

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 for consideration according to the following procedure.

Matters Regarding a Professional 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, it shall be discussed by the complainant with the staff member's supervisor and in compliance with provisions of a collective bargaining agreement, if applicable.

C. Third Level

If a satisfactory solution is not achieved by discussion with the building principal, a written request for a conference shall be submitted to the Superintendent. This request should include:

1. the specific nature of the complaint and a brief statement of the facts giving rise to it;
2. the respect in which it is alleged that the complainant (or child of the complainant) has been affected adversely;
3. the action which the complainant wishes taken and the reasons why it is felt that such action be taken.

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

D. Fourth Level

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.

The Board, after reviewing all material relating to the case, shall grant a hearing.

The complainant shall be advised, in writing, of the Board's decision no more than _____ business days following the next regular meeting.

Matters Regarding an Administrative Staff Member

Since administrators are considered members of the District's professional staff, the general procedure specified in "Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member" shall be followed.

Matters Regarding a Support Staff Member

In the case of a support staff member, the complaint is to be directed, initially, toward the person's supervisor, and the matter then brought as required to higher levels in the same manner as prescribed for "Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member."

Matters Regarding District Services or Operations

If the request, suggestion, complaint, or grievance relates to a matter of District procedure or operation, it should be addressed, initially, to the building principal and then brought, in turn, to higher levels of authority in the manner prescribed in "Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member."

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 initially to the District's Residency or Homelessness Coordinator, and then to the Third Level of the process for "Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member."

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 and then brought, in turn, to higher levels of authority in the manner prescribed in "Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member."

Matters Regarding Instructional Materials

The Superintendent 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, complaint, or grievance relates to instructional materials such as library books, reference works, and other instructional aids used in the District, it should be addressed, initially, at a meeting with the building principal and the staff member(s) using the instructional materials. If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved at the building level, the following procedure shall be followed:

- A. A complainant may request a formal review of the instructional material by submitting a "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials" form to the building principal. The building principal shall forward a copy of this form to the Assistant Superintendent-Curriculum and Instruction and will notify, as appropriate, those teachers using the instructional material in question that a formal review has been initiated.

- B. Upon receipt of the instructional materials reconsideration form, the Assistant Superintendent-Curriculum and Instruction shall convene a review committee consisting of appropriate staff members and a parent.
- C. The Superintendent shall be an ex officio member of the committee.
- D. The review committee, in evaluating the questioned material, 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 use being made of the material
- E. Ordinarily, the material in question will remain in use pending an examination by the review committee. However, the Superintendent, in certain situations, may authorize the removal of the material in question until the review committee has completed its deliberations.
- F. The recommendations of the review committee shall be reported to the Superintendent in writing no more than twenty (20) business days after the formal review is initiated. The Superintendent will review the recommendations of the review committee and advise the complainant, in writing, of a decision within ten (10) business days of receiving the recommendation from the review committee. The Superintendent shall advise the Board of the decision in the matter.
- G. The complainant may appeal the decision of the Superintendent, within ten (10) business days, to the Board through a written request to the Superintendent, who shall forward the request and all written material relating to the matter to the Board.
- H. The Board shall review the case and advise the complainant, in writing, of its decision within twenty (20) business days of receiving the appeal of the complainant.

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

The Superintendent shall prepare administrative guidelines to implement this policy.

20 U.S.C. 1232h
105 ILCS 5/28-19 and 5/28-20

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