

## **COMPLAINT RESOLUTION POLICY**

**Limited Applicability of Policy:** The policy outlined below provides a vehicle for addressing certain types of issues and concerns of citizens and personnel. It does not abridge the right of individuals to address the Board at regular meetings of the Board (Public Participation provision of Policy #1200). Further, matters for which specific complaint/appeal steps are identified in other policies, procedures or are outlined in applicable laws, regulations, or negotiated agreements (employees) shall be directed through those channels rather than under the auspices of this policy.

Among matters for which complaints and/or appeals are addressed by specific policies include but may not be limited to: Student discipline (Policy #4401); Student residency (Policy #4105); Harassment, intimidation and bullying (Policy #4420); Intra-district transfer appeal (Policy #4850); Discrimination (Policy #5165); and Sexual Harassment (Policy #5700). For matters applicable to this policy, the Board will consider and act upon appeals within the sequence identified below.

**Rationale:** The Board of Education welcomes comments and suggestions for improvement from the patrons whom it serves. Constructive criticism of the schools is welcome whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to allow the schools to do their tasks more effectively. Similarly, the board recognizes that employees at times have complaints and/or issues they consider appropriate or necessary for review and/or appeal. However, the Board has confidence in its professional staff and respects the role delegated administration to investigate and seek to bring about resolution of complaints.

**Procedural Steps:** Accordingly, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a board member as an individual, it will promptly be referred to the school administration for study and possible resolution. If a board member considers a complaint sufficiently substantial or persistent, the matter may be referred directly to district-level administration to determine the appropriate level of review. Upon making the referral administration will informally notify the board member/s (e.g., telephone call) regarding the status of the complaint review process. When a complaint initially directed to board members reaches “formal” status (Step 2B, as noted in Administrative Regulations), the Board will be apprised in writing of the step and resolution status of the complaint.

Reasonable efforts will be made to address concerns and issues raised in any complaint at the earliest stage and to reach an acceptable resolution through an informal process. Administration will develop procedures for receiving complaints courteously and ensuring a timely reply to the complainant (see Complaint Policy #5155 Administrative Regulations).

Whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board of Education or to an individual board member the complainant will be advised to take their concern to the appropriate staff member. This can be a teacher, supervisor, principal or the superintendent/designee. The proper steps and sequence for channeling complaints are as follows:

1. Subject of the complaint (teacher or involved employee)
2. Supervisor or building administrator

3. Superintendent or his/her designee
4. Board of Education

If all other remedies have been exhausted and a complaint can not be satisfactorily resolved at Steps 1-3, the complainant may appeal to the Board of Education (Step 4 of Administrative Regulations for Policy #5155). No appeal will be heard by the Board and no charges or accusations against an employee will be investigated or acted upon unless the accusations are reduced to writing, signed by the party making the complaint, and presented to the Board through the board clerk.

For purposes of conducting the appeal review, the Board will have access to documents and reports of lower level rulings. Further, all parties involved may be asked to attend the Board meeting for the purpose of presenting any additional facts, making further explanations, and/or clarifying the issues.

Board action with regard to complaints heard will be communicated to affected parties as specified within Complaint Policy Administrative Regulations.

### **Important Provisions**

**Anonymous Complaints:** This type of complaint provides no avenue for response or redress. Therefore, it will be the policy of the Board that anonymous complaints shall not be pursued. An unsigned complaint will not be read or acted upon at any meeting of the Board and anonymous telephone complaints will not be brought to the Board by any individual board member, administrator, or other district employee. Further, the administration will not act on any anonymous complaint. However, anonymous complaints received will be reported to the superintendent or designee who is authorized to make exception to this provision and to review and investigate anonymous complaints on a case by case basis.

**Non-Retaliation:** The Board recognizes that individuals may at times hesitate to bring a complaint due to fear of “retaliation.” Regardless of the outcome of a complaint review, it is the Board’s expressed expectation that neither the complainant nor family member, including a student/s, shall be subjected to any retaliatory action/s as a consequence of bringing a complaint against an employee or the District.