

(School District or ISD)  
**PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**  
(Policy/Guidelines – SAMPLE)

Any person or group having a legitimate interest in the operations of this District shall have the right to present a request, suggestion, complaint, or grievance concerning District 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 District by direct discussions 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.

**Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member**

A. First Level

If it is a matter specifically directed toward a professional 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 reasoned explanation or take appropriate action within his/her authority and District administrative guidelines.

This level does not apply if the matter involves suspected child abuse, substance abuse, or any other serious allegation which may require investigation or inquiry by school officials prior to approaching the professional staff member.

As appropriate, the staff member shall report the matter and whatever action may have been taken to the Superintendent/(Other Designated Person).

B. Second Level

If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved at the First Level, it shall be discussed by the complainant with the staff member's supervisor and in compliance with provisions of a collective bargaining agreement, if applicable.

C. Third Level

If a satisfactory solution is not achieved by discussion with the supervisor, 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.

D. 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 hearing by the Board.

The Board, after reviewing all material relating to the case, shall provide the complainant with its written decision or grant a hearing before the Board.

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

### **Matters Regarding an Administrative Staff Member**

Since administrators are considered members of the District's professional staff, the general procedure specified in "Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member" shall be followed.

### **Matters Regarding a Support Staff Member**

In the case of a complaint directed toward a support staff member, the complaint is to be directed, initially, toward the person's superior, and the matter then brought as required to higher levels in the manner prescribed as for Professional Staff Members.

### **Matters Regarding District Services or Operations**

If the request, suggestion, complaint, or grievance relates to a matter of District procedure or operation, it should be addressed, initially, to the appropriate supervisor and then brought, in turn, to higher levels of authority in the manner prescribed in "Matters Regarding Professional Staff Member."

### **Matters Regarding the Educational Program**

If the request, suggestion, complaint, or grievance relates to a matter of District program, it should be addressed, initially, to the appropriate supervisor and then brought, in turn, to higher levels of authority in the manner prescribed in "Matters Regarding Professional Staff Member."

### **Matters Regarding Instructional Materials**

The Superintendent shall prepare administrative guidelines to ensure that students and parents are adequately informed each year regarding their right to inspect instructional materials and the procedure for completing such an inspection. (See "Request to Inspect Instructional Materials" form attached.)

Complaints about materials provided by the Regional Educational Media Centers (R.E.M.C.) shall be handled in accordance with the policy of the R.E.M.C. Board.

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

- A. The criticism is to be addressed to the Superintendent, in writing, and shall include
  1. author;
  2. title;
  3. publisher;
  4. the complainant's familiarity with the material objected to;
  5. sections objected to, by page and item;
  6. reason for objection.
- B. Upon receipt of the information, the Superintendent shall, appoint a review committee consisting of:
  1. one (1) or more professional staff members;
  2. one (1) or more Board members;
  3. one (1) or more lay persons knowledgeable in the area
- C. The Superintendent shall be an ex officio member of the committee.
- D. The committee, in evaluating the questioned material, shall be guided by the following criterion.
  1. the appropriateness of the material for the age and maturity level of the students with whom it is being used
  2. the accuracy of the material
  3. the objectivity of the material
  4. the use being made of the material
- E. The material in question may be withdrawn from use pending the committee's recommendation to the Superintendent.

F. The committee's recommendation shall be reported to the Superintendent in writing within thirty (30) business 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 the action taken or recommended.

G. The complainant may appeal this decision within thirty (30) business 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.

H. The Board shall review the case in committee session and advise the complainant, in writing, of its decision within ten (10) business 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.

### **COMPLAINT REVIEW COMMITTEE PROCEDURES**

The following procedures should be used by committees formed to review complaint concerning instructional materials.

A. **Roberts' Rules of Order** shall be followed for conducting meetings.

A chairman and a secretary will be selected by the Superintendent prior to the initial meeting.

B. **First Meeting**

1. Copies of the petitioner's complaint are distributed.
2. Copies of the material being challenged are distributed.
3. Relevant materials concerning the issue are made available.
4. The petitioner may make an oral presentation of not more than fifteen (15)

minutes.

5. District staff may make an oral presentation of not more than fifteen (15) minutes.

6. The chairman directs each committee member to review the complaint carefully and be prepared to vote on the issue at the second meeting.

C. **Second Meeting**

1. Committee discussion, led by the chairman.
2. Petitioner may be present to observe, but may not participate in the deliberations.
3. Vote of a simple majority of those present entitled to vote will determine the

resolution of the complaint.

4. Only members who have read or viewed the material in its entirety may vote.

5. Balloting will be written and confidential.

The vote will then be forwarded to the Superintendent for his/her review and decision.

Minutes of each meeting will be kept by the secretary and distributed to the petitioner, the committee, and the Superintendent.

The petitioner may appeal the decision of the committee to the Board, who will have access to all materials made available to the committee as well as to the minutes of each meeting.

### **PROCEDURES FOR INSPECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

The following procedures should be used when a member of the public makes a request to inspect instructional materials.

A "Request to Inspect Instructional Materials" form should be completed and submitted to the administrator. Upon receipt of this form, the administrator will contact the person making the request within ten (10) days to schedule an appointment for the person to come to the District to review and inspect the material indicated. If, upon inspection and review, the person would like to file a complaint about the instructional materials, the person shall follow the complaint procedures outlined in the above policy.

## **PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS**

It is the policy of the Board of Education that complaints and concerns of parents and other members of the community are to be dealt with as efficiently as possible but in accordance with the procedure described below. Please follow this procedure so that the District can respond promptly and appropriately to your concerns.

### **MATTERS REGARDING A PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBER (teacher, counselor, etc.)**

#### **Step One**

Contact the concerned staff member who shall discuss it promptly with you and make every effort to provide a reasoned explanation or take appropriate action within his/her authority and District administrative guidelines.

This step does not apply if the matter involves suspected child abuse, substance abuse, or any other serious allegations which may require investigation or inquiry by school officials prior to approaching the professional staff member. In such cases, follow Step Two.

#### **Step Two**

If the matter involves suspected abuse or if it cannot be resolved satisfactorily with the staff member, contact the staff member's principal who shall make arrangements to discuss the matter with you but in compliance with any provisions of the negotiated agreement that may be applicable.

#### **Step Three**

If you believe that your concern has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may request a meeting with \_\_\_\_\_. Please include with your request the following:

- A. a brief statement of the facts giving rise to your complaint
- B. a description of how you, your child, or other students have been affected adversely
- C. the action which you wish the District to take, together with the reasons that such an action should be taken

The \_\_\_\_\_ will then arrange to meet with you at a mutually-convenient time.

#### **Step Four**

(not needed if Step Three is with the Superintendent)

Should the matter still not be resolved to your satisfaction, or if it is one beyond the \_\_\_\_\_ authority and requires involvement of the Superintendent, a meeting will be arranged as quickly as possible.

#### **Step Five**

If the Superintendent is unable to satisfy your concerns, then you may request, in writing, a meeting with the Board.

The Board, after reviewing all material relating to the case, shall grant a hearing before the Board or a committee of the Board.

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

## **MATTERS REGARDING AN ADMINISTRATOR**

Since administrators are considered members of the District's professional staff, the general procedure specified in "Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member." shall apply. Step One would be to discuss the matter initially with the concerned administrator. If the complaint is about the Superintendent or Treasurer, you should contact him/her directly. Any involvement of the Board would be in accordance with District policy.

## **MATTERS REGARDING A SUPPORT STAFF MEMBER (bus driver, custodian, etc.)**

In the case of a support staff member, the complaint is to be directed, initially, toward the person's supervisor, and the matter then brought as may be necessary to higher levels in the same manner as prescribed for "Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member."

## **MATTERS REGARDING DISTRICT SERVICES OR OPERATIONS**

If your concern or complaint relates to a matter of District procedure or operation, it should be addressed, initially, to the person in charge of that operation. If you are not sure who that person is, please call the Superintendent's secretary at (Area Code) (Phone Number).

## **MATTERS REGARDING THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

If your concern or complaint relates to some aspect of the District's program, it should be addressed, initially, to the principal of the school in which the program functions, and then brought, in turn, to higher levels of authority in the manner prescribed in "Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member."

## **CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS REGARDING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

If your concern or complaint relates to instructional materials such as textbooks, library books, reference works, and the like, please complete the "Request for Review of Materials or Course Content" form (see attached)

The completed form should be submitted to the principal who will respond to your request in accordance with the steps outlined in Board policy. a copy of which is available upon request.

**REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF MATERIALS OR COURSE CONTENT**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Complainant represents: Self: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Identify)

Type of material (book, film, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Title, author: \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher, date of publication: \_\_\_\_\_

A. I have read, viewed, or listened to the complete work. Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

or

I have examined the complete course that includes the questioned subject.  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

B. How did the student obtain access to the material? (assignment, free selection, from a friend, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

C. Is the material part of a set or series? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If yes, was the entire set or series read, viewed, or listened to? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

D. Was the teacher's guide (if any) that accompanies the material examined?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

E. What is objectionable and why? (Be specific: include page number, frame number, nature of complaint, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

F. What was your reaction to the objectionable part of the item?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

G. Were there sections in the material that were appropriate? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
If yes, please list them \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

H. Did you locate reviews of the item? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
If yes, please provide citation \_\_\_\_\_  
If no, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

I. Did the review(s) substantiate your opinion? \_\_\_\_\_

J. Is there any merit to the material? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
If yes, indicate such and provide approximate grade level(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

K. What do you believe is the theme or purpose of the material? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

L. List school personnel with whom you have discussed this material.  
Name Title  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

M. In its place, what material would you recommend to accomplish the intended purpose?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

N. In what school did you find this material? \_\_\_\_\_



**REQUEST TO INSPECT INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

The specific instructional materials I wish to review are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTIFICATION TO PUBLIC REGARDING INSPECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

(Mr.) (Mrs.) (Ms.) (Miss) \_\_\_\_\_ is the \_\_\_\_\_  
and is responsible for coordinating inspections of instructional materials at the school. His/Her office is  
located at \_\_\_\_\_ or she/he can be reached by calling (Area Code)  
(Phone Number).

Members of the public have the right to inspect instructional materials, including but not limited to print  
and non-print materials, teacher's manuals, films, tapes and any other supplementary materials, used  
as part of the educational curriculum.