

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG
(LOCAL)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES	The Board encourages students and parents to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the appropriate teacher, principal, or other campus administrator.
INFORMAL PROCESS	Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.
FORMAL PROCESS	<p>If an informal conference regarding a complaint fails to reach the outcome requested by the student or parent, the student or parent may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
FREEDOM FROM RETALIATION	Neither the Board nor any District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against any student or parent for bringing a concern or complaint.
NOTICE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS	The principal of each campus shall inform students and parents of this policy.
APPLICATION	Except as addressed by SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS, below, this policy applies to all complaints or grievances from students or parents.
SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS	<p>Complaints alleging certain forms of harassment shall be processed in accordance with FNCJ.</p> <p>For more information on how to proceed with complaints regarding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Alleged discrimination, see FB.2. Loss of credit on the basis of attendance, see FEC.3. Removal to a disciplinary alternative education program, see FOC and FO.4. Expulsion, see FO, FOD and the Student Code of Conduct.5. Identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability within the scope of Section 504, see FB.6. Identification, evaluation, educational placement, or discipline of a student with a disability within the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, see EHBA, FOF, and the par-

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ents' rights handbook provided to parents of all students referred to special education.

7. Instructional materials, see EFA.
8. On-campus distribution of nonschool materials, see FNAA.
9. A commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District, see CKE.
10. Student transfers, see FDB **and FDA**(LOCAL).

11. Residency, see FD(LOCAL)

12. Campus-level and extracurricular discipline, see FO(LOCAL) and the Student Code of Conduct.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, terms are defined as follows:

COMPLAINT /
GRIEVANCE

The terms "complaint" and "grievance" shall have the same meaning.

FILING

Written complaints and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, fax, or 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. Fax filings shall be timely filed if they are received on or before the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the fax copy. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.

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 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 the deadline and received by the student or parent or designated representative no more than three days after the response deadline.

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.

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DAYS	<p>“Days” shall mean District business days. In calculating time lines under this policy, the day a document is filed is “day zero,” and all deadlines shall be determined by counting the following day as “day one.”</p>
GENERAL PROVISIONS	<p>Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. A student or parent shall not bring separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.</p>
UNTIMELY FILINGS	<p>All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent.</p> <p>If a written complaint 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 ten days, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.</p>
COSTS INCURRED	<p>Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.</p>
WRITTEN COMPLAINT	<p>Complaints under this policy shall be submitted in writing.</p> <p>Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the written complaint. If the student or parent does not have copies of these documents, copies may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted unless the student or parent did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.</p> <p>A written complaint that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed, but may be refiled with all the requested information if the refiling is within the designated time for filing a complaint.</p>
LEVEL ONE	<p>Written complaints must be filed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Within 15 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; and2. With the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem. <p>In most circumstances, students and parents shall file Level One complaints with the campus principal.</p> <p>If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the Superintendent or designee, the com-</p>

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plaint may begin at Level Three following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the written complaint at Level One.

If the complaint is not filed with the appropriate administrator, the receiving administrator must note the date and time the complaint was received and immediately forward the complaint to the appropriate administrator.

The appropriate administrator shall hold a conference with the student or parent within ten days after receipt of the written complaint.

The administrator shall have ten days following the conference to provide the student or parent a written response.

LEVEL TWO

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may request a conference with the appropriate area assistant superintendent to appeal the Level One decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing within ten days after receipt of a response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the response deadline at Level One.

The appropriate area assistant superintendent shall hold a conference within ten days after the written request is filed. At the conference, the appropriate area assistant superintendent shall consider only the issues and documents presented at Level One and identified in the Level Two appeal notice. The appropriate area assistant superintendent shall have ten days following the conference to provide the student or parent a written response.

LEVEL THREE

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may request a conference with the Superintendent or designee to appeal the Level Two decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing within ten days after receipt of a response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the response deadline at Level Two.

The Superintendent or designee shall hold a conference within ten days after the written request is filed. At the conference, the Superintendent or designee shall consider only the issues and documents presented at Level One and identified in the Level Three appeal notice. The Superintendent or designee shall have ten days following the conference to provide the student or parent a written response.

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LEVEL FOUR

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level Three or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may appeal the decision to the Board.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing within ten days after receipt of a response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the response deadline at Level Three.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the Board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda for presentation to the Board.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board with copies of the written complaint, all responses, all appeal notices, and all written documentation previously submitted by the student or parent or the administration. The Board shall consider only those issues and documents presented at the preceding levels and identified in the appeal notice.

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]

The presiding officer may set 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 Four presentation. The Level Four 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.

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 for any reason the Board fails to reach 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 Three.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This policy shall be published annually in the District's Student/Parent Policy Guide.