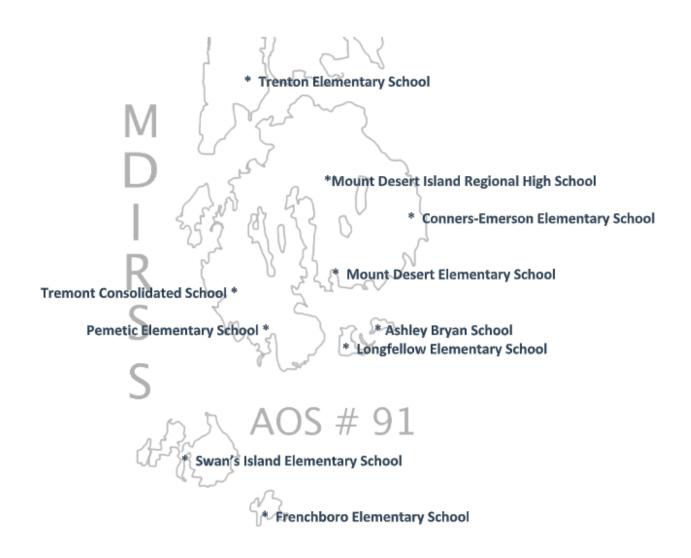
Mount Desert Island Regional School System - AOS #91

School Board Handbook



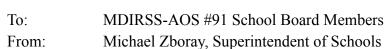
2025-2026

Updated: 10/22/25

Mount Desert Island Regional School System – AOS #91

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Re: School Board Handbook

Welcome to the Mount Desert Island Regional School System - AOS #91 School Board. This handbook will outline the duties and responsibilities you will adhere to as a valued member of our school board. I look forward to meeting with you to review the information provided here and to answer any questions you may have as you begin your service on our school board. It takes all of us working toward the common goal of educating our students that makes being a school board member such a rewarding experience.

At times, the decisions we are tasked with making may seem daunting, but with supportive, collaborative, and engaged discussions we will be able to make these decisions together.

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About Our School Boards/Committees

Mount Desert Island Regional School System – AOS #91 has 11 individual school committees and boards. Each elementary school department has its **own school committee or board of directors**.

The **Mount Desert Island High School Board** is made up of the four Mount Desert Island elementary school committees (Bar Harbor, Mt. Desert, Southwest Harbor, Tremont). 20 members total but only 10 members may vote (3 Bar Harbor, 3 Mt. Desert, 2 Tremont, 2 Southwest Harbor).

The **Mount Desert Island Regional School System – AOS #91 Board** is composed of 36 members from all nine individual school committees/boards within the district. All members are encouraged to attend but only 19 members may vote (4 Bar Harbor, 3 Mt. Desert, 3 Southwest Harbor, 3 Tremont, 3 Trenton, 1 Cranberry Isles, 1 Frenchboro, 1 Swan's Island).

The **Board of Trustees for Mount Desert Island High School** is composed of three members from each of the 4 towns on Mt. Desert Island (Bar Harbor, Mt. Desert, Southwest Harbor, Tremont) who oversee the physical building and grounds.

School Board/Committee Responsibilities

- Set the **mission and vision** for the district
- Adopt policies to achieve the goals of the mission and vision
- Hire and evaluate the Superintendent
 - The Superintendent is the Chief Executive Officer and the only direct hire made by the School Board.
 - The Superintendent is responsible for managing the schools and administering policies.
- Adopt and oversee the budgets
- Manage the collective bargaining process for employees of the district

Operating Principles

- 1. The Superintendent should recommend or provide proposals on most matters before the School Committee, and should provide relevant information in a timely manner in order to allow the School Committee to conduct its business and make informed decisions.
- 2. The Superintendent should work with the School Committee Chair in establishing meeting agendas.
- 3. A School Committee member should ask the School Committee Chair or the Superintendent to place an item on the agenda in advance of the meeting instead of bringing it up unexpectedly at the meeting. There should be sufficient interest among the entire School Committee on a matter before asking the Superintendent to devote their time to the matter.
- 4. School Committee member requests for information should be directed through the Superintendent and not through a school employee unless otherwise agreed.
- 5. When an individual presents concerns, issues, or proposals, School Committee members will refer individuals to the staff members who can properly and most expeditiously address the issue (school principals, operations manager, etc.)
- 6. All personnel issues received by the School Committee or individual members will be directed to the Superintendent. School Committee members should follow the Public Complaints About School Personnel Policy KEB carefully.
- 7. The School Committee will lead by example and avoid words and actions that create a negative impression on an individual, the School Committee, or the district. While we encourage debate and differing points of view, we will do it with care and respect.
- 8. To be efficient and effective, long meetings must be avoided. If a School Committee member needs more information, either the Superintendent or School Committee Chair is to be called before the meeting. Public comment protocol (<u>Policy BEDH Public Comment at School Board Meetings</u>) will be consistently practiced.
- 9. The Superintendent or designee will be the district spokesperson on critical or emergency issues.
- 10. The School Committee Chair or designee will be the School Committee spokesperson. Individual School Committee members will not speak to the media on behalf of the School Committee.
- 11. Surprises to the School Committee or the Superintendent should be avoided.
- The School Committee is an elected position, not a volunteer position. School Committee members should make every attempt to be fully engaged in meeting the different areas of responsibility.
- 13. School Committee members should avoid the use of mobile or other devices during meetings which can be distracting and disrespectful to others.
- 14. The School Committee must abide by Freedom of Access statutes. Keep in mind that all emails and other written materials are likely to be ruled as "public" documents that must be shared upon request.

Principles of Successful Board/Committee Service

From the Maine School Board Association Handbook

To succeed in your service as a board member, there are several basic principles to keep in mind.

- 1. You were selected by your fellow citizens to be a school board member, not simply to echo their views and wants but for your willingness and ability to:
 - Learn about and analyze complex issues;
 - Help the public understand the issues; and
 - Work with fellow board members and use your best judgment in making decisions.
- 2. The skills you need to be an effective board member may be different from those that got you elected.
- 3. It is important to learn how to make good decisions based on all available information, even when you are under time or political pressure.
- 4. You need to be able to work effectively as part of a team.
- 5. You need to act as a policy maker, not an administrator.
- 6. In spite of competing pressures and demands, you must be committed to doing the right things and to doing things right.

Restrictions

- Executive sessions will be held to discuss only those issues allowed by <u>Maine State Statute</u>.
 The School Board/Committee will not vote or take action on any issue in executive session, including action to exit executive session. Members will honor the confidentiality of these discussions.
- 2. Individual school board/committee members do not have authority. Only the school board/committee as a whole has authority. Individual school board/committee members will refrain from attempting to take unilateral action or make individual demands of administration or staff.
- 3. School board/committee workshop sessions will be for in-depth discussion on one or two specific topics for the purpose of information sharing. The school board/committee does not vote or take action on issues during a workshop session.

School Committee Code of Ethics - Policy BCA

Having accepted the challenge of service on the School Committee, I accept the principles set forth in the following code of ethics to guide me in helping to provide free public education to all the children of my school unit within the State of Maine.

- A. I will view service on the School Committee as an opportunity to serve my community, state, and nation because I believe public education is the best means to promote the welfare of our people and to preserve our democratic way of life.
- B. I will at all times think of children first and base my decisions on how they will affect children, their education, and their training.
- C. I will make no disparaging remarks, in or out of the School Committee meetings, about other members of the School Committee or their opinions.
- D. I will remember at all times that as an individual I have no legal authority outside the meetings of the School Committee, and that I will conduct my relationship with the school staff, the local citizenry, and all media of communications on the basis of this fact.
- E. I will recognize that my responsibility is not to operate the schools but to see that they are well operated.
- F. I will seek to provide education for all children in the community commensurate with their needs and abilities.
- G. I will listen to all citizens but will refer all complaints to the proper authorities, and will discuss such complaints only at a regular meeting after failure of administrative solution.
- H. I will support a decision graciously once it has been made by the majority of the School Committee.
- I. I will not criticize employees publicly, but will make such criticism to the Superintendent for investigation and action, if necessary.
- J. I will make decisions openly after all facts bearing on a question have been presented and discussed.
- K. I will refuse to make promises as to how I will vote on a matter to come before the School Committee as a whole.
- L. I will honor School Committee business that is confidential.
- M. I will confine my School Committee action to policy making, planning, and appraisal, leaving the administration of the schools to the Superintendent.
- N. I will welcome and encourage cooperation and participation by teachers, administrators, other personnel and parents and community members in developing policies that affect the welfare of the children they serve.
- O. I will endeavor at all times to see that schools have adequate financial support within the capabilities of the community and state, in order that every child may receive the best possible education.
- P. I will resist every temptation and outside pressure to use my position as a School Committee member to benefit myself or any individual or agency.
- Q. I will endeavor to attend every regular and special Committee meeting recognizing that my presence means representation for my town. If I find that this is not possible for an extended length of time, I will give consideration to resigning from my position on the School Committee.
- R. I will recognize at all times that the School Committee of which I am a member is an agent of the state, and as such, I will abide by the laws of the state and the regulations formulated by the Maine Department of Education and by the State Board of Education.

Board Member Conflict of Interest - Policy BCB

In order to further the mission of the schools, to meet the school unit's obligations under applicable law, and to promote public confidence in the schools, Board members should not permit personal financial interests or family allegiances to influence improperly the performance of their duties. This policy is intended to prevent the occurrence of real or apparent conflicts of interest that may impair the mission and reputation of the schools.

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- "Employee" means a person who receives monetary payment or benefits, no matter the amount paid or hours worked, for personal services performed for a school administrative unit.
- "Volunteer" means a person who performs personal services for a school administrative unit without monetary payments or benefits of any kind or amount.

A. Contracts

The Board and the school unit shall not enter into any contract in which a Board member (i) has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest (as defined by law), (ii) or is employed by, contracts with or has any other financial interest in an entity which furnishes goods or services to the schools, except as follows:

- 1. The Board member having the interest makes full disclosure of interest before any action is taken and abstains from voting, negotiating or award of the contract and from otherwise attempting to influence the decision (disclosure and abstention shall be recorded in the minutes of the Board), or
- 2. The contract is obtained through properly advertised bid procedures in accordance with state law and Board policies.

When a Board member participates in the selection, award or administration of a contract that is supported by a federal award, the Board member shall also comply with Policy DJH – Purchasing and Contracting: Procurement Staff Code of Conduct.

B. Employment

- 1. A Board member may not, during the time the member serves on the Board and for one year after the member ceases to serve on the Board, be appointed to any civil office of profit or employment position which has been created or the compensation of which has been increased by action of the Board during the time the member serves on the Board.
- 2. A Board member or spouse of a member may not be an employee in the school unit.
- 3. A member of the Board or spouse of a member may not serve as a volunteer when that volunteer has primary responsibility for a curricular, cocurricular or extracurricular program or activity and reports directly to the Superintendent, principal, athletic director or other school administrator in the school unit.
- 4. Volunteer activities of a member of the Board or member's spouse, other than in roles that are prohibited by this section, may be prescribed by policies developed and approved by the Board.

Nepotism - Policy BCC

Immediate and extended family members of Board members shall not be employed by the School Department, subject to the following exemptions:

- a. Immediate and extended family members, except spouses, who are employed as of the date of policy adoption, for as long as they remain continuously employed.
- b. Employees who are employed on the date that an immediate or extended family member of theirs is elected to the Board.
- c. Board members are expected to recuse themselves from participating in any personnel action involving an immediate or extended family member employed by the School Department.

Public Complaints of School Personnel - Policy KEB

Complaints should be handled at the lowest level possible. All reasonable efforts should be made by the involved parties to resolve a complaint in a timely and collaborative manner.

The school board believes that constructive criticism, when it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of our educational programs, assists school personnel to perform their responsibilities more effectively. At the same time, the school board places trust in its employees and desires to support their actions in such a manner that employees are not subjected to unnecessary, spiteful, or frivolous complaints.

- 1. Teacher/Staff Member
- 2. Principal
- 3. Superintendent
- 4. School Board

<u>Public Comment at School Board Meetings - Policy BEDH</u>

The School Board recognizes the value of public comments on school and educational matters. To permit fair and orderly expression of public comments at Board business meetings, while still allowing the Board to conduct its business efficiently, the Board has established procedures for regular business meetings. At special and emergency meetings, public comments will be limited to the topic(s) of the particular meeting.

Conduct of Board Meetings

Parliamentary procedures exist to facilitate efficiently conducted meetings that protect the rights of the members. The fundamental principles of parliamentary procedure are:

- 1. Fairness of process and courtesy for all.
- 2. Only one thing; speaker, motion, or action at a time.
- 3. The majority rules.
- 4. The minority must be heard.
- 5. Each proposition is entitled to a full and free debate.
- 6. The purpose is to facilitate action, not to obstruct it.

Quorum: The minimum number of members who must be present for a valid transaction of any business. The numbers required for a quorum of each school board/committee are:

School Committee/Board	Total number of members	Total needed for a quorum
Bar Harbor School Committee	5	3
Cranberry Isles School Committee	3	2
Frenchboro School Committee	3	2
Mt. Desert Island Regional High School Board	20 (10 voting members)	6 (no more than 3 from Mt. Desert, 3 from Bar Harbor, 2 from Southwest Harbor, and 2 from Tremont
Mt. Desert Island Regional High School Board of Trustees	12	7
Mt. Desert Island Regional School System - AOS #91 Board	36 (19 voting members)	10
Mt. Desert School Committee	5	3
Southwest Harbor School Committee	5	3
Swan's Island Board of Directors	5	3
Tremont School Committee	5	3
Trenton School Committee	5	3

Motions

A motion is a request that the business is brought before the board.

The **main motion** introduces the action "I move that..." and is open to debate. Usually requires a majority vote to carry.

- Only one motion may be addressed at a time.
- A motion must receive a second to have a discussion on the motion.
- If no second to the motion is received, the motion dies.
- If a second is received, after discussion, the board chair or presiding officer repeats the motion and calls for a vote. The vote is taken.

A **subsidiary motion** is the amending of the motion.

- A motion may be modified but the main idea of the motion may not be changed.
- Each amendment must be voted on before action can be taken on the main motion.

An **incidental motion** is business to be disposed of before an action can be taken on a main motion. For example:

- Withdrawal of motion may be requested by the maker of the motion. Without objections, withdrawal is allowed.
- Point of order is made to immediately question a parliamentary action of a decision of process that just occurred.
- Appeal from the decision of the chair is made if a member disagrees with the
 presiding officer's decision. The board then may vote either to sustain or overrule
 the chair's decision. An appeal is usually debatable.

A **privileged motion** deals with any or all issues specifically related to a meeting or to the comfort of members in attendance. They are called privileged because, even when another business is pending, the real needs (regarding time, comfort, or other special need) of the people in the meeting are considered important enough to be dealt with immediately. For example:

- To take a recess.
- To adjourn.
- To fix a time and place to adjourn.

Steps in a Main Motion

- 1. Motion is made, preferably in a positive form, by saying "I move that..."
- 2. The motion must be seconded to be considered. If no second, the motion dies.
- 3. The chair repeats the motion, which opens the motion for discussion.
- 4. Debate/discussion.
- 5. Chair repeats the motion when discussion ends or time limits expire.
- 6. Chair calls for ayes and nays. Must always call for the negative vote, even if it appears that the vote is unanimous.
- 7. Chair announces the result of the vote.

Parliamentary Procedure - Frequently Used Motions

To do this:	You say this:	May you interrupt a speaker?	Do you need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	What vote?
Introduce new business	"I move that"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Request information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	No vote, unless objection
Call for a brief intermission	"I move to recess for minutes."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Postpone the question to a later time.	"I move to postpone the question until next month's meeting."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer the question to a committee for further study.	"I move to refer the motion to the committee to study."	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Put a limit on the debate.	"I move that debate be limited to 5 minutes."	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
End debate and vote	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Adjourn the meeting	"I move that we adjourn."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority

School Committee Norms

The following are norms by which the school boards and committees within MDIRSS-AOS 91 will operate:

- 1. Respect all views and treat all with equal weight.
- 2. Seek to understand other views in addition to working to make others understand your opinion.
- 3. Look for common ground when considering dissimilar views.
- 4. Put your stake in the ground but be willing to move it.
- 5. Listen without interrupting.
- 6. Be hard on issues, soft on people.
- 7. Be civil, especially when differences arise.
- 8. If you have issues with a person, talk directly with that person.
- 9. No surprises.

School Committee Stipends

MDIRSS-AOS #91 School Board and Policy Committee Meetings 2025-2026

*Unless otherwise noted, all meetings occur at the times and locations listed.

Please refer to the school board meeting calendar on the district website for the most accurate dates and times.

Bar Harbor

First Monday of the month at 4:30 pm in the Conners-Emerson Library

*September 15, 2025 October 6, 2025

November 3, 2025

*November 17, 2025 (budget)

December 1, 2025

* December 15, 2025 - if needed

January 5, 2026

February 2, 2026

March 2, 2026

April 6, 2026

May 4, 2026

June 1, 2026

Cranberry Isles

First Friday of the month at 8:30 AM if meeting at the Ashley Bryan School (ABS) or 8:45 AM if meeting at the Longfellow School (Longfellow)

September 5, 2025 (Longfellow)

October 3, 2025 (ABS)

November 7, 2025 (Longfellow)

December 5, 2025 (Supt. Office) *January 9, 2026 (Supt. Office)

February 6, 2026 (ABS)

March 6, 2026 (Longfellow)

April 3, 2026 (ABS)

May 1, 2026 (Longfellow)

June 5, 2026 (ABS)

Frenchboro

Third Tuesday of the month at 4:00 pm at the Frenchboro School

September 16, 2025

October 21, 2025

November 18, 2025

December 16, 2025

January 20, 2026

February ___, 2026 March 17, 2026

April ___, 2026

May 19, 2026

June 16, 2026

MDIRSS-AOS #91

Second Monday of the month in the MDI High School Library, time to be determined

August 11, 2025

September 8, 2025

*October 20, 2025

November 10, 2025

December 8, 2025

*December 17, 2025 - Annual Meeting

January 12, 2026

*Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at 6:00 pm

- Annual Public Budget Meeting

February 9, 2026

March 9, 2026

April 13, 2026

May 11, 2026 June 8, 2025

Mt. Desert Elementary

First Wednesday of the month at 4:00 pm at Mt. Desert Elem. School

September 3, 2025

October 1, 2025

November 5, 2025

December 3, 2025

January 7, 2026

February 4, 2026

March 4, 2026 April 1, 2026

May 6, 2026

June 3, 2026

Mt. Desert Island High School

Second Monday of the month in the MDI High School Library, usually at 5:00 pm

August 11, 2025

September 8, 2025

*October 20, 2025

November 10, 2025

December 8, 2025

January 12, 2026

February 9, 2026

March 9, 2026

*Wednesday, April 1, 2026 at 6:00 pm

- Annual Meeting

April 13, 2026

May 11, 2026

June 8, 2026

Mt. Desert Island High School **Board of Trustees**

Fourth Monday of the month at 5:30 pm in the MDI High School Library

August 25, 2025

September 22, 2025

October 27, 2025

November 24, 2025

*December 2025 - date to be determined

January 26, 2026

February 23, 2026

March 23, 2026

April 27, 2026

*May 18, 2026 June 22, 2026

Southwest Harbor

Second Thursday of the month at 5:00 pm at the Pemetic Elem. School

September 11, 2025

October 9, 2025

November 13, 2025

December 11, 2025

January 8, 2026

February 12, 2026

March 12, 2026

April 9, 2026

May 14, 2026

June 11, 2026

Swan's Island

Fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm at the Swan's Island School

September 23, 2025

October 28, 2025

November 25, 2025

*December 2025 - date to be determined

January 27, 2026

February 24, 2026

March 24, 2026

April 28, 2026

May 26, 2026

June 23, 2026

Tremont

First Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm at the Tremont School

September 2, 2025

October 7, 2025

November 4, 2025

December 2, 2025

Trenton

Second Tuesday of the month at 5:30

at the Trenton Elem. School

September 9, 2025 October 14, 2025

*November 18, 2025

Policy Committee

Fourth Thursday of the month at 5:30 pm in the Supt.'s Office

September 25, 2025

October 23, 2025

*November 20, 2025

*December 2024 - no meeting

January 6, 2026	December 9, 2025	January 22, 2026
February 3, 2026	January 13, 2026	February 26, 2026
March 3, 2026	February 10, 2026	March 26, 2026
April 7, 2026	March 10, 2026	April 23, 2026
May 5, 2026	April 7, 2026	May 28, 2026
June 2, 2026	May 12, 2026	*June 2026 - no meeting
	June 9, 2026	
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Annual Agenda Items *Budget meeting timelines are listed on the district website www.mdirss.org

After town meeting:	Reorganization of School Committee/Board - Election of Officers				
JULY					
AUGUST	AOS - chair, vice-chair and secretary by ballot				
SEPTEMBER					
OCTOBER	AOS - Approval of Administrative Review of Consolidated MDIRSS-AOS #91 Emergency Response Plan	MDIHS - Drop out report	Budget goals	Executive Session - Board Evaluation of Superintendent	Review School Resource Officer MOU - Bar Harbor, Mt. Desert, and MDIHS only
NOVEMBER	Budget work continues				
DECEMBER	AOS Annual Meeting - evaluation of Superintendent, renewal/extension of Superintendent's contract, Annual Report of Administrators				
JANUARY	MDIRSS-AOS 91 Annual Public Budget Meeting	Approval of School Calendar			
FEBRUARY	Approval of School Calendar (if not approved in January)				
MARCH	MDI High School - Set Annual Budget Meeting and Sign Warrant				
APRIL	MDI High School Annual Budget Meeting (1st Weds. in April)	Nomination and Election of Probationary Teachers (written	BH dix item: Use of Title I and Title IIA Funds and Consolidated NCLB Application Process		Appointment of School Physician
MAY	Authorization for Superintendent to Apply for and Receive State and Federal Funds	notice must be received by teacher before May 14)			
JUNE	Extension of Contract and Adjustment of Salary for Administrators, including MDIRSS-AOS 91 Central Office Administrators	Authorization for Superintendent to Hire During Summer Months	Transfer reserves		

Freedom of Access

Maine law requires that the actions of public entities are matters of public record. Maine's Freedom of Access Act (1959) provides directives regarding public meetings and access to public information. The State of Maine has developed a website (maine.gove/foaa/) to inform the public of their rights in this regard.

Training related to public records and public proceedings

Elected officials must complete training on the requirements of Maine's Freedom of Access laws relating to public records and proceedings. Public officials must complete the training within 120 days after taking the oath of office.

Elected officials required to complete training

Elected officials required to complete the training include:

- 1. The Governor;
- 2. Attorney General, Secretary of State, Treasurer of State and State Auditor;
- 3. Legislators elected after November 1, 2008;
- 4. Commissioner, treasurers, district attorneys, registers of deeds, registers of probate and budget committee members of any county;
- 5. Municipal officers, clerks, treasurers, assessors and budget committee members of municipal governments;
- 6. Officials of school units and school boards; and
- 7. Officials of regional or other political subdivisions, including officials of water districts, sanitary districts, hospital districts, transit districts or regional transportation districts.

You may meet the training requirement by conducting a thorough review of the material on the **Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) page** of the State of Maine website (hard copy provided on following pages) or by completing another training course that includes all of this information but may include additional information.

Certification and record of completion

After completing the training, you are required to make a written or electronic record attesting that the training has been completed. Please sign the Certificate of Completion of Freedom of Access training (policy BIC-E) and return it to the Superintendent's Office as soon after completion of the training as possible.

Code: BIC-E

MOUNT DESERT ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM - AOS #91 CERTIFICATION OF COMPLETION OF FREEDOM OF ACCESS TRAINING REQUIRED BY 1 M.R.S.A. § 412

I,	, hereby certify that I ha	ve met the
I,(Name of elected official)		
training requirements set forth in M.R.S.A	§ 412 on	by
	(Date of traini	ng)
completing the following training.		
 A thorough review of all of the info Asked Questions portion of the Stat www.maine.gov/foaa/faq. 		Frequently
Another training course that include	es this information, identified as	s follows:
(Title of course)		
(Name of course provider)		
Dated this day of	, 20	
(Signature)		
(Printed name)		
(Elected office)		

Adopted: <u>01/23/17</u>

Additional Resources

- **►** Maine School Board Association Handbook
- **►** Maine School Board Association
- **►** Maine Revised Statutes
- **State of Maine Department of Education**
- > National School Boards Association
- ➤ American School Board Journal
- **➤** Teachers Collective Bargaining Agreement (2024-2027)
- **► Mount Desert Island Education Association Support Staff**
 - **Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028)**
 - (Bar Harbor, Mount Desert, Southwest Harbor, Tremont, Trenton,
 - Mount Desert Island High School)
- > Support Staff Procedures Manual
- **Budgets Timeline** updated as information changes