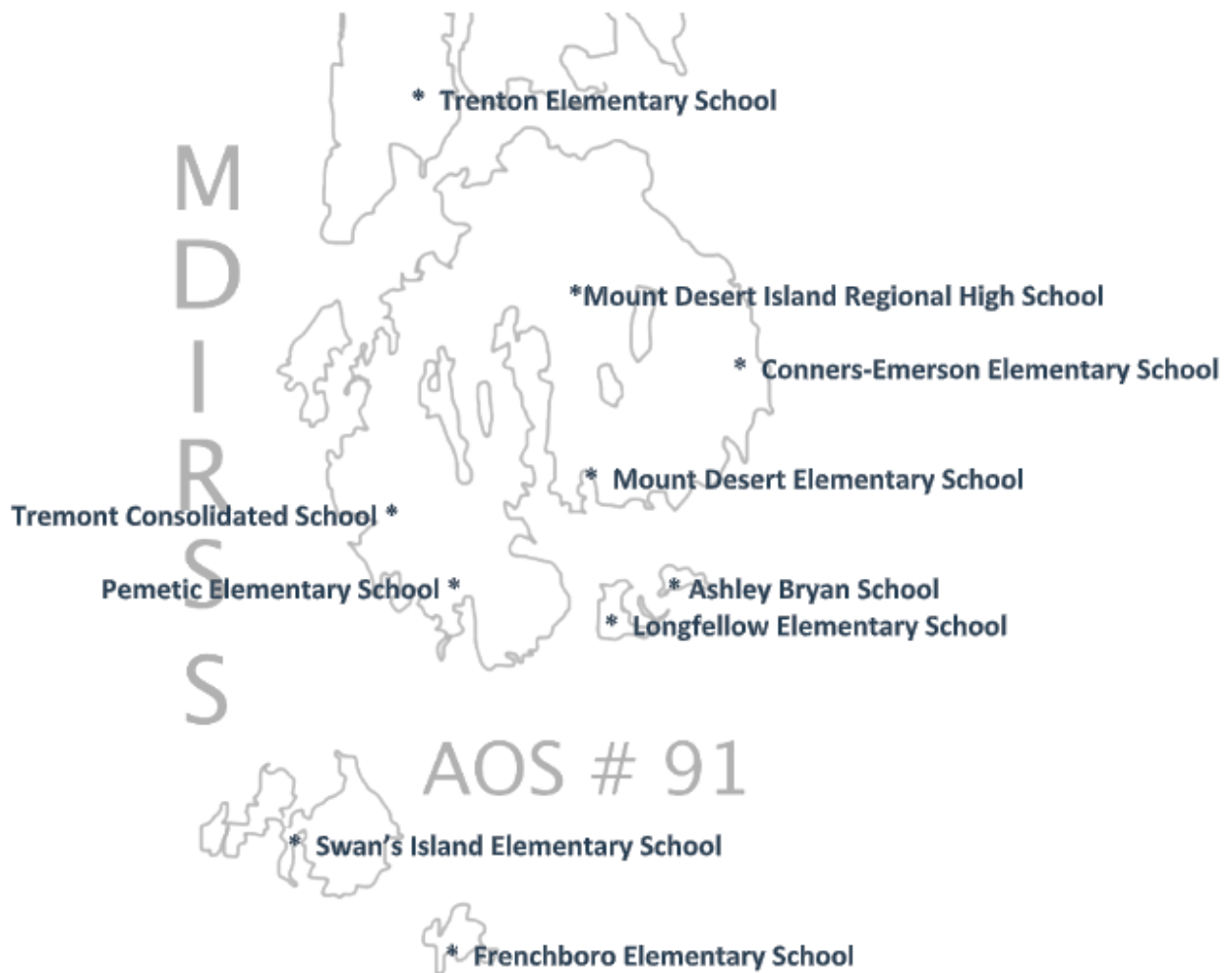


Mount Desert Island Regional School System - AOS #91

School Board Handbook



2023-2024



Mount Desert Island Regional School System



Office of the Superintendent of Schools

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Mount Desert, Maine 04660

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To: MDIRSS-AOS #91 School Board Members
From: Michael Zboray, Superintendent of Schools
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.

Contents

About Our School Boards/Committees.....	1
School Board/Committee Responsibilities.....	1
Operating Principles.....	2
Principles of Successful Board/Committee Service	3
Restrictions.....	3
Code of Ethics - Policy BCA.....	4
Conflict of Interest - Policy BCB.....	5
Nepotism - Policy BCC.....	6
Public Complaints About School Personnel - Policy KEB.....	6
Public Participation at Board Meetings - Policy BEDH.....	6
Conduct of Board Meetings.....	6
Quorums.....	7
Motions.....	7-8
Parliamentary Procedure - Frequently Used Motions.....	9
School Committee Norms.....	10
Shared expectations for how we operate as a School Committee.....	10
MDIRSS-AOS #91 School Board Meetings 2022-2023.....	11-12
Freedom of Access.....	12
Certificate of Completion of Freedom of Access Training.....	13
Additional Resources.....	14

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 Southwest Harbor, 2 Tremont).

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 participation protocol ([Policy KEBH - Public Participation at Board Meetings](#)) 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.
12. 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

1. [Executive sessions](#) will be held to discuss only those issues allowed by Maine State Statute. 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

Public Participation at Board Meetings - Policy BEDH

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
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.

MDIRSS-AOS #91 School Board and Policy Committee Meetings 2023-2024

**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.

<p>Bar Harbor <i>First Monday of the month at 4:30 pm in the Conners-Emerson Library</i></p> <p>*September 18, 2023 October 2, 2023 November 6, 2023 *November 20, 2023 at 4:00 pm (budget) December 4, 2023 * December 18, 2023 - if needed January 2024 - <i>date to be determined due to holiday on 1st Monday</i> February 5, 2024 March 4, 2024 April 1, 2024 May 6, 2024 June 3, 2024</p>	<p>Cranberry Isles <i>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)</i></p> <p>September 1, 2023 (ABS) October 6, 2023 (Longfellow) November 3, 2023 (ABS) December 1, 2023 (Longfellow) January 5, 2024 (ABS) February 2, 2024 (Longfellow) March 1, 2024 (ABS) April 5, 2024 (Longfellow) May 3, 2024 (ABS) June 7, 2024 (Longfellow)</p>	<p>Frenchboro <i>Third Tuesday of the month at 4:00 pm at the Frenchboro School</i></p> <p>*September 27, 2023 October 17, 2023 November 21, 2023 December 19, 2023 January 16, 2024 February 2023 - <i>date to be determined</i> March 19, 2024 April 16, 2024 May 21, 2024 June 18, 2024</p>
<p>MDIRSS-AOS #91 <i>Second Monday of the month in the MDI High School Library, time to be determined</i></p> <p>September 11, 2023 *October 16, 2023 November 13, 2023 December 11, 2023 - Annual Meeting January 8, 2024 *Monday, January 22, 2024 at 6:00 pm - Annual Public Budget Meeting February 12, 2024 March 11, 2024 April 8, 2024 May 13, 2024 June 10, 2024</p>	<p>Mt. Desert Elementary <i>First Wednesday of the month at 4:00 pm at Mt. Desert Elem. School</i></p> <p>*Thursday, September 7, 2023 *Thursday, October 5, 2023 *Thursday, November 2, 2023 December 6, 2023 January 3, 2024 February 7, 2024 March 6, 2024 April 3, 2024 May 1, 2024 June 5, 2024</p>	<p>Mt. Desert Island High School <i>Second Monday of the month in the MDI High School Library, time to be determined</i></p> <p>September 11, 2023 *October 16, 2023 November 13, 2023 December 11, 2023 January 8, 2024 February 12, 2024 March 11, 2024 *Wednesday, April 3, 2024 at 6:00 pm - Annual Meeting April 8, 2024 May 13, 2024 June 10, 2024</p>
<p>Mt. Desert Island High School Board of Trustees <i>Fourth Monday of the month at 5:30 pm in the MDI High School Library</i></p> <p>September 25, 2023 October 23, 2023 November 27, 2023 *December 2023 - <i>date to be determined</i> January 22, 2024 February 26, 2024 March 25, 2024 April 22, 2024 April 8, 2024 *May 2024 - <i>date to be determined</i> June 24, 2024</p>	<p>Southwest Harbor <i>Second Wednesday of the month at 5:00 pm at the Pemetec Elem. School</i></p> <p>*September 20, 2023 *October 18, 2023 *November 15, 2023 *December 20, 2023 *January 17, 2024 February 14, 2024 *March 20, 2024 *April 24, 2024 *May 22, 2024 June 12, 2024</p>	<p>Swan's Island <i>Fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm at the Swan's Island School</i></p> <p>September 26, 2023 October 24, 2023 November 28, 2023 *December 19, 2023 January 23, 2024 February 27, 2024 March 25, 2024 April 23, 2024 May 28, 2024 June 25, 2024</p>
<p>Tremont <i>First Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm at the Tremont School</i></p> <p>September 5, 2023 October 3, 2023 November 7, 2023 December 5, 2023</p>	<p>Trenton <i>Second Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm at the Trenton Elem. School</i></p> <p>September 12, 2023 October 10, 2023 November 14, 2023 December 12, 2023</p>	<p>Policy Committee <i>Third Thursday of the month at 5:30 pm in the Supt.'s Office</i></p> <p>September 21, 2023 October 19, 2023 November 16, 2023 December 2023 - no meeting</p>

January 2, 2024 February 6, 2024 March 5, 2024 April 2, 2024 May 7, 2024 June 4, 2024	January 9, 2024 February 13, 2024 March 11, 2024 April 9, 2024 May 14, 2024 June 11, 2024	January 18, 2024 February 15, 2024 March 21, 2024 April 18, 2024 May 16, 2024 June 20, 2024
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Annual Agenda Items *[Budget meeting timelines](#) are listed on the district website www.mdirss.net

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	
NOVEMBER	Budget work continues			
DECEMBER	AOS Annual Meeting - evaluation of Superintendent, renewal/extension of Superintendent's contract			
JANUARY	MDIRSS-AOS 91 Annual Public Budget Meeting	Approval of School Calendar		
FEBRUARY	Approval of School Calendar (if not approved in January)			
MARCH	MDIHS - 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 notice must be received by teacher before May 14)	BH dix item: Use of Title I and Title IIA Funds and Consolidated NCLB Application Process	All schools - Authorization to Expend Title I and Title IIA Funds
MAY	Extension of Contract and Adjustment of Salary for Administrator	Appointment of: Truant Officer, Attendance Officer, School Physician	Authorization for Superintendent to Apply for and Receive State and Federal Funds	
JUNE	AOS - Annual Report of Administrators, including update on 3 year plan	Authorization for Superintendent to Hire During Summer Months	Authorization for Superintendent to Purchase Heating Oil	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 (<http://www.maine.gov/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.

**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 have met the
(Name of elected official)

training requirements set forth in M.R.S.A. § 412 on _____ by
(Date of training)

completing the following training.

- A thorough review of all of the information made available on the Frequently Asked Questions portion of the State Freedom of Access website, www.maine.gov/foaa/faq.
- Another training course that includes this information, identified as follows:

(Title of course)

(Name of course provider)

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20____.

(Signature)

(Printed name)

(Elected office)

Adopted: 01/23/17

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 \(2021-2024\)](#)
- [Mount Desert Island Education Association Support Staff Collective Bargaining Agreement \(2022-2025\)](#) (Southwest Harbor, Tremont, Trenton, Mount Desert Island High School)
- [Bar Harbor Support Staff Agreement \(2022-2025\)](#)
- [Support Staff Procedures Manual](#)
- [Budgets Timeline - will be updated](#)