

M.S.A.D #49

Parent Notifications

This brochure is a compilation of announcements that the federal government requires us to communicate annually. In addition to the topics outlined here, there are several district policies and state regulations that we periodically publish in our district newsletter. As the newsletter is mailed in the fall and spring, we ask that you review that publication for additional information.



Qualified Teacher Announcement

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We at M.S.A.D. #49 are publishing this information as one way to fulfill our obligations under the "Parents' Right to Know" requirements of the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA).

Maine has some of the most qualified teachers in the country, and we are extremely proud of our teaching staff. We work hard to assure that every class has a teacher with the appropriate background, experience, and credentials for his or her current teaching assignment.

We believe that a caring, competent, and qualified teacher for every child is the most important ingredient in education reform, and we want to assure you that we consider all our teachers to be fully qualified for their positions. All of our teachers are currently entitled to teach under Maine's strict certification requirements. All of our teachers have college degrees and many have advanced degrees. In addition, teachers continue their learning through professional development activities and teachers are evaluated each year to make sure that their teaching skills remain at the highest possible level.

Additional information on the ESSA Act, as well as on the qualifications of your child's teacher, is available on request. Please contact the Superintendent's office or your child's building principal if you have questions or would like further information. Working with parents is an important aspect of our efforts to help students learn and we welcome your interest.

Sincerely,

Roberta E. Hersom
Superintendent of Schools



Project Childfind

Project Childfind is a nationwide attempt by public schools to identify, locate, and evaluate all children between the ages of three and twenty; including children with disabilities who are homeless, are wards of the state or stage agency clients, children with disabilities attending private schools and receiving home instruction, highly mobile children

(including migrant and homeless), children who have the equivalent of 10 full days of unexcused absences or 7 consecutive school days of unexcused absences during a school year, and children incarcerated in county jails, and who are in need of special education and related services, even though they may be advancing from grade to grade. Residents of M.S.A.D. #49 are asked to assist the school community by contacting the Director of Special Educa-

tion, at 207-453-4200 ext. 3106, if they know of any pre-school or school-age residents with special needs who are not currently enrolled in school. Parents of students attending private schools who suspect their child might require special education services are encouraged to arrange a meeting.



Homeless Students

Children in families who are homeless (living in a shelter, motel, vehicle, the street, or doubled up with friends or relatives because they cannot afford housing) are eligible to enroll in school. If you believe you or your child is homeless, inform the school or contact the District Homeless Liaison at 207-453-4200 ext. 3102.



Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Parents are welcome to share their concerns and ideas on the use of federal funds by calling Assistant Superintendent at 207-453-4200. District and school report cards are located on the district web site at www.msad49.org or by contacting the school. State report cards are available at: <https://www.msad49.org/o/msad-49/browse/45064>



Asbestos Removal

In accordance with the Asbestos Hazards Emergency Response Act of 1986, the annual update of asbestos abatement projects is reported in the district newsletter.



Restraint & Seclusion Policy

School officials can use physical restraint only when there is risk of physical injury or harm to that student or to others, and only if less restrictive interventions are deemed inappropriate. School officials can use seclusion only when there is a risk of physical injury or harm to that student or to others. Parents may access the school board's policy on restraint and seclusion by contacting the Superintendent's Office or a school principal. The policy reviews the parent/guardian complaint process.



Copyright Compliance

Students are to comply with the federal copyright law and the guidelines concerning reproduction of copyrighted works by educators. Teachers and library specialists will inform students about the legal and ethical issues raised by copyright infringement and illegal use of copyrighted materials. When considering copying materials, students are to seek guidance from teachers on the legality of copying materials from print, internet, software, video, television recordings and music.



Integrated Pest Management

M.S.A.D. #49 has developed an Integrated Pest Management Policy (ECB) to reduce any potential problem to staff, students, general public, property and the environment that pests can pose.

Pest Control

Because pesticides pose risks, the school uses an alternative approach merely to applying pesticides. Control of insects, rodents, and weeds at our school focuses on making the school buildings and grounds an unfavorable place for pests to live and breed. Through maintenance and cleaning, we will reduce or eliminate available food and water sources and hiding places for the pests. We will also routinely monitor the school area to detect pest problems and prevent the pests from becoming established. Some techniques we will use include pest monitoring, sanitation, pest exclusion, proper food storage, pest removal and as a last resort—pesticides. This holistic approach is often called Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Pesticide Use

Sometimes pesticide use may be necessary to control a pest problem. When that happens, the school will use the lowest risk products available. If higher risk pesticides must be used, notices will be posted at application sites and parents, guardians and staff have a right to know.

Your Right to Know

District staff will be notified of specific pesticide applications made at the school. Notification will be given at least five days before planned pesticide applications when possible. Pesticide application notices will also be posted in the school and on school grounds. Notification need not be given for pesticide applications recognized by law to pose little or no risk of exposure to children or staff.

The school also keeps records of prior pesticide applications and information about the pesticides used. You may review these records as well as a copy of the Pesticides in Schools regulation (CMR 01-026 Chapter 27) by contacting our IPM coordinator at 453-4230. For further information about pests, pesticides and your right to know, call the Board of Pesticides Control at 287-2731 or visit the Maine school IPM web site at: www.thinkfirstspraylast.org/schoolipm.



Notice of Non-Discrimination

M.S.A.D. #49 does not discriminate in admission to, access to, operations of its programs, services, and activities or employment practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, age, marital or parental status, national origin, gender, or disability. M.S.A.D. #49 complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights

Act of 1964, Title IX Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the American Disabilities Act of 1990. Questions, concerns, complaints, or requests for information regarding M.S.A.D. #49 policies and procedures for nondiscrimination may be forwarded to designated ADA/Affirmative Action Compliance Officer.



FERPA: Student Education Records and Information Rights

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides certain rights to parents and eligible students (18 years of age or older) with respect to the student's education records.

Inspection of Records: Parent/eligible students may inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of making a request. Such requests must be submitted to the Superintendent or building administrator in writing and must identify the record(s) to be inspected. The Superintendent or building administrator will notify the parent/eligible student of the time and place where the record(s) may be inspected. Parents/eligible students may obtain copies of education records at a cost of 6 cents per page.

Amendment of Records: Parent/eligible students may ask the School Department to amend education records they believe are inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's right to privacy. Such requests must be submitted to the Superintendent or building administrator in writing, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the Superintendent or building administrator decides not to amend the record as requested, the parent/eligible student will be notified of the decision, their right to request a hearing, and information about the hearing procedure.

Disclosure of Records: The School Department must obtain a parent/eligible student's written consent prior to disclosure of personally identifiable information in education records except in circumstance as permitted by law.

Directory Information: The School Department designates the following information as directory information that may be made public at its discretion: name, participation and grade level of students in officially recognized activities and sports, height and weight of student athletes, dates of attendance in school unit, honors and awards received, and photographs and videos relating to school attendance and participation in school activities (except photographs and videos on the Internet). Parents/eligible students who do not want the School Department to disclose directory information must notify the Superintendent in writing by September 15 or within thirty (30) days of enrollment, whichever is later.

Military Recruiters/Institutions of Higher Education: Military recruiters and institutions of higher education are entitled to receive the names, addresses and telephone numbers of secondary students and the School Department must comply with any such request, provided that parents have been notified of their right to request that this information not be released without their prior written consent. Parents/eligible students who do not want the School Department to disclose this information must notify the Superintendent in writing by September 15 or within thirty (30) days of enrollment, whichever is later.

School Officials with Legitimate Educational Interests: Education records may be disclosed to school officials with a "legitimate educational interest." A school official has a legitimate educational interest if he/she needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional response-ability. School officials include persons employed by the School Department as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); members of the Board of Education; persons or companies with whom the School Department has contracted to provide specific services (such as attorneys, auditors, medical consultants, evaluators, therapists, or online educational service providers) and parents, students and volunteers serving on an official committee (such as disciplinary or grievance committee) or assisting a school official in performing his/her professional responsibilities.

Other School Units: As required by Maine law, M.S.A.D. #49 sends student education records to a school unit to which a student applies for transfer, including disciplinary records, attendance records, special education records and health records (except for confidential health records for which consent for dissemination has not been obtained).

Other Entities/Individuals: Educational records may be disclosed to other entities and individuals as specifically permitted by law. Parents/eligible students may obtain information about other exceptions to the written consent requirement by request to the Superintendent or building administrator.

Complaints Regarding School Department Compliance with FERPA: Parents/eligible students who believe that the School Department has not complied with the requirements of FERPA have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education. The office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202. If you need help understanding your rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, you may also contact the District FERPA official, Special Education Director at 207-453-4200 ext. 3106.

Harassment

M.S.A.D. #49 recognizes the right of each student to attend school in an atmosphere, which is free of intimidation, hostility and offensiveness. In order to ensure such an atmosphere, students and employees are not to engage in harassment. Acts of harassment based upon race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, or disability are not only a violation of this policy but also constitute illegal discrimination under state and federal laws.

Examples of prohibited harassment:

- A. Unwelcome sexual advances, gestures, comments, or contact
- B. Threats
- C. Vulgar language or offensive jokes
- D. Ridicule, slurs, derogatory action or remarks; and

Students who believe that they are victims of harassment should follow the grievance procedure below:

Step I: The complaint is verbally filed with the school's assistant principal or principal. The complaint is investigated and an attempt is made to resolve to both parties' satisfaction. (The complainant may bypass verbal complaint and file a written complaint directly with the District Affirmative Action Officer).

Step II: Written complaint is filed. The District Affirmative Action Officer investigates and responds in writing.

Step III: Appeal is made to District Superintendent. The Superintendent investigates and responds in writing.

Step IV: Appeal is made to School Board. Board hears complaint at next board meeting but not more than ten school days from date of appeal. Board renders findings in writing not more than five days from hearing date.

Complainant has five school days to appeal from previous level of review. Filing a complaint of harassment will not result in retaliation against the complainant as this is both against the policy of M.S.A.D. #49 and against the law. The District Affirmative Action Officer can be reached at 207-453-4200 ext. 3102. Students should also be aware that the Maine Human Rights Commission is the State agency responsible for enforcing the laws which prevent harassment, and students may also file complaints with the Commission. The Maine Human Rights Commission can be contacted at State House Station 51, Augusta, ME 04333, or 207-624-6050.

Targeted Assistance and Schoolwide Programs

Albion, Benton, Clinton, and Fairfield Primary Schools recently updated their comprehensive needs assessment (CNA). This is a document that requires a planning team of teachers, parents, and community members to oversee the schools' professional practices, policy, and procedures, family and community engagement, accountability, evaluation, reevaluation and fiscal requirements.

Each of the elementary schools is expected to review this information yearly and set new goals using scientifically research-based instructional methods and strategies that strengthen the core academic program of the school. This past year, our schools submitted their CNAs to the Maine Department of Education, applied for schoolwide status and were granted approval by the DOE.

Previously, our schools were designated Targeted Assistance. Although many similarities exist between Title IA Targeted Assistance and Schoolwide programs, there are also significant differences. For example, student identification is made that renders them eligible or ineligible for services. In a schoolwide program, all students are eligible to receive additional services. Students identified as most at risk are given additional services. Additionally, in a Schoolwide, Title IA funds are used to provide professional development for all staff to support all students.

For further information concerning Schoolwide, please visit the Maine DOE website to view a pre-recorded webinar on Schoolwide. We believe that Schoolwide will serve our broader educational program in our schools.

The Title IA program continues to support Reading Recovery. This short-term early literacy intervention provides intensive individual instruction for children with the lowest reading performance in first grade, and is a critical component of a comprehensive literacy design. "If there is any description of progressions in literacy learning it belongs not in the activities, not in a curriculum sequence, but in the heads of teachers who know how to open doors to learning."
—Marie Clay, 2005