REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 13

School District Resolution Procedure

Principle 1:

Problems are most effectively resolved through direct, respectful communication at the most immediate level. Escalation should only occur when initial attempts at resolution have been unsuccessful or when concerns persist.

Principle 2:

When resolving issues, we expect everyone to adhere to the Core Ethical Values of Regional School District 13:

Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, Kindness, Courage

General Guidelines

The following general guidelines are proven to help resolve situations positively and professionally:

Maintain respectful, professional communication (adhere to Core Ethical Values)

- Focus on the issue, not people or personalities
- Presume that everyone has positive intentions
- Keep discussions confidential and appropriate
- Document all communications
- Allow reasonable time for resolution at each level

Support Resources:

- Contact the main office or central office for assistance in identifying the appropriate person to address your concern
- Interpreters are available upon request
- Written materials can be available in alternative formats when needed

Special Circumstances - Immediate Escalation Warranted

We understand that special circumstances might warrant a different approach. In the following circumstances, please contact the Building Principal or Superintendent immediately for:

- Imminent Safety concerns
- Suspected abuse or neglect
- Legal violations
- Emergency situations

The Building Principal or Superintendent will be able to deal with the situation immediately or direct you to the appropriate resource.

Law Enforcement

You can also contact law enforcement directly for:

- Threats of violence
- Criminal activity
- Child abuse (also contact DCF)

Prohibited Retaliation

The district prohibits retaliation against any individual who files a complaint or participates in the complaint resolution process in good faith.

Steps for Direct Resolution

Step 1: Direct Resolution (First Level)

Before filing any formal complaint, attempt direct resolution:

- For classroom/instructional issues: Speak directly with the teacher
- For athletics: Please speak directly to the coach
- For school-wide issues: Contact the building principal
- For transportation issues: Contact the transportation coordinator or building principal
- For special services issues: Contact the student case manager

Guidelines for Direct Communication:

- Schedule a meeting or phone call rather than addressing concerns in passing; email is effective to start the conversation but shouldn't be a substitute for the conversation itself; please allow 24-48 hours to respond.
- Clearly explain your concern and desired outcome.
- Listen carefully to the other party's perspective.
- Issues may not be resolved immediately, and it's helpful to "sleep on it" or give both parties some time to think about the issues and potential solutions before making a decision; set a date to get back to each other.
- Document the date, participants, and outcome of the conversation, any action steps that were mutually agreed upon
- Allow a reasonable amount of time for the implementation of agreed-upon solutions (this will vary of course depending on what might need to change).

Step 2: Building-Level Resolution (Second Level)

If Step 1 does not resolve the issue or concerns persist:

- For classroom issues: Contact the building principal
- For athletic issues: Contact the Athletic Director
- For district-wide issues: Contact the appropriate department supervisor (if you aren't sure who this is, please contact any main office)
- Pass along documentation of your Step 1 efforts to the next person
- Clearly state why the initial resolution was inadequate
- Request a meeting and follow the same meeting steps outlined above

Step 3: District-Level Resolution (Third Level)

If Steps 1 and 2 have not resolved the issue:

- Contact the Superintendent
- Submit a written complaint including:
    - Description of the issue
    - Documentation of previous resolution attempts (Steps 1 and 2)

    - Desired outcome
    - Supporting materials/evidence
- The Superintendent will respond to set up a meeting.
- Follow the same steps outlined above

Board-Level Resolution (Final Level)

If district-level resolution is unsuccessful:

- If it is a general issue (not specific to any individual student or employee), anyone in the school community can bring up an issue during the public comment session of any board meeting
- Follow board policies for public comment or formal presentations
- The Board will review the matter according to established procedures; please note that the Board must follow specific legal guidelines on how they hear and/or decide on school issues
- If not brought forward through public comment, the School Board will not hear or act upon complaints until the complainant has brought forth their concern through appropriate and applicable administrative procedures. The Board will allow exceptions to this provision for complainants whose complaint relates solely to School Board actions or operations.

Board Commitment to Direct Problem Solving:

- In the event a complainant registers a concern directly with an individual Board member, the Board member and complainant shall address the concern using the following procedure:
    1. The Board Member shall refer the complainant to the Superintendent to register the complaint. The Superintendent may delegate the investigation of the complaint to another, appropriate administrator, or in some cases to legal counsel.
    2. If deemed appropriate, the Superintendent or designee may inform the subject of the complaint of the nature of the complainant's concern(s). The Superintendent or designee may also provide the subject of the complaint an opportunity for explanation, comment, and presentation of facts. After review of the complaint, the Superintendent or designee shall seek to resolve the matter and report the related outcome to the School Board.
    3. If the member of the public will not present the complaint to the Superintendent, the Board Member shall ask the complainant to document the complaint in a signed written document. The Board member will then refer the documented and signed complaint to the Superintendent for investigation.
    4. After the resolution of the complaint has occurred – and the complainant believes the Superintendent, Administrator or legal counsel has not provided a satisfactory response to the complaint – then the complainant may request the School Board hear the complaint.

- After taking reasonable efforts to resolve their complaint directly with the Superintendent, members of the public may bring complaints relating to the Superintendent to the School Board Secretary. The School Board Secretary will bring the complaint to the School Board Chair. If deemed appropriate, the School Board may inform the Superintendent of the nature of the complainant's concern(s). The School Board or designee may also provide the Superintendent an opportunity for explanation, comment, and presentation of facts.
    1. The School Board will hear and act upon the complaint only by majority vote and when the issue is on the agenda for public or executive session, depending on the nature of the issue. The School Board may decline to act on any complaint that, in the School Board's sole judgment, would interfere with the Superintendent's ability to administer the district properly. All School Board decisions shall be final.
    2. In accordance with procedure above, should the School Board decide to hear and act upon a complaint pertaining to District Employees, Contracted Service Providers, Administration, or Students, the School Board shall determine whether they will hear the complaint in public or executive session. This decision will be made in compliance with all applicable laws pertaining to employee, student and family privacy rights.
    3. The Board shall also determine whether it is appropriate to inform the subject of the complaint of the hearing to provide them with further opportunity for explanation, comment, and presentation of the facts to the Board.
    4. If the Superintendent is the subject of the complaint, the Board shall determine whether the complaint should be heard in public or non-public session in compliance with all applicable laws. If deemed appropriate, the School Board may inform the Superintendent of the nature of the complainant's concern(s). The School Board or designee may also provide the Superintendent an opportunity for explanation, comment, and presentation of facts.