

## NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION

In order that newly elected School Committee members may cast informed votes and function effectively as School Committee members, the School Committee and Superintendent will extend to them the fullest measures of courtesy and cooperation, and will make every reasonable effort to assist newly elected School Committee members in understanding the School Committee's functions, policies, procedures and current issues.

- A. In the interim between a new member's election or appointment and his/her assuming office, the School Committee, through the Superintendent, will invite newly elected members to attend meetings, except those held in executive session, and provide newly elected members with agenda, minutes and reports applicable to those meetings. During the time between election or appointment and the assumption of office, the status of the future-member remains that of a private citizen and not that of an elected or appointed official.
- B. The School Committee, through the Superintendent, will provide new members with copies of appropriate publications, such as the School Committee policy manual, student handbook(s), collective bargaining agreements, and current budget documents.
- C. The Superintendent will remind School Committee members of their obligation to complete, not later than the 120<sup>th</sup> day after the date of taking the oath of office, training on the requirements of Maine's Freedom of Access Law. The Superintendent will provide School Committee members with information regarding available training options. Each School Committee member shall attest by means of a written or electronic record that he/she has completed the training and provide a copy of such record to the Superintendent's Office. To facilitate documentation of training, the Superintendent will make available to School Committee members copies of the State's sample Certification of Completion of Freedom of Access Training form.
- D. The School Committee will encourage new members to attend appropriate in-district and out-of-district orientation and/or School Committee workshops. Reimbursement for such activities must be approved in advance by the School Committee Chair, in consultation with the Superintendent, and is subject to the availability of funds.
- E. The Chair and Superintendent will schedule and arrange for an orientation session for new School Committee members as soon as practicable after election or appointment. A reasonable amount of time will be provided for discussion of:
  1. The roles and responsibilities of the School Committee and individual members;
  2. Basic operational procedures of the School Committee;
  3. Placement of items on the agenda;
  4. The role of committees, subcommittees and advisory committees;
  5. How and why executive sessions may be held;
  6. What is considered confidential or privileged information;

7. Appropriate responses of an individual member when a request or complaint is made directly to him/her by a student, parent or member of the community;
8. How the School Committee responds to complaints involving personnel;
9. General information about the school system and its resources;
10. How School Committee members, in fulfilling their duties, may request information concerning schools and District operations, finances and personnel;
11. How School Committee members may make arrangements to visit schools and the protocol for such visits;
12. Protocol for dealing with the media; and
13. Other relevant topics.

All School Committee members will be invited to the orientation session and encouraged to attend. The orientation is intended to serve as a useful review of basic School Committee concepts for experienced members, as well as an opportunity to provide information and counsel to new School Committee members.

Legal Reference: 1 M.R.S.A. § 412

Cross Reference: BIC - School Committee Member Freedom of Access Law Training

Adopted: November 12, 2008