

BEA - SCHOOL BOARD USE OF ELECTRONIC MAIL and OTHER ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Use of electronic mail (e-mail) and other electronic communications (including but not limited to texts, chat programs and social media) by school board members should conform to the same standards of judgment, propriety and ethics as other forms of school board-related communication. Board members shall comply with the following guidelines when using e-mail in the conduct of board responsibilities:

- I. The School Board and its members shall not use e-mail or other electronic communications as a substitute for deliberations at official Board meetings, for other communications or business properly confined to Board meetings, or in any way to defeat the purposes of the Freedom of Access Act.
- II. Board members should be aware that e-mail, including attachments, and other electronic communications received or prepared for use in board business or containing information relating to board business are likely to be regarded as public records which may be inspected and copied by any person upon request, unless otherwise made confidential by law. In some cases, such communications may be subject to state record retention requirements. For these reasons, Board members are well-advised to use the email address issued by the school unit for their official communications.
- III. Board members shall avoid discussing information about employees, students or other confidential matters in e-mail or other electronic communications because of the risk of improper disclosure. Board members are expected to comply with the same standards as school employees with regard to confidential information.
- IV. Board members shall have no authority to speak on behalf of the Board unless specifically designated by the Board to do so. When posting, responding, or otherwise engaging in other social media activity, a Board member shall make it clear by posting in a clear and conspicuous place that they are speaking in their individual capacity and that their views or other expressive activities are their own and are not being undertaken on behalf of the Board or School Department, and have not been endorsed or approved by the Board or School Department. This applies to a Board member's own social media pages, the social media pages of others where a Board Member is posting or otherwise engaging in expressive activity related to school business, and the district's social media pages.

Legal Reference:

- 1 MRSA § 401 et seq.
- 20-A MRSA §§ 6001-6002
- 20 USC § 1232g

Cross Reference:

- GBJ - Personnel Records and Files
- [IJND/IJND-R](#) - School Website and Social Media
- [JRA - Student Educational Records](#)

ADOPTED:

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