

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG
(LOCAL)

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 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. Complaints concerning expulsion shall be submitted in accordance with FOD and the Student Code of Conduct.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. Complaints concerning instructional materials shall be submitted in accordance with EFA.
11. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District shall be submitted in accordance with CKE.

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12. Complaints concerning intradistrict transfers or campus assignment shall be submitted in accordance with FDB.
13. Complaints concerning admission, placement, or services provided for a homeless student shall be submitted in accordance with FDC.

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.

Informal resolution shall be encouraged but shall not extend any deadlines in this policy, except by mutual written consent.

FORMAL PROCESS

A student or parent may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form.

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.

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 or "mini-trial" at any level.

FREEDOM FROM
RETALIATION

Neither the Board nor any District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against any student or parent for bringing a concern or complaint.

GENERAL
PROVISIONS
FILING

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.

SCHEDULING
CONFERENCES

The District shall make reasonable attempts to schedule conferences at a mutually agreeable time. If a student or parent fails to

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appear at a scheduled conference, the District may hold the conference and issue a decision in the student's or parent's absence.

RESPONSE 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.

DAYS "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."

REPRESENTATIVE "Representative" shall mean any person who or organization that is designated by the student or parent to represent the student or 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. A representative may not represent the complainant/grievant without the complainant present unless the complainant has designated the representative through written notice to the District. 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.

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 five 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.

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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 at the time of filing, 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 requested by an administrator hearing the complaint.

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 refile 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.

If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the Superintendent or designee, the complaint may begin at Level Three 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 five 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

After seeking resolution of issues/concerns at Level One of supervision, individuals who still feel that their concerns or issues have not been appropriately addressed should make an appointment to

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visit with the appropriate central office administrator, depending on the issues.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within five days of the date of the written Level One response or, if no response was received, within five 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 central office administrator 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 individual may provide information concerning any documents or information relied upon by the administration for the Level One decision. The central office administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference. The central office administrator or designee shall not be required to consider documentation not submitted or issues not presented at Level One.

The central office administrator or designee shall provide the individual a written response within five days following the conference. In reaching a decision, the administrator or designee may consider the Level One record, information provided at the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the administrator 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

Issues that are not resolved at Level Two should be appealed to the next level. The appeal should be made in writing to the Superintendent's office and must be filed within five days of the date of the written response, or, if no response was received, within five days of the Level Two response deadline. The Level Two adminis-

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trator shall prepare and forward to the Superintendent or designee the record of the Level Two appeal.

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.

Depending on the issue, the Superintendent shall determine whether or not the issue should be placed on the agenda before the Board or whether or not it could possibly be productive to pursue resolution of this issue in a meeting with the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall not be required to consider documentation not previously submitted or issues not previously presented at Level Two.

Any issue not resolved adequately before the Superintendent or designee may be appealed to the Board for consideration. The request for appeal must be made in writing to the Superintendent and must include the remedy being sought by the complainant. The request must be filed within five days of the date of the written response or, if no response was received, within five days of the response deadline.

If the complaint is presented to the Board, the Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board the record of the Level Two appeal. The student or parent may request a copy of the Level Two record.

The appeal shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level Two, except that if at the Level Three hearing the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, the administration shall provide the student or parent notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the hearing. The Board shall not be required to consider documentation not previously submitted or issues not previously presented.

The District shall determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law. [See BE]

At the Board's discretion, the Board may hear the complaint based on an oral presentation or upon written submission. If the complaint is heard on oral presentation, the presiding officer may set

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reasonable time limits and guidelines for the presentation. The Board shall hear the complaint and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

In addition to any other record of the Board meeting required by law, the Board shall prepare a separate record of the Level Three presentation. If the complaint is heard on oral presentation, the Level Three presentation, including the presentation by the student or parent or the student's representative, any presentation from the administration, and questions from the Board with responses, shall be recorded by audio recording, video/audio recording, or court reporter.

If the complaint is heard on oral presentation, the Board shall then consider the complaint. It may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If the Board does not make a decision regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.

If the complaint is presented on written submission, the Board shall consider the complaint based on written submission at a scheduled Board meeting. It may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting after the Board considers the complaint. The written submission shall serve as the record of the Level Three proceeding before the Board, except that the Board is not required to consider documentation not previously submitted or issues not previously addressed.