

## **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.

The Board designates the Superintendent as the Public Access Officer for RSU 26.

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 available 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 immediate inspection and/or copying in the Superintendent's Office. Requests for all other public records shall be made to the Public Access Officer, specifying the records desired for inspection/copying. The Public Access Officer/designee shall acknowledge receipt of a request for inspection/copying of public records within a reasonable period of time.

If the request is denied, the Public Access Officer/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.

### Electronically Stored Public Records

In compliance with the Freedom of Access Act, the school unit will provide access to an electronically stored public record as a printed document or in the medium in which the record is stored, at the requester's option, except that the school unit is not required to provide access to an electronically stored public record as a computer file, if the school unit does not have the ability to separate or prevent the disclosure of confidential information contained in or associated with that file. The School unit is not required to provide access to a computer terminal.

### Fees

Except as otherwise provided by law or court order, RSU 26 will charge fees as follows:

- A. A fee of \$.25 per page to cover the cost of copying.
- B. A fee of \$10 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 a conversion of a public record into a form susceptible of visual or aural comprehension or into a usable format is necessary, a fee to cover the actual co-costs will be assessed.
- D. A charge for the actual mailing costs to mail a copy of the record.
- E. No fee shall be charged for inspection of public records, unless the record cannot be inspected without being compiled or converted, in which case, paragraph B or C applies.
- F. Fee less than \$10 may be waived at the Superintendent's discretion.

As required by law, the school unit 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 total cost exceeds \$30.00 will inform the requestor before proceeding. If the estimated total cost is greater than \$30.00 or if the requestor has previously failed to pay a fee assessed for access to RSU 26's records, the requestor may be required to pay all or a portion of the estimated cost prior to the search, retrieval, compiling, conversion and copying of the public record.

The Public Access Officer/designee 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: 11-14-12