

ELLSWORTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION

In order that newly elected School Board members may cast informed votes and function effectively as Board members, the Board and Superintendent will extend to them the fullest measures of courtesy and cooperation, and will make every reasonable effort to assist newly elected School Board members in understanding the Board'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 Board, 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 Board, through the Superintendent, will provide new members with copies of appropriate publications, such as the Board's policy manual, student handbook(s), collective bargaining agreements, and current budget documents.
- C. The Superintendent will remind Board members of their obligation to complete, not later than the 120th 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 Board members with information regarding available training options. Each Board 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 Board members copies of the State's sample Certification of Completion of Freedom of Access Training form.
- D. The Board will encourage new members to attend appropriate in-district and out-of-district orientation and/or boardsmanship workshops. Reimbursement for such activities must be approved in advance by the Board 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 Board members as soon as practicable after election or appointment. A reasonable amount of time will be provided for discussion of:

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1. The roles and responsibilities of the School Board and individual members;
2. Basic operational procedures of the Board;
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. Information that is considered confidential or privileged;
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 Board responds to complaints involving personnel;
9. General information about the school system and its resources;
10. How Board members, in fulfilling their duties, may request information concerning the Ellsworth schools and school unit operations, finances, and personnel;
11. How Board 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 Board members will be invited to the orientation session and encouraged to attend. The orientation is intended to serve as a useful review of basic boardsmanship concepts for experienced members, as well as an opportunity to provide information and counsel to new School Board members.

Legal Reference: 1 M.R.S.A. § 412

Cross Reference: BIC – School Board Member Freedom of Access Law Training

Adopted: April 8, 2014

Reviewed: November 17, 2017