

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Any person or group having a legitimate interest in the operations of this School shall have the right to present a request, suggestion, or complaint concerning staff, the curriculum, or operations of the School. At the same time, the Board of Education has a duty to protect staff from unnecessary harassment. The purpose of this policy is to provide the means for judging each public complaint in a fair, impartial manner and to seek a remedy, when appropriate.

The Board desires to rectify any misunderstandings between the public and the School by direct, informal discussions among the interested parties. More formal procedures shall be employed only when such informal meetings fail to resolve the differences.

Any requests, suggestions, or complaints reaching the Board, Board members, and/or the administration shall be referred to the Superintendent or the Board for consideration, according to the procedures detailed below.

Matters Regarding a Staff Member

First Step

The complainant must first address the matter to the staff member, who shall discuss it promptly with the complainant and shall make every effort to provide a reasoned explanation or take appropriate action within his/her authority and Administrative Guidelines.

This level does not apply if the matter involves suspected child abuse, substance abuse, or any other serious allegation which may require investigation or inquiry by School officials.

As appropriate, the staff member shall report the complaint to the Superintendent and explain whatever action may have been taken.

Second Step

If the complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the complainant shall discuss it with the staff member's supervisor and/or Superintendent.

Third Step

If a satisfactory solution is not achieved by discussion with the Superintendent, the complainant may submit a written request for a conference to the Superintendent. This request should include the following:

- A. the specific nature of the complaint and a brief statement of the factors giving rise to it;
- B. the manner in which the complainant (or child of the complainant) alleges he/she has been affected adversely;
- C. the reason(s) the matter could not be resolved in discussions with the Superintendent;
- D. the relief sought by the complainant and the reasons such relief is needed.

Should the matter be resolved in conference with the Superintendent, the Board shall be advised of the matter and its resolution.

Fourth Step

If the matter is still unresolved or still requires a Board decision or action, the complainant shall request, in writing, a hearing by the Board.

After reviewing all material relating to the case, the Board may provide the complainant with its written decision and/or grant a hearing before the Board or a committee of the Board.

The complainant shall be advised, in writing, of the Board's decision no more than ten (10) business days following the Board's decision or action. The Board's decision will be final on the matter, and the Board will not provide a meeting to other complainants on the same issue.

If the complainant contacts an individual Board member to discuss the matter, the Board member shall inform the complainant that he/she has no authority to act in his/her individual capacity and that the complainant must follow the procedure described in this policy.

Matters Regarding the Superintendent

First Step

The complainant must first address the matter to the Superintendent, who shall discuss it promptly with the complainant and shall make every effort to provide a reasoned explanation or take appropriate action within her/his authority and the School's Administrative Guidelines.

Second Step

If the complaint regarding the Superintendent cannot be resolved through discussion, the complainant may submit a written request to the Board for a conference. This request should include the following:

- A. the specific nature of the complaint and a brief statement of the facts giving rise to it;
- B. the manner in which the complainant (or child of the complainant) alleges he/she has been affected adversely;
- C. the reason(s) the matter was not able to be resolved with the Superintendent;
- D. the relief sought by the complainant and the reasons such relief is needed.

The complainant shall be advised, in writing, of the Board's decision within ten (10) business days. The Board's decision will be final and not subject to appeal.

Matters Regarding the Educational Program, Services, or Operations

If the request, suggestion, complaint, or grievance relates to a matter of educational program, services, or operations, it should first be addressed to the Superintendent. Should the matter still not be resolved, or if it is one beyond the Superintendent's authority and requires a Board decision or action, the complainant shall request, in writing, a hearing by the Board.

After reviewing all material relating to the case, the Board may provide the complainant with its written decision and/or grant a hearing, before the Board or a committee of the Board.

The complainant shall be advised, in writing, of the Board's decision no more than five (5) business days following the next regular meeting. The Board's decision will be final on the matter, and the Board will not provide a meeting to other complainants on the same issue.

If the complainant contacts an individual Board member to discuss the matter, the Board member shall inform the complainant that s/he has no authority to act as an individual member of the Board and that the complainant must follow the procedure described in this policy

Matters Regarding Instructional Materials

The Superintendent shall prepare Administrative Guidelines to ensure students and parents are adequately informed each year regarding their right to inspect instructional materials and regarding the procedure for completing such an inspection per Policy 2210.01.

If the request, suggestion, complaint, or grievance relates to instructional materials such as textbooks, library books, reference works, and other instructional aids used in the School, the following procedure shall be followed:

- A. The criticism is to be addressed to the Superintendent, in writing, and shall include:
 1. author;
 2. title;
 3. publisher;
 4. the complainant's familiarity with the material;
 5. sections objected to, by page and item;
 6. reasons for each objection.

- B. Upon receipt of the information, the Superintendent shall appoint a review committee, consisting of any/all of the following:
 1. one (1) or more professional staff members;
 2. one (1) or more Board member;
 3. one (1) or more lay persons knowledgeable in the area;
 4. The Superintendent (as an ex official member of the committee).

- C. In evaluating the questioned material, the committee shall be guided by the following criteria:
 1. the appropriateness of the material for the age and maturity level of the students with whom it is being used;

2. the accuracy of the material;
3. the objectivity of the material;
4. the instructional use being made of the material.

The material in question may not be withdrawn from use, pending the committee's recommendation to the Superintendent.

The committee's recommendation shall be reported to the Superintendent, in writing, within thirty (30) business days following the formation of the committee. The Superintendent will advise the complainant, in writing, of the committee's recommendation and will advise the Board of the action taken or recommended.

Within thirty (30) business days, the complainant may appeal this decision to the Board, through a written request. The Superintendent shall forward to the Board all written material relating to the matter.

The Board shall review the case and advise the complainant, in writing, of its decision within ten (10) business days.

No challenged material may be removed from the curriculum or from a collection of resource materials except by action of the Board, and no challenged material may be removed solely because it presents ideas that may be unpopular or offensive to some. Any Board action to remove material will be accompanied by the Board's statement of its reasons for the removal.