

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

8:10 Connection with the Community

Public Relations

The Board President is the official spokesperson for the Board of Education. The Superintendent is the District's chief spokesperson. The Superintendent or designee shall plan and implement a District public relations program that will:

1. Develop community understanding of school operation.
2. Gather community attitudes and desires for the District.
3. Secure adequate financial support for a sound educational program.
4. Help the community feel a more direct responsibility for the quality of education provided by their schools.
5. Earn the community's good will, respect, and confidence.
6. Promote a genuine spirit of cooperation between the school and the community.
7. Keep the news media accurately informed.
8. Coordinate with the District Safety Coordinator to provide accurate and timely information to the appropriate individuals during an emergency.

The public relations program should include:

1. Regular news releases concerning District programs, policies, activities, and special event management for distribution by, for example, posting on the District website or sending to the news media.
2. News conferences and interviews, as requested or needed. The Board President and Superintendent will coordinate their respective media relations efforts. Individuals may speak for the District only with prior approval from the Superintendent with the exception of Board members following the direction of the Board President.
3. Publications having a high quality of editorial content and effective format. All publications shall identify the District, school, department, or classroom and shall include the name of the Superintendent, the Building Principal, and/or the author and the publication date.
4. Other efforts that highlight the District's programs and activities.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is a process that the Board uses to actively involve diverse citizens in dialogue, deliberation, and collaborative thinking around common interests for the District's schools.

The Board, in consultation with the Superintendent, determines the purpose(s) and objective(s) of any community engagement initiative. For each community engagement initiative, the Board will commit to the determined purpose(s) and objective(s), and provide information about the expected nature of the public's involvement; the Superintendent or designee will identify the effective tools and tactics that will advance the Board's purpose(s) and objective(s).

The Superintendent or designee will provide timely updates regarding community engagement activities.

The Board will periodically: (1) review whether its community engagement initiatives are achieving the identified purpose(s) and objective(s), (2) consider what, if any, modifications would improve effectiveness, and (3) determine whether to continue individual initiatives.

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Any person or group having a legitimate interest in the operations of this District shall have the right to present a request, suggestion, complaint, or grievance concerning District personnel, the program, or the operations of the District. At the same time, the Board of Education has a duty to protect its staff from unnecessary harassment. It is the intent of this policy to provide the means for judging each public complaint and grievance in a fair and impartial manner and to seek a remedy where appropriate.

It is the desire of the Board to rectify any misunderstandings between the public and the District by direct discussions of an informal type among the interested parties. It is only when such informal meetings fail to resolve the differences shall more formal procedures be employed.

Any requests, suggestions, complaints, or grievances reaching the Board, Board members, and the administration shall be referred to the Superintendent, or designee, for consideration according to the following procedure.

Matters Regarding a Staff Member

A. First Level

If it is a matter specifically directed toward a professional staff member, the matter must be addressed, initially, to the concerned staff member who shall discuss it promptly with the complainant and make every effort to provide a reasoned explanation or take appropriate action within his/her authority and District 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 prior to approaching the professional staff member.

B. Second Level

If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved at the First Level, the complainant may request to meet with the staff member's supervisor. The request for the meeting should include the nature of the complaint and a brief statement of facts related to the complaint. The supervisor will meet with the complainant in compliance with provisions of a collective bargaining agreement, if applicable. The supervisor's decision is final.

Guidelines for Matters Regarding Enrollment Disputes

If the matter relates to disputes concerning student residency determination, Homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act, or related issues, the matter should be addressed to the District's Residency or Homelessness Coordinator, who will follow the Second Level procedures set forth above.

Matters Regarding the Educational Program

If the request, suggestion, complaint, or grievance relates to a matter of District program, it should be addressed, initially, to the building principal who will follow the Second Level procedures set forth above.

Matters Regarding Instructional Materials

The Superintendent, or designee, shall prepare administrative guidelines to ensure that students and parents are adequately informed each year regarding their right to inspect instructional materials and the procedure for completing such an inspection.

If the request, suggestion, or complaint, relates to instructional materials such as library books, reference works, and other instructional aids used in the District, it should be addressed at a meeting with the building principal and the staff member(s) using the instructional materials. The building principal will work with the complainant and the staff member(s) to reach a resolution regarding the request, suggestion or complaint.

LEGAL REF.:

[20 U.S.C. 1232h](#)

[105 ILCS 5/28-19](#) and [5/28-20](#)

CROSS REF.: 2:110 (Qualifications, Term, and Duties of Board Officers)