

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, gender, national origin, disability, or religion shall be submitted in accordance with FFH.
2. Complaints concerning dating violence shall be submitted in accordance with FFH.
3. Complaints concerning unlawful retaliation related to discrimination and harassment shall be submitted in accordance with FFH.
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. Appeals of the Student Code of Conduct, shall proceed as follows:
 - a. Consequences of Level One offenses may be appealed to the campus principal. No further appeal is available.
 - b. Consequences of Level Two offenses that do not result in disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) placement may be appealed to the executive director for school administration. No further appeal is available.
 - c. Consequences of Level Two offenses resulting in DAEP placement may be appealed to the executive director of school administration. No further appeal is available.
 - d. Consequences of Level Three offenses that do not result in expulsion may be appealed to the executive director of school administration. No further appeal is available.
 - e. Consequences of Level Three offenses that result in expulsion may be appealed to the Board.
 - f. Consequences of Level Four offenses may be appealed to the Board.

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7. Complaints concerning removal to a DAEP shall be submitted in accordance with FOC, the Student Code of Conduct, and item 6 above.
8. Complaints concerning expulsion shall be submitted in accordance with FOD, the Student Code of Conduct, and item 6 above.
9. 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.
10. Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability within the scope of Section 504 shall be submitted in accordance with FB and the procedural safeguards handbook.
11. Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, educational placement, or discipline of a student with a disability within the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act shall be submitted in accordance with EHBAE, FOF, and the procedural safeguards handbook provided to parents of all students referred to special education.
12. Complaints concerning instructional resources shall be submitted in accordance with EF.
13. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District shall be submitted in accordance with CKE.
14. Complaints concerning intradistrict transfers or campus assignment shall be submitted in accordance with FDB.
15. Complaints concerning admission, placement, or services provided for a homeless student shall be submitted in accordance with FDC.
16. Complaints concerning on-campus distribution of nonschool materials shall be submitted in accordance with FNAA.

**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.

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	<p>Informal resolution shall be encouraged but shall not extend any deadlines in this policy, except by mutual written consent.</p>
<p>Formal Process</p>	<p>A student or parent may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Freedom from Retaliation</p>	<p>Neither the Board nor any District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against any student or parent for bringing a concern or complaint.</p>
<p>General Provisions</p>	
<p>Filing</p>	<p>Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, by electronic communication, including e-mail 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.</p>
<p>Scheduling Conferences</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Response</p>	<p>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 e-mail 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.</p>
<p>Days</p>	<p>"Days" shall mean District business days. In calculating time lines under this policy, the day a document is filed is "day zero." The following business day is "day one."</p>
<p>Representative</p>	<p>"Representative" shall mean any person who or organization that is designated by the student or parent to represent the student or</p>

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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.

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. If a complaint could be heard by two or more departments, the associate superintendents shall jointly decide the proper department.

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 ten 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.

Level One

Complaint forms must be filed:

1. Within ten 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.

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 days following the conference. 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 days following the conference. 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 shall be heard by a hearing officer who shall not be a District employee.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing in the Superintendent's office, 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 provide the hearing officer 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 presented to the hearing officer within 15 business days of receipt of the appeal notice. An audiotape record of the proceeding before the hearing officer shall be made. The hearing officer shall make a written recommendation for disposition to the Board within 15 business days following the hearing. The Board shall review the hearing officer's written recommendation at its first regular meeting following receipt of same. The time frame may be adjusted, however, as practicable.

The complainant and the administration shall be provided a copy of the recommendation prior to such meeting. No testimony or new evidence shall be taken at the Board level except as may be required by law. The Board may decide to accept, reject, or modify the recommendation of the hearing officer.

[See also BED(LOCAL) and GF(LOCAL) regarding citizen inquiries and complaints.]