

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG  
(LOCAL)

COMPLAINTS

In this policy, the terms “complaint” and “grievance” shall have the same meaning.

OTHER COMPLAINT  
PROCESSES

Student or parent complaints shall be filed in accordance with this policy, except as provided below:

1. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, gender, national origin, disability, or religion shall be submitted in accordance with FFH.
2. Complaints concerning dating violence shall be submitted in accordance with FFH.
3. Complaints concerning retaliation related to discrimination and harassment shall be submitted in accordance with FFH.
4. Complaints concerning bullying or retaliation related to bullying shall be submitted in accordance with FFI.
5. Complaints concerning loss of credit on the basis of attendance shall be submitted in accordance with FEC.
6. Complaints concerning removal to a disciplinary alternative education program shall be submitted in accordance with FOC and the Student Code of Conduct.
7. Complaints concerning expulsion shall be submitted in accordance with FOD and the Student Code of Conduct.
8. Complaints concerning any final decisions of the gifted and talented selection committee regarding selection for or exit from the gifted program shall be submitted in accordance with EHBB.
9. Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability within the scope of Section 504 shall be submitted in accordance with FB and the procedural safeguards handbook.
10. Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, educational placement, or discipline of a student with a disability within the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act shall be submitted in accordance with EHBAE, FOF, and the procedural safeguards handbook provided to parents of all students referred to special education.
11. Complaints concerning instructional materials shall be submitted in accordance with EFA.
12. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District shall be submitted in accordance with CKE.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG  
(LOCAL)

	<p>13. Complaints concerning intradistrict transfers or campus assignment shall be submitted in accordance with FDB.</p> <p>14. Complaints concerning admission, placement, or services provided for a homeless student shall be submitted in accordance with FDC.</p>
NOTICE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS	The District shall inform students and parents of this policy.
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 form.</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.
GENERAL PROVISIONS	Complaint forms 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 or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.
FILING	
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

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG  
(LOCAL)

shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.

DAYS

“Days” shall mean District business days. In calculating time lines under this policy, the day a document is filed is “day zero.” The following business day is “day one.”

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. The District may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.

CONSOLIDATING  
COMPLAINTS

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.

UNTIMELY FILINGS

All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent.

If a complaint form 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 from the date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

COSTS INCURRED

Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

COMPLAINT FORM

Complaints under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the District.

Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. 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 by the student or parent unless the student or parent did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG  
(LOCAL)

A complaint form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed, but may be refiled with all the required information if the refile is within the designated time for filing a complaint.

LEVEL ONE

Complaint forms must be filed:

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; and
2. With the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem.

In most circumstances, students and parents shall file Level One complaints with the campus principal.

If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the Superintendent or designee, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One.

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

The appropriate administrator shall investigate as necessary and hold a conference with the student or parent within ten days after receipt of the written complaint. The administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The administrator shall provide the student or parent a written response within ten days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the administrator may consider information provided at the Level One conference and any other relevant documents or information the administrator believes will help resolve the complaint.

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 Superintendent or designee to appeal the Level One decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level One response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level One response deadline.

After receiving notice of the appeal, the Level One administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One complaint to

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG  
(LOCAL)

the Level Two administrator. The student or parent may request a copy of the Level One record.

The Level One record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the student or parent at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level One administrator in reaching the Level One decision.

The Superintendent or designee shall hold a conference within ten days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues presented by the student or parent at Level One and identified in the Level Two appeal notice. At the conference, the student or parent may provide information concerning any documents or information relied upon by the administration for the Level One decision. The Superintendent or designee may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the student or parent a written response within ten days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the Superintendent or designee may consider the Level One record, information provided at the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the Superintendent or designee believes will help resolve the complaint.

Recordings of the Level One and Level Two conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the Level One and Level Two records.

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 appeal the decision to the Board.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level Two response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level Two response deadline.

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.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG  
(LOCAL)

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board the record of the Level Two appeal. The student or parent may request a copy of the Level Two record.

The Level Two record shall include:

1. The Level One record.
2. The notice of appeal from Level One to Level Two.
3. The written response issued at Level Two and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the administration in reaching the Level Two decision.

If at the Level Three hearing the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, the administration shall provide the student or parent notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the hearing.

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, including an opportunity for the student or parent and administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board. 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 Three presentation. The Level Three 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 the Board does not make 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 Two.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG  
(LEGAL)

UNITED STATES  
CONSTITUTION

The District shall take no action abridging the freedom of speech or the right of the people to petition the Board for redress of grievances. *U.S. Const. Amend. I, XIV* [See FNA]

The Board may confine its meetings to specified subject matter and may hold nonpublic sessions to transact business. But when the Board sits in public meetings to conduct public business and hear the views of citizens, it may not discriminate between speakers on the basis of the content of their speech or the message it conveys. *Rosenberger v. Rector & Visitors of Univ. of Virginia*, 515 U.S. 819, 828 (1995); *City of Madison v. Wis. Emp. Rel. Comm'n*, 429 U.S. 167, 174 (1976); *Pickering v. Bd. of Educ.*, 391 U.S. 563, 568 (1968)

TEXAS CONSTITUTION

Citizens shall have the right, in a peaceable manner, to assemble together for their common good and to apply to those invested with the powers of government for redress of grievances or other purposes, by petition, address, or remonstrance. *Tex. Const. Art. I, Sec. 27*

There is no requirement that the Board negotiate or even respond to complaints. However, the Board must stop, look, and listen and must consider the petition, address, or remonstrance. *Prof'l Ass'n of College Educators v. El Paso County Cmty. [College] Dist.*, 678 S.W.2d 94 (Tex. App.—El Paso 1984, writ ref'd n.r.e.)

FEDERAL LAWS  
SECTION 504

A district that receives federal financial assistance, directly or indirectly, and that employs 15 or more persons shall adopt grievance procedures that incorporate appropriate due process standards and that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. *34 C.F.R. 104.7(b)*

AMERICANS WITH  
DISABILITIES ACT

A district that employs 50 or more persons shall adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited by the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 28, Part 35 (Americans with Disabilities Act regulations). *28 C.F.R. 35.107*

TITLE IX

A district that receives federal financial assistance, directly or indirectly, shall adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of student complaints alleging any action prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. *34 C.F.R. 106.8(b)* [See FB]

EDUCATION CODE  
CHAPTER 26

Parents are partners with educators, administrators, and the Board in their children's education. Parents shall be encouraged to actively participate in creating and implementing educational programs for their children. *Education Code 26.001(a)*

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG  
(LEGAL)

Unless otherwise provided by law, the Board, an administrator, an educator, or other person may not limit parental rights. *Education Code 26.001(c)*

'PARENT' DEFINED

For purposes of Education Code Chapter 26 (Parental Rights), "parent" includes a person standing in parental relation, but does not include a person as to whom the parent-child relationship has been terminated or a person not entitled to possession of or access to a child under a court order. Except as provided by federal law, all rights of a parent under Education Code Title 2 and all educational rights under Family Code 151.003(a)(10) shall be exercised by a student who is 18 years of age or older or whose disabilities of minority have been removed for general purposes under Family Code Chapter 31, unless the student has been determined to be incompetent or the student's rights have been otherwise restricted by a court order. *Education Code 26.002*

COMPLAINT  
PROCEDURES

The Board shall provide for procedures to consider complaints that a parent's right has been denied. *Education Code 26.001(d)*

The Board shall adopt a grievance procedure under which the Board shall address each complaint that it receives concerning a violation of a right guaranteed by Education Code Chapter 26 (Parental Rights). *Education Code 26.011*

PARENTAL RIGHTS

Parental rights listed in Education Code Chapter 26 are:

1. Rights concerning academic programs. *Education Code 26.003* [See EHA, EIF, FDB, and FMH]
2. Access to student records. *Education Code 26.004* [See FL]
3. Access to state assessments. *Education Code 26.005* [See EKB]
4. Access to teaching materials. *Education Code 26.006* [See EF and EKB]
5. Access to Board meetings, other than a closed meeting under the Open Meetings Act. *Education Code 26.007* [See BE and BEC]
6. Right to full information concerning a student. *Education Code 26.008* [See DF, FFE, and FM]
7. Right to information concerning special education and education of students with learning disabilities. *Education Code 26.0081* [See FB]
8. Requests for public information. *Education Code 26.0085* [See GBA]



STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG  
(LEGAL)

9. Consent required for certain activities. *Education Code 26.009* [See EHA, FFE, FL, FM, and FO]
10. Refusal of psychiatric or psychological treatment of child as basis for report of neglect. *Education Code 26.0091* [See FFG]
11. Exemption from instruction. *Education Code 26.010* [See EMB]

OBJECTION TO  
SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT

The parent or person standing in parental relation to any student may object to the student's school assignment. Upon receiving a written petition to request or object to a student's assignment, the Board shall follow the procedures set forth at Education Code 25.034. *Education Code 25.033(2), .034* [See FDB]

CHALLENGE TO  
EDUCATION RECORDS

The District shall give a parent or eligible student, on request, an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of the student's education records on the grounds that the information contained in the records is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the privacy rights of the student. *34 C.F.R. 99.21* [See FL]

DENIAL OF CLASS  
CREDIT OR FINAL  
GRADE

If a student is denied credit or a final grade for a class by an attendance committee, the student may appeal the decision to the Board. *Education Code 25.092(d)* [See FEC]

COMPLAINTS AGAINST  
PROFESSIONAL  
EMPLOYEES

A person may not file suit against a professional employee of the District unless the person has exhausted the District's remedies for resolving the complaint. *Education Code 22.0514*

"Professional employee of the District" includes:

1. The Superintendent, principal, teacher, including a substitute teacher, supervisor, social worker, school counselor, nurse, and teacher's aide employed by the District;
2. A teacher employed by a company that contracts with the District to provide the teacher's services to the District;
3. A student in an education preparation program participating in a field experience or internship;
4. A DPS-certified school bus driver;
5. A member of the Board; and
6. Any other person whose employment by the District requires certification and the exercise of discretion.

*Education Code 22.051(a)*

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG  
(LEGAL)

**FINALITY OF GRADES** An examination or course grade issued by a classroom teacher is final and may not be changed unless the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or not consistent with the District's grading policy applicable to the grade, as determined by the Board.

The Board's determination is not subject to appeal. This provision does not prohibit an appeal related to a student's eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities under Education Code 33.081. [See FM]

*Education Code 28.0214*

**REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION** A district that receives a request from a parent for public information relating to the parent's child shall comply with Government Code Chapter 552 (Public Information Act). The District shall also comply with the deadlines and provisions set forth at Education Code 26.0085. *Gov't Code Ch. 552; Education Code 26.0085*

**CLOSED MEETING** The Board may conduct a closed meeting on a parent or student complaint to the extent required or provided by law. *Gov't Code Ch. 551, Subch. D* [See BEC]

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS** An appeal of the Board's decision to the Commissioner of Education shall be decided based on a review of the record developed at the District level. "Record" includes, at a minimum, an audible electronic recording or written transcript of all oral testimony or argument. *Education Code 7.057(c), (f)*

It is the District's responsibility to make and preserve the records of the proceedings before the Board. If the District fails to create and preserve the record without good cause, all substantial evidence issues that require missing portions of the record for resolution shall be deemed against the District. The record shall include:

1. A tape recording or a transcript of the hearing at the local level. If a tape recording is used:
  - a. The tape recording must be complete, audible, and clear; and
  - b. Each speaker must be clearly identified.
2. All evidence admitted;
3. All offers of proof;
4. All written pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;
5. A description of matters officially noticed;
6. If applicable, the decision of the hearing examiner;

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

FNG  
(LEGAL)

7. A tape recording or transcript of the oral argument before the Board; and
8. The decision of the Board.

*19 TAC 157.1073(d)*

DISRUPTION

It is a criminal offense for a person, with intent to prevent or disrupt a lawful meeting, to substantially obstruct or interfere with the ordinary conduct of a meeting by physical action or verbal utterance and thereby curtail the exercise of others' First Amendment rights. *Penal Code 42.05; Morehead v. State, 807 S.W. 2d 577 (Tex. Crim. App. 1991)*

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**Note:** See EHBAB for provisions concerning students with disabilities; see the FO series for provisions concerning student discipline; see FL for provisions concerning student records.

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