

406 Complaints Concerning Personnel, Programs or Procedures

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Policy

The Board recognizes that from time to time concerns regarding the operation of the School District will arise. The Board, consistent with its broad policy-making role, believes it should deal with complaints concerning specific schools, personnel, programs, or procedures only after the usual channels have been exhausted. The Board also places trust in its employees and desires to support their actions in a manner that frees them from unnecessary or unwarranted criticism and complaints.

Complaints, questions, or expressions of concern shall be dealt with in a manner that reflects mutual respect and fair process, and administrative procedures for dealing with such situations should ensure that:

- Complaints are handled as near the source as possible
- Complaints are investigated and resolved expeditiously
- Complaints are dealt with in a courteous and constructive manner
- Personnel against whom complaints are made have an opportunity to respond.

When a citizen has a complaint about the action of any employee or about any policy, educational program, or learning resource, such a concern should be first channeled through the personnel of a school when appropriate, and secondly through the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, before the complaint is referred to the Superintendent for consideration. No anonymous complaints shall be considered.

Specific complaint policies in regard to alleged sexual or personal harassment can be found in Board *Policy 505: Employee Welfare*, in regard to alleged child abuse in Board *Policy 306: Suspected Child Abuse*, and in regard to complaints regarding the appropriateness of locally evaluated learning materials in Board *Policy 201: Learning Resources for Classroom Use*.

A decision of an employee or employees of the Board that significantly affects the education, health or safety of the student may be appealed by a parent/guardian and/or student in the School District pursuant to Board *Bylaw 906: School Act Appeals*.

The Board recognizes that employee decisions that do not significantly affect the education, health or safety of a student are within the final authority of the Superintendent as the Board's chief educational officer.

Administrative Procedures

Procedures for Handling Complaints

When no procedure is provided in legislation, in an employee collective agreement, or elsewhere in Board policy for complaints, those complaints shall be handled in the following manner:

Where action or investigation is desired by the complainant, or where it seems appropriate, the normal channel shall be from complainant to employee, to the employee's immediate supervisor, and then to a senior administrator, e.g., Assistant Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, or Director, and finally through to the Superintendent. Every effort should be made to resolve the concern at the earliest possible stage. Persons receiving or hearing complaints should advise the complainant to follow this channel;

Step 1: The parent/guardian and/or student shall make every effort to meet with the employee(s) involved with the decision. If there is no resolution;

Step 2: The parent/guardian and/or student shall make every effort to meet with the principal and appropriate staff member(s). If there is no resolution;

Step 3: The complaint shall be provided in writing to the appropriate senior administrator, e.g., Assistant Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, or Director. The written documentation shall include an outline of the nature of the complaint and the steps taken to resolve the matter directly with the employee(s) involved. The parent/guardian and/or student shall then meet with the Assistant Superintendent. Other members of the School District administration and employees may be involved at that time. The student's educational program will be continued in a manner established by the school principal and consistent with provisions in the *School Act* during this period of review. The disposition of the review shall be confirmed in writing to the parent/guardian and/or student. At the same time, the disposition shall be communicated to the employee(s) whose decision led to the review. If there is no resolution;

Step 4: The parent/guardian and/or student shall meet with the Superintendent. Other members of the School District administration and employees may be involved at this time. The disposition of the review shall be confirmed in writing to the parent/guardian and/or student. At the same time the disposition shall be communicated to the employee(s) whose decision led to the review.

Where the complaint involves alleged child abuse, the procedure to be followed is outlined in Board *Policy 306: Suspected Child Abuse*.

Where the complaint involves personal or sexual harassment, the procedure to be followed is outlined in Board *Policy 505: Employee Welfare*.

Where the complaint involves challenging the appropriateness of classroom learning resources, the procedure to be followed is outlined in Board *Policy 201: Learning Resources for Classroom Use*.