
PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Any person or group having a legitimate interest in the schools of this District shall have the right to present a request, suggestion or complaint concerning district personnel, the program, or the operations of the District. At the same time, the Board 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 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 formal meeting fails to resolve the differences, shall more formal procedures be employed.

Any requests, suggestions or complaints reaching the board, Board members and the administration shall be referred to the Chancellor for consideration according to the following procedure. Telephone calls regarding personnel are to be referred to the appropriate Dean. Telephone calls regarding administrative personnel are to be referred to the Chancellor.

A. Matters Regarding a Teaching Staff Member

Level One – If it is a matter specifically directed toward a teaching 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 reasonable explanation or take appropriate action within his/her authority and district rules and regulations. As appropriate, the staff member shall report the matter, and whatever action may have been taken, to the Chief Instructional Officer (CIO).

Level Two – If a satisfactory solution is not achieved by discussion in Level One, a written request for a conference shall be submitted to the CIO, with a copy to the College President. This request should include:

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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 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 CIO, the College President shall be advised of the resolution.

Level Three – Should the matter still not be resolved by discussion at Level Two, or if it is gone beyond the CIO’s authority, decision or action, the complainant shall request a conference with the College President.

Level Four – Should the matter still not be resolved by discussion at Level Three, or if it has gone beyond the College President’s authority, decision or action, the complainant shall provide a written request for a conference to the Chancellor with a copy to the Board of Trustees. 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 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 Chancellor, the Board shall be advised of the resolution.

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Level Five – Should the matter still not be resolved, or if it is gone beyond the Chancellor’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 materials relating to the care, shall either provide the complainant with its written decision, or grant a hearing before a committee of the Board.

The complainant shall be advised, in writing, of the Board’s decision, no more than twenty (20) days following the hearing.

B. Matters Regarding An Administrative Staff Member

In the case of a complaint directed toward an administrative staff member, the general procedure specified in Part A shall be followed. The complaint shall be discussed, initially, with the person toward whom it is directed and if a satisfactory resolution is not achieved at this level, the matter shall be brought, as required, to higher levels terminating with the Board.

C. Matters Regarding a Classified Staff Member

In the case of a complaint directed toward a classified staff member, the same procedure is to be followed as in Part A except Level One shall be the Director of Human Resources.

D. Matters Regarding a Program or Operation

If the request, suggestion or complaint relates to a matter of district or school policy, procedure, program or operation, it should be addressed, initially, to the Chief Instructional Officer (CIO) or the head of the nonprofessional department who is more directly concerned and then brought, in turn, to higher levels of authority in the manner prescribed in Part A.

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E. Matters Regarding Instructional Materials

If the request, suggestion or complaint relates to instructional materials such as textbooks, library books, reference works and other instructional aids used in the District, the following procedures should be followed:

1. The criticism is to be addressed to the Chancellor in writing, and shall include:
 - a. author;
 - b. title;
 - c. publisher;
 - d. sections objected to, by page and item;
 - e. reasons for objection;
 - f. in what class the material was used; and
 - g. how the material was used.

2. Upon receipt of the information, the Chancellor shall, after advising the Board of Trustees of the complaint, appoint a review committee consisting of:
 - a. the head of the department in which the material is being used;
 - b. an instructor in the subject area;
 - c. a library staff member;
 - d. a Board member;
 - e. a lay person knowledgeable in the area; and
 - f. the Chancellor shall be a member ex-officio of the committee.

3. The committee, in evaluating the questioned material, shall be guided by the following criteria:
 - a. the appropriateness of the material for the age and maturity level of the students with whom it is being used;
 - b. the accuracy of the materials;

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- c. the objectivity of the material;
 - d. the use of being made of the material; and
 - e. the material in question shall not be withdrawn from use pending the committee's decision.
4. The committee's decision shall be reported to the Chancellor in writing within thirty (30) days following the formation of the committee. The Chancellor will advise the complainant in writing of the committee's decision, and advise the Board of the action recommended.
5. The complainant may appeal this decision to the Board through a written request to the Chancellor, who shall forward the request and all written materials relating to the matter to the Board.
6. The Board shall review the case in public or private session, as appropriate to the circumstances, at which a majority of members are present, and advise the complainant in writing of its decision within fifteen (15) days. (Govt. Code 54957)
7. As appropriate, and when not infringing on the privacy of any individuals, the Board shall recognize the right of a person or group having registered a complaint about district personnel, program, operations, or instructional materials, to summarize briefly during the public session of a regular Board meeting any such complaint which has been brought to the attention of the Board, together with the Board decision or action taken, so that the matter becomes a part of the Board minutes, the official public record.

Board approval date: _____