

Book	Policy Manual
Section	900 Community
Title	Public Complaint Procedures
Code	906
Status	Second Reading
Last Revised	September 28, 2021

Purpose

The Joint Operating Committee welcomes inquiries, suggestions, and constructive criticism from parents/guardians, residents or community groups of participating school districts regarding the school's programs, personnel, operations and facilities. The Joint Operating Committee adopts this policy to establish procedures for seeking appropriate resolution to complaints.

Authority

The Joint Operating Committee encourages parents/guardians, residents or community groups of participating school districts who have general complaints about Joint Operating Committee policy and school procedures, programs, personnel, operations and facilities to follow the general complaint procedure established in this policy.

The Joint Operating Committee directs parents/guardians, other individuals and organizations alleging violations of law in the school's administration of federally-funded programs to submit complaints in accordance with the separate federal program complaint procedure established in this policy.[\[1\]](#)

Delegation of Responsibility

The school shall annually notify parents/guardians, employees and the public of this policy and established complaint procedures via the school website, newsletters, posted notices and/or other efficient communication methods.

Guidelines

General Complaint Procedure

It is the intent of the Joint Operating Committee that complaints, concerns and suggestions be addressed and/or resolved at the lowest appropriate level.

At all levels of this procedure, school employees shall make a determination as to whether the complaint should proceed as outlined in this policy or if the complaint should be submitted through a specialized complaint process addressed in a separate Joint Operating Committee policy, school procedure or administrative regulation that is directly related to the nature of the complaint.

General complaints about Joint Operating Committee policy and school procedures, programs, personnel, operations and facilities shall begin with an informal, direct discussion between the complainant and school employee who is most directly involved.

The employee shall attempt to provide a reasonable explanation or take appropriate action within the employee's authority. The employee shall report the matter and the resolution to the building administrator or immediate supervisor.

When an informal discussion fails to resolve the complaint, the following procedure shall be used.

First Level - If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved by discussion with the employee, the complainant shall submit a written complaint to the building administrator or designee and a conference shall be scheduled with the complainant. The written complaint shall include the contact information of the person or group filing the complaint, the specific nature of the complaint, a brief statement of relevant facts, how the complainant has been affected adversely, and the action requested. The building administrator or designee shall provide a written response to the complainant.

Second Level - If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved through a conference with the building administrator or designee, the complaint shall be referred to the Director or designee. The Director or designee shall review the complaint and may schedule a conference with the complainant. The Director or designee shall provide a written response to the complainant.

Third Level - If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved through referral to the Director or designee or if resolution of the complaint is beyond his/her authority and requires Joint Operating Committee action, the Director or designee shall refer the complaint to the Joint Operating Committee.

The Joint Operating Committee, after reviewing all information relative to the complaint, shall provide the complainant with its written response. The Joint Operating Committee may, at its discretion, grant a hearing before the Joint Operating Committee or a committee of the Joint Operating Committee. If a hearing is granted, the complainant shall be advised of the Joint Operating Committee's response, in writing, no more than thirty (30) days following the hearing.

Any requests, suggestions or complaints first directed to individual Joint Operating Committee members and/or the Joint Operating Committee shall be referred to the Director for consideration, investigation and action. If further action is warranted, based on the initial investigation, such action shall be in accordance with the procedures outlined above.

Complaint Procedure for Federal Programs

Complaints alleging violations of law in the school's administration of federally-funded programs shall be processed in accordance with the following procedure.[\[1\]](#)

The complainant shall submit a written, signed statement to the school's administration office that includes:

- 1. Contact information of the individual or organization filing the complaint.**
- 2. Alleged federal program violation.**
- 3. Facts supporting the alleged violation.**
- 4. Supporting documentation, such as information on discussions, correspondence or meetings with school staff regarding the complaint.**

School staff shall forward complaints to the school administrator responsible for federal programs, who will notify the Director and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing.

The school administrator responsible for federal programs shall conduct an independent investigation, which may include, but not be limited to:

- 1. On-site visit to the building that is the subject of the complaint.**
- 2. Opportunity to present evidence by all individuals and/or organizations involved.**
- 3. Opportunity for participants to ask questions of each other and witnesses.**

When the investigation is completed, the school administrator responsible for federal programs shall prepare a written report with a recommendation for resolving the complaint. The report shall include:

- 1. Name of the individual or organization filing the complaint.**
- 2. Nature of the complaint.**
- 3. Summary of the investigation.**
- 4. Recommended resolution.**
- 5. Reasons for the recommended resolution.**

The school administrator responsible for federal programs shall submit the written report to the Director, who will determine whether further investigation is required and/or the school's final response.

All individuals and/or organizations making the complaint or that are the subject of the complaint shall be notified of the resolution of the complaint by the Director or designee.

The school administrator responsible for federal programs shall ensure that the resolution of the complaint is implemented.

The time period between receipt and resolution of a complaint shall not exceed sixty (60) calendar days, unless circumstances require additional time.

The complainant may appeal the final resolution to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

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