

Board Information Item

	Information Packet ☐ Board Agenda Information ☐ Board Agenda Action ☒ Board Agenda Consent ☐ 10/27/2025
Subject:	Act on Updates to General Grievance Board Policies DGBA, FNG & GF(LOCAL)
Contact Person:	Paula Barbaroux, Chief Operations Officer
Policy/Code:	Texas Education Code § 26A.001 and § 26A.002 Board Policies DGBA(LOCAL), FNG(LOCAL), and GF(LOCAL)
Priority and Performance Objective:	Priority 4: Strong Financial Stewardship and Internal System Efficiency Objective 4.2: Effective and Efficient District Operations
Summary:	If the Board of Trustees approves the District of Innovation amendment, the administration recommends updates to the District's general complaint or grievance policies. The purpose of the recommendation is to provide additional time for complainants to file a formal complaint and additional time for the administration to investigate and provide a response at Levels I and II of the process as compared to the current policies and in lieu of new Texas Education Code § 26A.001 and § 26A.002. The District maintains a webpage dedicated to the complaint/grievance process with readily available forms that contain an email address for submitting a formal complaint. These forms are available in English and Spanish.
Attachments:	Proposed Board Policies, Grievances DGBA(LOCAL), FNG(LOCAL), and GF(LOCAL)

Recommendation: | The recommendation is for the Board of Trustees to approve the updates to the District's general grievance policies identified as DGBA(LOCAL), FNG(LOCAL), and GF(LOCAL).

PERSONNEL-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS
EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

DGBA
(LOCAL)

Complaints

In this policy, the terms “complaint” and “grievance” shall have the same meaning.

**Other Complaint
Processes**

Employee complaints shall be filed in accordance with this policy, except as required by the policies listed below. Some of these policies require appeals to be submitted in accordance with DGBA after the relevant complaint process:

1. Complaints alleging discrimination, including violations of Title IX (gender), Title VII (sex, race, color, religion, national origin), ADEA (age), or Section 504 (disability), shall be submitted in accordance with the DIA series.
2. Complaints alleging certain forms of harassment, including harassment by a supervisor and violation of Title VII, shall be submitted in accordance with the DIA series.
3. Complaints concerning retaliation relating to discrimination and harassment shall be submitted in accordance with the DIA series.
4. Complaints concerning instructional resources shall be submitted in accordance with the EF series.
5. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District shall be submitted in accordance with the CKE series.
6. Complaints concerning the proposed nonrenewal of a term contract issued under Chapter 21 of the Education Code shall be submitted in accordance with DFBB.
7. Complaints concerning the proposed termination or suspension without pay of an employee on a probationary, term, or continuing contract issued under Chapter 21 of the Education Code during the contract term shall be submitted in accordance with DFAA, DFBA, or DFCA.

Notice to Employees

The District shall inform employees of this policy through appropriate District publications.

Guiding Principles

Informal Process

The Board encourages employees to discuss their concerns with their supervisor, principal, or other appropriate administrator who has the authority to address the concerns. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Informal resolution shall be encouraged but shall not extend any deadlines in this policy, except by mutual written consent.

PERSONNEL-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS
EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

DGBA
(LOCAL)

Direct Communication with Board Members	Employees shall not be prohibited from communicating with a member of the Board regarding District operations except when communication between an employee and a Board member would be inappropriate because of a pending hearing or appeal related to the employee.
Formal Process	An employee may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form. Even after initiating the formal complaint process, employees are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. An employee whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time. The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or “mini-trial” at any level.
Freedom from Retaliation	Neither the Board nor any District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against an employee for bringing a concern or complaint.
Whistleblower Complaints	Whistleblower complaints shall be filed within the time specified by law and may be made to the Superintendent or designee beginning at Level Two. Timelines for the employee and the District set out in this policy may be shortened to allow the Board to make a final decision within 60 calendar days of the initiation of the complaint. [See DG]
Complaints Against Supervisors	Complaints alleging a violation of law by a supervisor may be made to the Superintendent or designee. Complaint forms alleging a violation of law by the Superintendent may be submitted directly to the Board or designee.
General Provisions Filing	Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, by electronic communication, including email and fax, or by U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Filings submitted by electronic communication shall be timely filed if they are received by the close of business on the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the electronic communication. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are post-marked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.
Scheduling Conferences	The District shall make reasonable attempts to schedule conferences at a mutually agreeable time. If the employee fails to appear at a scheduled conference, the District may hold the conference and issue a decision in the employee’s absence.

PERSONNEL-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS
EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

DGBA
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Response	At Levels One and Two, “response” shall mean a written communication to the employee from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered, sent by electronic communication to the employee’s email address of record, or sent by U.S. Mail to the employee’s mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.
Days	“Days” shall mean District business days, unless otherwise noted. In calculating timelines under this policy, the day a document is filed is “day zero.” The following business day is “day one.”
Representative	“Representative” shall mean any person who or an organization that does not claim the right to strike and is designated by the employee to represent him or her in the complaint process. The employee may designate a representative through written notice to the District at any level of this process. The representative may participate in person or by telephone conference call. If the employee designates a representative with fewer than three days’ notice to the District before a scheduled conference or hearing, the District may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the District’s counsel. The District may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.
Consolidating Complaints	Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. Employees shall not file separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint. When two or more complaints are sufficiently similar in nature and remedy sought to permit their resolution through one proceeding, the District may consolidate the complaints.
Untimely Filings	All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent. If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the employee, at any point during the complaint process. The employee may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within five days from the date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.
Costs Incurred	Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

PERSONNEL-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS
EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

DGBA
(LOCAL)

Complaint and
Appeal Forms

Complaints and appeals under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the District.

Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the employee does not have copies of these documents, they may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted by the employee unless the employee did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.

A complaint or appeal form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed but may be refiled with all the required information if the refile is within the designated time for filing.

Audio Recording

As provided by law, an employee shall be permitted to make an audio recording of a conference or hearing under this policy at which the substance of the employee's complaint is discussed. The employee shall notify all attendees present that an audio recording is taking place.

Level One

Complaint forms must be filed:

1. Within ~~45~~ **20** days of the date the employee first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and
2. With the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem.

In most circumstances, employees on a school campus shall file Level One complaints with the campus principal; other District employees shall file Level One complaints with their immediate supervisor.

If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the Superintendent or designee, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One.

If the complaint is not filed with the appropriate administrator, the receiving administrator must note the date and time the complaint form was received and immediately forward the complaint form to the appropriate administrator.

The appropriate administrator shall investigate as necessary and schedule a conference with the employee within ~~ten~~ **fifteen** days after receipt of the written complaint. The administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

PERSONNEL-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS
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(LOCAL)

Absent extenuating circumstances, the administrator shall provide the employee a written response within ten days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the administrator may consider information provided at the Level One conference and any other relevant documents or information the administrator believes will help resolve the complaint.

Level Two

If the employee did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may request a conference with the Superintendent or designee to appeal the Level One decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level One response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level One response deadline.

After receiving notice of the appeal, the Level One administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One complaint to the Level Two administrator. The employee may request a copy of the Level One record.

The Level One record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the employee at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level One administrator in reaching the Level One decision.

The Superintendent or designee shall schedule a conference within ten days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level One. At the conference, the employee may provide information concerning any documents or information relied upon by the administration for the Level One decision. The Superintendent or designee may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the employee a written response within ~~ten~~ **fifteen** days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the Superintendent or designee may consider the Level One record, information provided at the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the Superintendent or designee believes will help resolve the complaint.

PERSONNEL-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS
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Level Three

Recordings of the Level One and Level Two conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the Level One and Level Two records.

If the employee did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may appeal the decision to the Board.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level Two response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level Two response deadline.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform the employee of the date, time, and place of the Board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda for presentation to the Board.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board the record of the Level Two appeal. The employee may request a copy of the Level Two record.

The Level Two record shall include:

1. The Level One record.
2. The notice of appeal from Level One to Level Two.
3. The written response issued at Level Two and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the administration in reaching the Level Two decision.

The appeal shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level Two, except that if at the Level Three hearing the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, the administration shall provide the employee notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the hearing.

The District shall determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law. [See BE]

The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for the presentation, including an opportunity for the employee and administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board. The Board shall hear the complaint and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

In addition to any other record of the Board meeting required by law, the Board shall prepare a separate record of the Level Three

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presentation. The Level Three presentation, including the presentation by the employee or the employee's representative, any presentation from the administration, and questions from the Board with responses, shall be recorded by audio recording, video/audio recording, or court reporter.

The Board shall then consider the complaint. It may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If the Board does not make a decision regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG
(LOCAL)

Complaints

In this policy, the terms “complaint” and “grievance” shall have the same meaning.

Other Complaint
Processes

Student or parent complaints shall be filed in accordance with this policy, except as required by the policies listed below. Some of these policies require appeals to be submitted in accordance with FNG after the relevant complaint process:

1. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability shall be submitted in accordance with the FFH series.
2. Complaints concerning dating violence shall be submitted in accordance with the FFH series.
3. Complaints concerning retaliation related to discrimination and harassment shall be submitted in accordance with the FFH series.
4. Complaints concerning bullying or retaliation related to bullying shall be submitted in accordance with FFI.
5. Complaints concerning failure to award credit or a final grade on the basis of attendance shall be submitted in accordance with FEC.
6. Complaints concerning expulsion shall be submitted in accordance with FOD and the Student Code of Conduct.
7. Complaints concerning any final decisions of the gifted and talented selection committee regarding selection for or exit from the gifted program shall be submitted in accordance with EHBB.
8. Complaints within the scope of Section 504, including complaints concerning identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability, shall be submitted in accordance with FB and the procedural safeguards handbook.
9. Complaints within the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, including complaints concerning identification, evaluation, educational placement, or discipline of a student with a disability, shall be submitted in accordance with EHBAE, FOF, and the procedural safeguards handbook provided to parents of all students referred to special education.
10. Complaints concerning instructional resources shall be submitted in accordance with the EF series.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG
(LOCAL)

11. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District shall be submitted in accordance with the CKE series.
12. Complaints concerning intradistrict transfers or campus assignment shall be submitted in accordance with FDB.
13. Complaints concerning admission, placement, or services provided for a homeless student shall be submitted in accordance with FDC.
14. Complaints concerning disputes regarding a student's eligibility for free or reduced-priced meal programs shall be submitted in accordance with COB.

Complaints regarding refusal of entry to or ejection from District property based on Education Code 37.105 shall be filed in accordance with this policy. However, the timelines shall be adjusted as necessary to permit the complainant to address the Board in person within 90 calendar days of filing the initial complaint, unless the complaint is resolved before the Board considers it. [See GKA(LEGAL)]

Notice to Students and Parents

The District shall inform students and parents of this policy through appropriate District publications.

Guiding Principles

Informal Process

The Board encourages students and parents to discuss their concerns with the appropriate teacher, principal, or other campus administrator who has the authority to address the concerns. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Informal resolution shall be encouraged but shall not extend any deadlines in this policy, except by mutual written consent.

Formal Process

A student or parent may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form.

Even after initiating the formal complaint process, students and parents are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. A student or parent whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.

The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or "mini-trial" at any level.

Freedom from Retaliation

Neither the Board nor any District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against any student or parent for bringing a concern or complaint.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG
(LOCAL)

General Provisions

Filing

Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, by electronic communication, including email and fax, or by U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Filings submitted by electronic communication shall be timely filed if they are received by the close of business on the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the electronic communication. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.

Scheduling
Conferences

The District shall make reasonable attempts to schedule conferences at a mutually agreeable time. If a student or parent fails to appear at a scheduled conference, the District may hold the conference and issue a decision in the student's or parent's absence.

Response

At Levels One and Two, "response" shall mean a written communication to the student or parent from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered, sent by electronic communication to the student's or parent's email address of record, or sent by U.S. Mail to the student's or parent's mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.

Days

"Days" shall mean District business days, unless otherwise noted. In calculating timelines under this policy, the day a document is filed is "day zero." The following business day is "day one."

Representative

"Representative" shall mean any person who or organization that is designated by the student or parent to represent the student or parent in the complaint process. A student may be represented by an adult at any level of the complaint.

The student or parent may designate a representative through written notice to the District at any level of this process. If the student or parent designates a representative with fewer than three days' notice to the District before a scheduled conference or hearing, the District may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the District's counsel. The District may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.

Consolidating
Complaints

Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. A student or parent shall not file separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG
(LOCAL)

Untimely Filings	All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent. If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the student or parent, at any point during the complaint process. The student or parent may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within five days from the date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.
Costs Incurred	Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

Complaint and Appeal Forms	Complaints and appeals under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the District. Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the student or parent does not have copies of these documents, copies may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted by the student or parent unless the student or parent did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference. A complaint or appeal form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed but may be refiled with all the required information if the refiling is within the designated time for filing.
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Level One

- Complaint forms must be filed:
1. Within ~~45~~ **20** days of the date the student or parent first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and
 2. With the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem.

In most circumstances, students and parents shall file Level One complaints with the campus principal.

If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the Superintendent or designee, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One.

If the complaint is not filed with the appropriate administrator, the receiving administrator must note the date and time the complaint form was received and immediately forward the complaint form to the appropriate administrator.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

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(LOCAL)

The appropriate administrator shall investigate as necessary and schedule a conference with the student or parent within ten days after receipt of the written complaint. The administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

Absent extenuating circumstances, the administrator shall provide the student or parent a written response within ~~ten~~ **fifteen** days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the administrator may consider information provided at the Level One conference and any other relevant documents or information the administrator believes will help resolve the complaint.

Level Two

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may request a conference with the Superintendent or designee to appeal the Level One decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level One response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level One response deadline.

After receiving notice of the appeal, the Level One administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One complaint to the Level Two administrator. The student or parent may request a copy of the Level One record.

The Level One record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the student or parent at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level One administrator in reaching the Level One decision.

The Superintendent or designee shall schedule a conference within ten days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level One. At the conference, the student or parent may provide information concerning any documents or information relied upon by the administration for the Level One decision. The Superintendent or designee may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the student or parent a written response within ~~ten~~ **fifteen** days following the conference.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

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(LOCAL)

The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the Superintendent or designee may consider the Level One record, information provided at the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the Superintendent or designee believes will help resolve the complaint.

Recordings of the Level One and Level Two conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the Level One and Level Two records.

Level Three

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may appeal the decision to the Board.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level Two response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level Two response deadline.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the Board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda for presentation to the Board.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board the record of the Level Two appeal. The student or parent may request a copy of the Level Two record.

The Level Two record shall include:

1. The Level One record.
2. The notice of appeal from Level One to Level Two.
3. The written response issued at Level Two and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the administration in reaching the Level Two decision.

The appeal shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level Two, except that if at the Level Three hearing the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, the administration shall provide the student or parent notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the hearing.

The District shall determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law. [See BE]

The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for the presentation, including an opportunity for the student or par-

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ent and administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board. The Board shall hear the complaint and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

In addition to any other record of the Board meeting required by law, the Board shall prepare a separate record of the Level Three presentation. The Level Three presentation, including the presentation by the student or parent or the student's representative, any presentation from the administration, and questions from the Board with responses, shall be recorded by audio recording, video/audio recording, or court reporter.

The Board shall then consider the complaint. It may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If the Board does not make a decision regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

GF
(LOCAL)

Complaints

In this policy, the terms “complaint” and “grievance” shall have the same meaning.

**Other Complaint
Processes**

Complaints by members of the public shall be filed in accordance with this policy, except as required by the policies listed below. Some of these policies require appeals to be submitted in accordance with GF after the relevant complaint process:

1. Complaints concerning instructional resources shall be filed in accordance with the EF series.
2. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District shall be filed in accordance with the CKE series.

Complaints regarding refusal of entry to or ejection from District property based on Education Code 37.105 shall be filed in accordance with this policy. However, the timelines shall be adjusted as necessary to permit the complainant to address the Board in person within 90 calendar days of filing the initial complaint, unless the complaint is resolved before the Board considers it. [See GKA(LEGAL)]

Guiding Principles
Informal Process

The Board encourages the public to discuss concerns with an appropriate administrator who has the authority to address the concerns. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Informal resolution shall be encouraged but shall not extend any deadlines in this policy, except by mutual written consent.

Formal Process

An individual may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form.

Even after initiating the formal complaint process, individuals are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. An individual whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.

The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or “mini-trial” at any level.

**Freedom from
Retaliation**

Neither the Board nor any District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against any individual for bringing a concern or complaint.

General Provisions
Filing

Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, by electronic communication, including email and fax, or by U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

GF
(LOCAL)

the deadline. Filings submitted by electronic communication shall be timely filed if they are received by the close of business on the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the electronic communication. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are post-marked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.

Scheduling
Conferences

The District shall make reasonable attempts to schedule conferences at a mutually agreeable time. If the individual fails to appear at a scheduled conference, the District may hold the conference and issue a decision in the individual's absence.

Response

At Levels One and Two, "response" shall mean a written communication to the individual from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered, sent by electronic communication to the individual's email address of record, or sent by U.S. Mail to the individual's mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.

Days

"Days" shall mean District business days, unless otherwise noted. In calculating timelines under this policy, the day a document is filed is "day zero." The following business day is "day one."

Representative

"Representative" shall mean any person who or organization that is designated by an individual to represent the individual in the complaint process.

The individual may designate a representative through written notice to the District at any level of this process. If the individual designates a representative with fewer than three days' notice to the District before a scheduled conference or hearing, the District may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the District's counsel. The District may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.

Consolidating
Complaints

Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. An individual shall not file separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.

Untimely Filings

All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent.

If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the individual, at any point during the complaint process. The individual may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within five days from the

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(LOCAL)

date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

Costs Incurred

Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

Complaint and
Appeal Forms

Complaints and appeals under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the District.

Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the individual does not have copies of these documents, they may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted by the individual unless the individual did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.

A complaint or appeal form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed but may be refiled with all the required information if the refiling is within the designated time for filing.

Level One

Complaint forms must be filed:

1. Within ~~45~~ **20** days of the date the individual first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and
2. With the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem.

If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the Superintendent or designee, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One.

If the complaint is not filed with the appropriate administrator, the receiving administrator must note the date and time the complaint form was received and immediately forward the complaint form to the appropriate administrator.

The appropriate administrator shall investigate as necessary and schedule a conference with the individual within ten days after receipt of the written complaint. The administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

Absent extenuating circumstances, the administrator shall provide the individual a written response within ~~ten~~ **fifteen** days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the administrator may consider in-

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formation provided at the Level One conference and any other relevant documents or information the administrator believes will help resolve the complaint.

Level Two

If the individual did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, he or she may request a conference with the Superintendent or designee to appeal the Level One decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level One response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level One response deadline.

After receiving notice of the appeal, the Level One administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One complaint to the Level Two administrator. The individual may request a copy of the Level One record.

The Level One record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the individual at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level One administrator in reaching the Level One decision.

The Superintendent or designee shall schedule a conference within ten days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level One. At the conference, the individual may provide information concerning any documents or information relied upon by the administration for the Level One decision. The Superintendent or designee may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the individual a written response within ~~ten~~ **fifteen** days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the Superintendent or designee may consider the Level One record, information provided at the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the Superintendent or designee believes will help resolve the complaint.

Recordings of the Level One and Level Two conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the Level One and Level Two records.

Level Three

If the individual did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired, he or she may appeal the decision to the Board.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level Two response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level Two response deadline.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform the individual of the date, time, and place of the Board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda for presentation to the Board.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board the record of the Level Two appeal. The individual may request a copy of the Level Two record.

The Level Two record shall include:

1. The Level One record.
2. The notice of appeal from Level One to Level Two.
3. The written response issued at Level Two and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the administration in reaching the Level Two decision.

The appeal shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level Two, except that if at the Level Three hearing the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, the administration shall provide the individual notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the hearing.

The District shall determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law. [See BE]

The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for the presentation, including an opportunity for the individual and administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board. The Board shall hear the complaint and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

In addition to any other record of the Board meeting required by law, the Board shall prepare a separate record of the Level Three presentation. The Level Three presentation, including the presentation by the individual or his or her representative, any presentation

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from the administration, and questions from the Board with responses, shall be recorded by audio recording, video/audio recording, or court reporter.

The Board shall then consider the complaint. It may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If the Board does not make a decision regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.