

## 8.04 PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Any person or group having a legitimate interest in the schools of this District shall have the right to present a request, suggestion, complaint, or grievance concerning personnel, the program, or the operations of the District. At the same time, the Board of Education 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 and grievance 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 School District by direct discussion of an informal type among the interested parties. It is only when such informal meetings fail to resolve the differences, shall more formal procedures be employed.

Any requests, suggestions, complaints, or grievances reaching the Board, Board members, and the administration shall be referred to the Superintendent for consideration according to the following procedure.

### A. Matters Regarding a Teaching Staff Member

First Level: If it is a matter specifically directed toward a teaching staff member, the matter should be addressed, initially, to the concerned staff member who shall discuss it promptly with the complainant and make every effort to provide a reasoned explanation or take appropriate action within his/her authority and District rules and regulations. This communication should be stated in writing or by appointment with the teaching staff member. As appropriate, the staff member shall report the matter, and whatever action may have been taken, to the building principal.

This level does not apply if the matter involves alleged child abuse, substance abuse, sexual harassment, or any other serious allegation that may require investigation or inquiry by the administration prior to approaching the teaching staff member.

Second Level: If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved at the first level, it shall be discussed by the complainant with the building principal.

Third Level: If a satisfactory solution is not achieved by discussion with the building principal, a written request for a conference shall be submitted to the Superintendent. 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 (or child of 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 Superintendent, the Board shall be advised of the resolution.

Fourth Level: Should the matter still not be resolved, or if it is one beyond the Superintendent's authority and requires a Board decision or action, the complainant shall request in writing, a meeting with the Board.

The Board, after reviewing all material relating to the matter, may grant a meeting with the Board.

The complainant shall be advised, in writing, of the Board's decision, no more than ten (10) business days following the meeting.

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 complaint is to be directed, initially, toward the person's supervisor, and the matter then brought, as required, to higher levels in the manner prescribed in Part A.

D. Matters Regarding a Program or Operation

If the request, suggestion, complaint, or grievance relates to a matter of District or school policy, procedure, program, or operation, it should be addressed, initially, to the building principal or the head of the classified department who is most directly concerned, and then brought, in turn, to higher levels of authority in the manner prescribed in Part A.

E. Complaints Regarding Instructional Materials

Occasional objections to a selection of reading or instructional materials may be received by media personnel or teachers which may be handled immediately to the satisfaction of the individual. If not, the following procedure should be initiated:

1. The criticism is to be addressed to the building principal, in writing, and shall include:
  - a. Author;

- b. Title;
  - c. Publisher;
  - d. The complainant's familiarity with the material objected to;
  - e. Sections objected to, by page and item; and
  - f. Reasons for objection.
2. Upon receipt of the information, the building principal may appoint a review committee, which may consist of one (1) or more professional staff members including the librarian.
  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 material;
    - c. The objectivity of the material; and
    - d. The use being made of the material.
  4. The material in question may be withdrawn from use pending the committee's recommendation to the Superintendent.
  5. The committee's recommendation shall be reported to the Superintendent in writing within ten (10) school days following the formation of the committee. The Superintendent will advise the complainant, in writing, of the committee's recommendation and advise the Board of action taken or recommended.
  6. The complainant may appeal this decision, within fifteen (15) school days, to the Board through a written request to the Superintendent, who shall forward the request and all written material relating to the matter to the Board.
  7. The Board shall review the case in public session and advise the complainant, in writing, of its decision within ten (10) school days.

No challenged material may be removed from the curriculum or from a collection of resource materials except by action of the Board, and no challenged material may be removed solely because it presents ideas that may be unpopular or offensive to some. Any Board action to remove material will be accompanied by the Board's statement of its reasons for the removal.

CHALLENGED OR QUESTIONED MATERIALS

Criticism of instructional materials or materials that are in the media center should be submitted in writing to the Superintendent. The Board of Education will be informed. Allegations thus submitted will be considered by a committee consisting of the District librarians, building principal, one counselor, and one faculty member of the school involved. The challenged book or material will be judged by the committee as to its conformity to the aforementioned principles. The books or materials involved may be suspended pending a decision in writing from the committee. Appeals may be made through the Superintendent to the Board of Education for final decision.

CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF A BOOK

-

Author \_\_\_\_\_ Hardcover \_\_\_\_\_ Paperback \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Request initiated by \_\_\_\_\_

-

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

-

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Complaint represents

\_\_\_\_\_ Himself/Herself

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name organization)  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Identify other group) \_\_\_\_\_

1. To what in the book do you object: (Please be specific: cite pages.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you feel might be the result of reading this book?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. For what age group would you recommend this book? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Is there anything good about this book?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Did you read the entire book? \_\_\_\_\_ What parts?  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Are you aware of the judgment of this book by literary critics? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What do you believe is the theme of this book?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What would you like your school to do about this book?

\_\_\_\_\_ do not assign it to my child

\_\_\_\_\_ withdraw it from all students as well as from my child

\_\_\_\_\_ send it back to the librarian for reevaluation

\_\_\_\_\_ restrict circulation to students with written parental consent

9. In its place, what book of equal literary quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of our civilization?

\_\_\_\_\_

-

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Complainant

Date: \_\_\_\_\_