following materials may be distributed to students to be carried home:

- A. Communications from the Board, Superintendent, school administrators, and school staff such as newsletters, letters to parents, announcements of meetings or events, school forms, and classroom information;
- B. Information or notices concerning school-sponsored activities or programs for students and/or parents;
- C. Information or notices concerning activities or programs offered by groups affiliated with RSU 29 schools, such as parent-teacher organizations, the Municipal Recreation Department and booster groups; and
- D. Information or notices from municipal, state or federal agencies concerning programs available to students.

Commercial materials will not be distributed to students except in the case of those whose purpose is to further a school activity such as graduation, class pictures or class rings. The building principal will approve distribution of such activity-related materials.

All other materials must be provided to the Superintendent for approval to distribute and directions regarding how they will be distributed.

## POSTING OF NON-PROFIT AND/OR COMMUNITY MATERIALS

Non-Profit/Community materials may not be posted without the prior approval of the Superintendent or designee. Any local non-profit/community group may submit such materials to the building principal.

Materials that interfere with the instructional process or the operations of the schools, that are lewd or obscene, libelous, that are discriminatory or infringe upon the rights of others, promote illegal activities or are in violation of any Board policy will not be posted.

In order to make sufficient space available, building principals may establish rules for the size of notices/flyers and the length of time they may be posted.

Building principals may designate a bulletin board or other specific location where notices regarding non-profit community activities or events that may be of interest to students and/or parents may be posted. All materials must include a statement that the activity or program is not affiliated with or endorsed by RSU 29.

Cross reference:     KHA/Public Solicitation in the Schools  
                          KHB/Advertising in the Schools

Adopted:     February 1, 2016

## VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

The Board encourages the active interest and involvement of parents and citizens in the public schools. In order to avoid interruption of the instructional program and to promote the safety of students and staff, building principals shall institute administrative procedures concerning visitors to the schools. Such procedures shall be subject to the approval of the Superintendent. It is understood that procedures may vary from school to school due to differing considerations such as the age of the students and building layout and location.

The following general guidelines shall be incorporated in all building-level administrative procedures concerning visitors.

- A. The term “visitor” shall apply to any person on school grounds or in school buildings who is not an employee or student of the school unit.
- B. All visitors shall report to the main office upon arrival at the school. This section shall not apply to parents or citizens who have been invited to the school for an open house, performance or athletic competition or other preplanned school program.
- C. All visitors are expected to schedule visits in advance. Teachers and other staff may not use instructional time to discuss individual matters with visitors.
- D. Individual Board members shall follow the same procedures as other visitors, and state whether they are visiting the schools on personal business or in connection with Board duties.
- E. Visitors shall comply with all applicable Board policies and school rules. Visitors who violate these policies/rules and/or disrupt the safe and orderly operation of the school shall be asked to leave the premises.
- F. The building administrator/designee has the authority to refuse entry to school grounds or buildings to persons who do not have legitimate, school-related businesses and/or who may disrupt the operations of the schools. This may include, but is not limited to, the news media, businesses, and fundraising or other organizations seeking access to students and/or staff.

- G. School staff shall report unauthorized persons on school grounds or in school buildings to the building administrator/designee. Unauthorized persons shall be directed to leave the premises immediately.
- H. The building administrator/designee may request the assistance of law enforcement as necessary to deal with unauthorized persons or violations of the law by visitors to the schools.

Cross Reference:   BCA – Board Member Code of Ethics  
                          EBCA –Emergency Management Plan  
                          JLIB – Student Dismissal Precautions  
                          JLF – Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect  
                          KLG – Relations with Law Enforcement Agencies

Adopted:       February 1, 2016