

DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY

Policy 103-R (B)

Complaints and Appeals by Staff

All staff are expected to think critically and exercise independent judgment in order to best contribute to the quality of decision making in the district. At the same time, they are expected to respect both the consensus of colleagues and authority of their supervisors.

Decision making processes will generally include opportunities for discussion amongst those most directly involved in the matter at hand or the implementation of the decision. The broadest consultation possible under the circumstances is encouraged. It is within this consultative process that dissenting opinions should be expressed and duly considered.

Staff are encouraged to seek the advice their Union representative when making a complaint to ensure that the matter is not contractual, in which case it would be dealt with through a grievance procedure as provided for in the relevant Collective Agreement.

At each step of a complaint or appeal procedure, the matter is to be resolved as quickly as is reasonably possible. Except under exceptional circumstances, there should be a response within two weeks and a resolution within two months.

Complaints

When a decision causes concern for a staff member, that concern should be verbally expressed directly to the person responsible for the decision. Dissent will be expressed and received respectfully. Retaliation in any form will not be tolerated. Disagreement, however, does not justify disregard for authority.

Under exceptional circumstances in which a staff member believes that a decision has the potential to place themselves, other individuals or the organization at significant risk, or is significantly at odds with the District's purpose or values, the staff member may register an official written complaint with the immediate supervisor. Health and safety risks should be reported verbally immediately with subsequent written report or complaint as necessary.

The supervisor:

1. Will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing;
2. May seek additional information;
3. Will meet with the complainant, and an advocate if desired, provide the complainant with any additional information that has been acquired, respond to the complaint, and entertain questions and further discussion as necessary for clear understanding; and
4. Will provide a written statement of the response after the meeting.

While a complaint process is underway, staff must continue to respect direction provided by the supervisor.

Appeals

If the staff member remains significantly concerned despite the written response, s/he may appeal to the next supervisor in the line of authority as follows:

1. Advise the supervisor whose decision is being appealed of the intention to appeal; and
2. Provide the next supervisor in the line of authority with a written statement of appeal based on the previous written complaint and the response, and simultaneously provide a copy of the statement to the supervisor whose decision is being appealed.

This will result in a meeting and response as described above under Complaints.

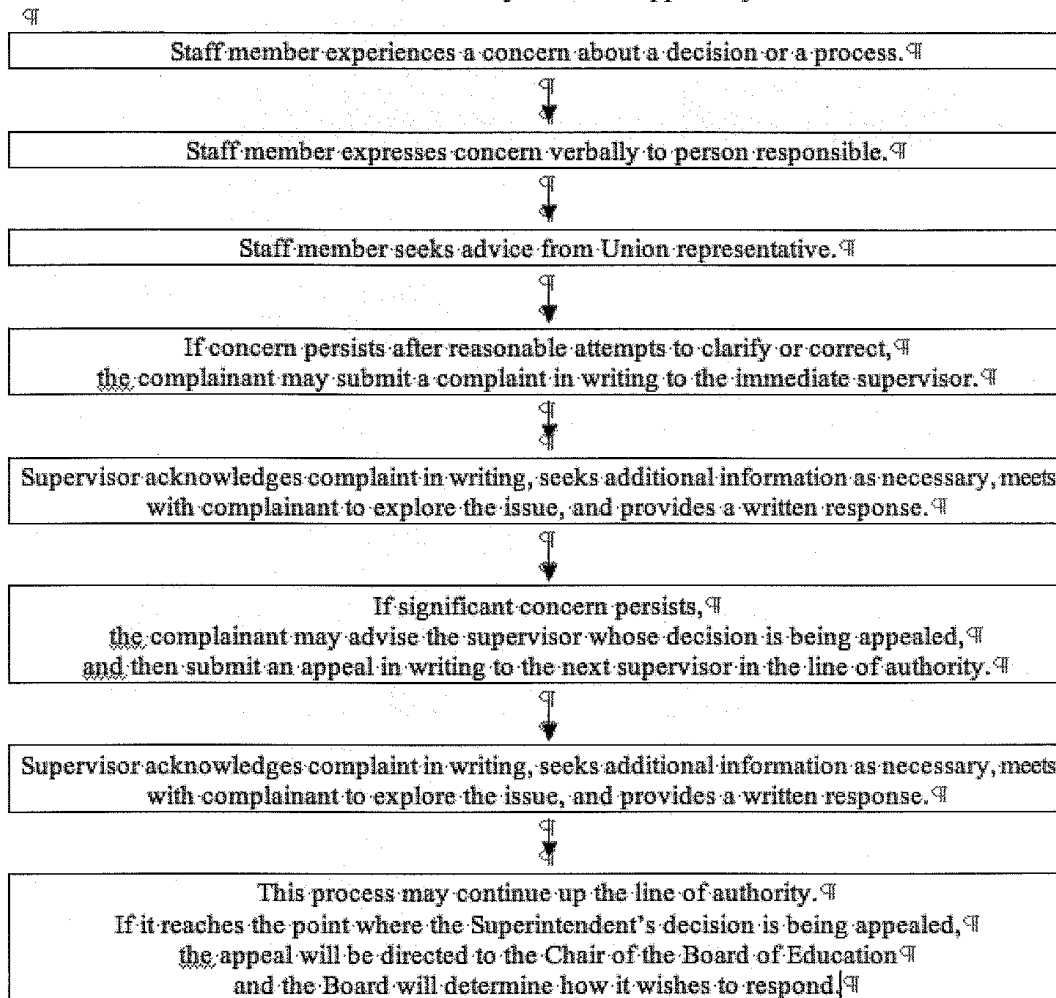
This process may be repeated up the line of authority in similar fashion if the appellant remains unsatisfied with the response.

Written complaints and appeals will be submitted in confidence and not copied to other parties. However, a staff member may seek the counsel of others, including Union representatives, in so doing and may provide a confidential copy of the complaint or appeal to such an individual.

At any point in the complaint or appeal process, a staff member may have the support of an advocate of his/her choice at meetings and the supervisor may also have an advocate present. All parties will be informed in advance of such intention.

Should an appeal concern the actions of the Superintendent, it will be addressed to the Chair of the Board. The Chair will advise the Board and the Board will determine how best to respond.

Process Flow for Complaints and Appeals by Staff



Adopted: 20 April 2009