

POLAND REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COMMITTEE	CODE: KDB Page: 1
SUBJECT: PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW/FREEDOM OF ACCESS	
DATE OF ORIGINAL POLICY: October 2008 REVISION DATE:	
JURISDICTION: Poland Regional High School	

POLICY:

The School Committee recognizes the importance of a well-informed public to the operations of the school unit. The School Committee will comply with all applicable sections of Maine's Freedom of Access Act. Except as otherwise provided by statute, all School Committee 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 and shall be open to public inspection.

School Committee agendas and minutes, proposed and approved School Committee policies, annual budget reports, student handbooks and School Committee 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, preferably in writing, to the Superintendent, specifying the records desired for inspection/copying. The Superintendent/designee may request clarification concerning which public record or records are being requested.

The Superintendent/designee shall acknowledge receipt of a request for inspection and/or copying of public records within a reasonable period of time.

M.R.S.A. § 408(1) requires acknowledgement of the receipt of a request to inspect and/or copy a public record within a "reasonable period of time." As a matter of good practice, MSMA recommends acknowledgement be provided within five working days whenever feasible.

If the request is denied, the Superintendent/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.

What should be regarded as a "reasonable period of time" for producing records for inspection depends upon the circumstances. Some documents are more accessible than others, and some requests more complex or difficult to fulfill, e.g., those requiring retrieval from multiple files, redacting (blacking out) of confidential information or searching computer networks.

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Other documents, such as School Committee meeting minutes and School Committee policies are typically kept in a central location and easily retrieved. It would be reasonable to expect that such documents would be provided expeditiously.

MSSA recommends consultation with your school attorney if there is a question as to whether a document or particular information must be provided in response to a Freedom of Access request.

Fees

Except as otherwise provided by law or court order, Poland Regional High School may charge fees as follows:

- A. A fee of \$.10 (standard size) and \$.15 (legal size) per page to cover the cost of copying.
- B. A fee of \$10.00 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 translation is required, a fee to cover the actual cost of translation.

No fee shall be charged for inspection of public records.

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 estimated total cost exceeds \$20.00, will inform the requestor before proceeding. If the estimated total cost is greater than \$100.00 or if the requestor has previously failed to pay a fee assessed for access to **Poland Regional High School's** records, the requestor may be required to pay all or a portion of the estimated cost prior to the search, retrieval, compiling, translation, and copying of the public record.

The Superintendent is directed to develop and implement such administrative procedures as may be necessary to carry out this policy.

AMPLIFYING INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES:

As per this policy Statement.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY:

The Poland Regional High School Committee delegates authority to implement this policy to the Superintendent of Schools.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE POLICY:

None

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DEFINITIONS:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

None

LEGAL REFERENCES:

1 M.R.S.A. § 401 et seq.

SIGNATURE BLOCK:

Poland Regional High School Committee

Scott Sawyer, Chair

DATE

Mary Ella Jones

DATE

Martha Stone

DATE

Steven Carr

DATE

Norm Davis

DATE

Dave Griffiths

DATE

Chris Woodford

DATE