

While staff members are expected to respond to verbally-presented complaints and concerns in a respectful, timely, and otherwise appropriate manner, the primary purpose of this rule is to provide procedures for the handling of public complaints that have been submitted in writing. These procedures are not intended to address complaints of misconduct by the Superintendent, which should instead be submitted in writing to the School Board President.

A. **Submitting a Complaint** – To ensure that District staff will respond to the issue as a formal complaint under these procedures and to avoid miscommunication, the District strongly encourages all complaints under these procedures to be submitted in writing. Complaints should be first made to the school employee most closely involved in the situation or issue. In particular:

1. Complaints about matters relating to individual employees, if they have not been resolved informally via direct communication with the employee, should be made to the employee's immediate supervisor.
2. Complaints about a school-level matter should be made to the building principal.
3. Complaints about a support service (such as transportation), District finances or policies, or other District-level matters should be made to the building principal or the District director who is responsible for the function in question.
4. Complainants not sure whom to contact should contact the office of the Superintendent to be advised by the Executive Assistant about whom to contact.

Staff have discretion to notify a complainant that a verbal complaint is being treated and processed in the same manner as a formal, written complaint under these procedures.

Anonymous complaints are strongly discouraged. The receiving administrator will determine what follow-up, if any, is made in response to an anonymous complaint. While anonymous complaints are not unilaterally disregarded, the

procedures described in this rule will also not be unilaterally applied to anonymous complaints.

There is no absolute deadline for the filing of a complaint. However, the District can usually respond most effectively when the complaint is filed shortly after the occurrence of the event(s) giving rise to the complaint. Timeliness may be considered in the response to any complaint or appeal.

B. **District Response to a Public Complaint** – Upon receipt of a complaint under these procedures, District staff will first determine how to route and process the complaint. In particular, District staff are expected to choose the most appropriate of the following options:

1. Staff will respond to complaints more appropriately handled by another employee by referring the complaint to the school employee most closely involved in the situation or issue. For example, a complaint about a classroom issue should first be brought to the classroom teacher.
2. If the District staff determines that a general complaint brought forward under these procedures should be processed under another District policy or procedure, staff will inform the complainant of that assessment and route the complaint to that more-applicable process.
3. In relatively rare circumstances, staff may determine that a complaint is not amenable to processing under any District-established procedure, or that it should be rejected or dismissed for some other reason. In those cases, the building or department administrator will notify the complainant of the determination. The complainant may seek a review of this decision by the Superintendent.
4. Staff may determine that the complaint will be further processed under these procedures.

Staff and administration have primary responsibility for responding to public complaints. Board members receiving public complaints should refer the complainant to the appropriate staff person, advising the member of the public to contact the staff most closely involved in the situation or issue. This is not intended to prevent the Board from hearing the subjects of public complaint, but rather to allow the most appropriate “source” for answers or

resolution to the complaints to be able to investigate them and respond to them.

C. **Appeals and Requests for Reconsideration** – Complaints not resolved following communication with the employee(s) most closely involved in the situation or issue may be appealed or brought forward for reconsideration using the following procedure:

1. The complainant shall notify either the building principal or District director who most closely oversees the area of complaint of his/her desire to appeal an unresolved complaint.
2. Where there is no clear building principal or District director who most closely oversees the area of complaint the Superintendent will assign an administrative employee to further investigate the complaint and to issue an administrative response to the complainant.
3. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the administrative response on appeal/reconsideration, the complainant may request a District level administrative review/reconsideration of the complaint. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Superintendent will either provide the final administrative response to the complaint or delegate it to a more appropriate Director.
4. The final level of administrative review for any complaint is review by the Superintendent.

This procedure does not seek to circumvent any policies or procedures that have stand-alone complaint procedures within them.

Adopted: 03/05/90
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