

# Santa Barbara Unified School District

## Administrative Regulation

Community Relations

AR 1312.3

### UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Except as the Board of Education may otherwise specifically provide in other district policies, these general uniform complaint procedures (UCP) shall be used to investigate and resolve only the complaints specified in BP 1312.3.

*(cf. 1312.1 - Complaints Concerning District Employees)*

*(cf. 1312.2 - Complaints Concerning Instructional Materials) (cf. 1312.4 - Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures)*

*(cf. 4030 - Nondiscrimination in Employment)*

### Compliance Officers

The district designates the individual(s) identified below as the employee(s) responsible for coordinating the district's response to complaints and for complying with state and federal civil rights laws. The individual(s) also serve as the compliance officer(s) specified in AR 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment as the responsible employee to handle complaints regarding sex discrimination. The individual(s) shall receive and coordinate the investigation of complaints and shall ensure district compliance with law.

*(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment) (cf. 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment)*

Assistant Superintendent of Student Services (Uniform Complaint Compliance Officer) 720 Santa Barbara Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93110 805-963-4338 titlexucp@sbunified.org

The compliance officer who receives a complaint may assign another compliance officer to investigate and resolve the complaint. The compliance officer shall promptly notify the complainant if another compliance officer is assigned to the complaint.

In no instance shall a compliance officer be assigned to a complaint in which he/she has a bias or conflict of interest that would prohibit him/her from fairly investigating or resolving the complaint. Any complaint against or implicating a compliance officer may be filed with the Superintendent or designee.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that employees assigned to investigate and resolve complaints receive training and are knowledgeable about the laws and programs at issue in the complaints to which they are assigned. Training provided to such designated employees shall include current state and federal laws and regulations governing the program, applicable processes for investigating and

resolving complaints including those involving alleged unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), applicable standards for reaching decisions on complaints, and appropriate corrective measures. Designated employees may have access to legal counsel as determined by the Superintendent or designee.

*(cf. 9124 - Attorney)*

The compliance officer or, if necessary, any appropriate administrator shall determine whether interim measures are necessary during and pending the results of an investigation. If interim measures are determined to be necessary, the compliance officer or the administrator shall consult with the Superintendent, the Superintendent's designee, or, if appropriate, the site principal to implement, if possible, one or more of the interim measures. The interim measures may remain in place until the compliance officer determines that they are no longer necessary or until the district issues its final written decision, whichever occurs first.

### **Notifications**

The district's UCP policy and administrative regulation shall be posted in all district schools and offices, including staff lounges and student government meeting rooms. (Education Code 234.1)

The Superintendent or designee shall annually provide written notification of the district's UCP, including information regarding unlawful student fees and local control and accountability plan (LCAP) requirements, and requirements related to the educational rights of foster youth, homeless students, and former juvenile court school students to students, employees, parents/guardians, the district advisory committee, school advisory committees, appropriate private school officials or representatives, and other interested parties. (Education Code 262.3, 49013, 52075; 5 CCR 4622)

*(cf. 0420 - School Plans/Site Councils)*

*(cf. 0460 - Local Control and Accountability Plan)*

*(cf. 1220 - Citizen Advisory Committees)*

*(cf. 3260 - Fees and Charges)*

*(cf. 4112.9/4212.9/4312.9 - Employee Notifications)*

*(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)*

*(cf. 6173 - Education for Homeless Children)*

*(cf. 6173.1 - Education for Foster Youth)*

*(cf. 6173.3 - Education for juvenile Court School Students)*

The annual notification and complete contact information of the compliance officer(s) and information related to Title IX as required pursuant to Education Code 221.61 shall be posted on the district web site.

*(cf. 1113 - District and School Web Sites)*

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all students and parents/guardians, including students and parents/guardians with limited English proficiency, have access to the relevant information provided in the district's policy, regulation, forms, and notices concerning the UCP.

**AR 1312.3(b)**

If 15 percent or more of students enrolled in a particular district school speak a single primary language other than English, the district's policy, regulation, forms, and notices concerning the UCP shall be translated into that language, in accordance with Education Code 234.1 and 48985. In all other instances, the district shall ensure meaningful access to all relevant UCP information for parents/guardians with limited English proficiency.

The notice shall:

1. Identify the person(s), position(s), or unit(s) responsible for receiving complaints
2. Advise the complainant of any civil law remedies that may be available to him/her under state or federal antidiscrimination laws, if applicable
3. Advise the complainant of the appeal process, including, if applicable, the complainant's right to take a complaint directly to the California Department of Education (CDE) or to pursue remedies before civil courts or other public agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in cases involving unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying).
4. Include statements that:
  - a. The district has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs.
  - b. The complaint review shall be completed within 60 calendar days from the date of receipt of the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to an extension of the timeline.
  - c. A complaint alleging retaliation or unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) must be filed not later than six months from the date it occurred, or six months from the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged unlawful discrimination. The time for filing may be extended for up to 90 days by the Superintendent or designee for good cause upon written request by the complainant setting forth the reasons for the extension.
  - d. A student enrolled in a public school shall not be required to pay a fee for his/her participation in an educational activity that constitutes an integral fundamental part of the district's educational program, including curricular and extracurricular activities.
  - e. The Board is required to adopt and annually update the LCAP in a manner that includes meaningful engagement of parents/guardians, students, and other stakeholders in the development and/or review of the LCAP.

**AR 1312.3(c)**

A foster youth shall receive information about educational rights related to his/her educational placement, enrollment in and checkout from school, as well as the responsibilities of the district liaison for foster youth to ensure and facilitate these requirements and to assist the student in ensuring proper transfer of

his/her credits, records, and grades when he/she transfers between schools or between the district and another district.

A foster youth, homeless student, or former juvenile court school student who transfers into a district high school or between district high schools as applicable shall be notified of the district's responsibility to:

- (1) Accept any coursework or part of the coursework that the student has satisfactorily completed in another public school, juvenile court school, or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency, and to issue full or partial credit for the coursework completed
- (2) Not require the student to retake any course or a portion of a course which he/she has satisfactorily completed in another public school, juvenile court school, or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency
- (3) If the student has completed his/her second year of high school before the transfer, provide the student information about district-adopted coursework and Board-imposed graduation requirements from which he/she may be exempted pursuant to Education Code 51225.1

The complainant has a right to appeal the district's decision to the CDE by filing a written appeal within 15 calendar days of receiving the district's decision.

The appeal to the CDE must include a copy of the complaint filed with the district and a copy of the district's decision.

Copies of the district's UCP are available free of charge.

### **District Responsibilities**

All UCP-related complaints shall be investigated and resolved within 60 calendar days of the district's receipt of the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to an extension of the timeline. (5 CCR 4631)

The compliance officer shall maintain a record of each complaint and subsequent related actions, including steps taken during the investigation and all information required for compliance with 5 CCR 4631 and 4633.

### **AR 1312.3(d)**

All parties involved in the allegations shall be notified when a complaint is filed and when a decision or ruling is made. However, the compliance officer shall keep all complaints or allegations of retaliation or unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) confidential except when disclosure is necessary to carry out the investigation, take subsequent corrective action, conduct ongoing monitoring, or maintain the integrity of the process. (5 CCR 4630, 4964)

### **Filing of Complaints**

The complaint shall be presented to the compliance officer who shall maintain a log of complaints received.

All complaints shall be filed in accordance with the following:

1. A written complaint alleging district violation of applicable state or federal law or regulations governing adult education programs, consolidated categorical aid programs, migrant education, career technical and technical education and training programs, child care and development programs may be filed by any individual, public agency, or organization. (5 CCR 4630)
2. Any complaint alleging noncompliance with law regarding the prohibition against requiring students to pay student fees, deposits, and charges or any requirement related to the LCAP may be filed anonymously if the complaint provides evidence, or information leading to evidence, to support an allegation of noncompliance. A complaint about a violation of the prohibition against the charging of unlawful student fees may be filed with the principal of the school. However, any such complaint shall be filed no later than one year from the date the alleged violation occurred. (Education Code 49013, 52075; 5 CCR 4630)
3. A complaint alleging unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) may be filed only by a person who alleges that he/she personally suffered the unlawful discrimination or by a person who believes that an individual or any specific class of individuals has been subjected to it. The complaint shall be initiated no later than six months from the date when the alleged unlawful discrimination occurred, or six months from the date when the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged unlawful discrimination. The time for filing may be extended for up to 90 days by the Superintendent or designee for good cause upon written request by the complainant setting forth the reasons for the extension. (5 CCR 4630)
4. When a complaint alleging unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) is filed anonymously, the compliance officer shall pursue an investigation or other response as appropriate, depending on the specificity and reliability of the information provided and the seriousness of the allegation.

**AR 1312.3(e)**

1. When the complainant or alleged victim of unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) requests confidentiality, the compliance officer shall inform him/her that the request may limit the district's ability to investigate the conduct or take other necessary action. When honoring a request for confidentiality, the district shall nevertheless take all reasonable steps to investigate and resolve/respond to the complaint consistent with the request.
2. If a complainant is unable to put a complaint in writing due to conditions such as a disability or illiteracy, district staff shall assist him/her in the filing of the complaint. (5 CCR 4600)
3. All UCP complaints shall be filed not later than one year from the date the alleged violation occurred
4. For complaints relating to Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP), the date of the alleged violation is the date when the reviewing authority approves the LCAP or annual update that was adopted by the LEA.
5. UCP complaints regarding state preschool health and safety issues pursuant to HSC Section 1596.7925 shall include the following statements:
  - a. File with the preschool program administrator or his or her designee.
  - b. A state preschool health and safety issues complaint pursuant to HSC Section 1596.7925 about problems beyond the authority of the preschool program administrator shall be

- forwarded in a timely manner, but not to exceed 10 working days to the appropriate local educational agency official for resolution.
- c. A state preschool health and safety issues complaint pursuant to HSC Section 1596.7925 may be filed anonymously. A complainant who identifies himself or herself is entitled to a response if he or she indicates that a response is requested. A complaint form shall include a space to mark to indicate whether a response is requested. If Section 48985 of the EC is otherwise applicable, the response, if requested, and LEA Investigation Report shall be written in English and the primary language in which the complaint was filed.
  - d. A complaint form for a state preschool health and safety issue pursuant to HSC Section 1596.7925 shall specify the location for filing a complaint. A complainant may add as much text to explain the complaint as he or she wishes.

### **Investigation of Complaint**

Within 10 business days after the compliance officer receives the complaint, the compliance officer shall begin an investigation into the complaint.

#### **AR 1312.3(f)**

Within three business days of initiating the investigation, the compliance officer shall provide the complainant and/or his/her representative with the opportunity to present the information contained in the complaint to the compliance officer and shall notify the complainant and/or his/her representative of the opportunity to present the compliance officer with any evidence, or information leading to evidence, to support the allegations in the complaint. Such evidence or information may be presented at any time during the investigation.

In conducting the investigation, the compliance officer shall collect all available documents and review all available records, notes, or statements related to the complaint, including any additional evidence or information received from the parties during the course of the investigation. He/she shall individually interview all available witnesses with information pertinent to the complaint and may visit any reasonably accessible location where the relevant actions are alleged to have taken place. To investigate a complaint alleging retaliation or unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), the compliance officer shall interview the alleged victim(s), any alleged offenders, and other relevant witnesses privately, separately, and in a confidential manner. As necessary, additional staff or legal counsel may conduct or support the investigation.

A complainant's refusal to provide the district's investigator with documents or other evidence related to the allegations in the complaint, failure or refusal to cooperate in the investigation, or engagement in any other obstruction of the investigation may result in the dismissal of the complaint because of a lack of evidence to support the allegation. (5 CCR 4631)

In accordance with law, the district shall provide the investigator with access to records and other information related to the allegation in the complaint and shall not in any way obstruct the investigation. Failure or refusal of the district to cooperate in the investigation may result in a finding based on evidence collected that a violation has occurred and in the imposition of a remedy in favor of the complainant. (5 CCR 4631)

The compliance officer shall apply a "preponderance of the evidence" standard in determining the veracity of the factual allegations in a complaint. This standard is met if the allegation is more likely to be true than not.

The preschool program administrator or the designee of the district superintendent shall (1) make all reasonable efforts to investigate any problem within his or her authority. Investigations shall begin within 10 days of the receipt of the complaint and (2) remedy a valid complaint within a reasonable time period, but not to exceed 30 working days from the date the complaint was received and report to the complainant the resolution of the complaint within 45 working days of the initial filing. If the preschool program administrator makes this report, he or she shall also report the same information in the same timeframe to the designee of the district superintendent.

The LEA complaint will be investigated and a written LEA Investigation Report issued to the complainant within 60 calendar days from the date of the receipt of the complaint, unless the complainant agrees in writing to an extension of time.

### **Report of Findings**

Unless extended by written agreement with the complainant, the compliance officer shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report, as described in the section "Final Written Decision" below, within 60 calendar days of the district's receipt of the complaint. (5 CCR 4631)

### **Final Written Decision**

The district's decision on how it will resolve the complaint shall be in writing and shall be sent to the complainant. (5 CCR 4631)

In consultation with district legal counsel, information about the relevant part of a decision may be communicated to a victim who is not the complainant and to other parties that may be involved in implementing the decision or affected by the complaint, as long as the privacy of the parties is protected.

If the complaint involves an English Learner student or parent/guardian and the student involved attends a school at which 15 percent or more of the students speak a single primary language other than English, then the decision shall also be translated into that language. In all other instances, the district shall ensure meaningful access to all relevant information for English Learner parents/guardians.

For all complaints, the LEA Investigation Report will contain the following elements: (5 CCR 4631)

- a. The findings of fact based on the evidence gathered;
- b. a conclusion that provides a clear determination for each allegation as to whether the LEA is in compliance with the relevant law;
- c. corrective actions if the LEA finds merit in a complaint:
- d. pertaining to complaints of Pupil Fees; LCAP; Physical Education Instructional Minutes, or Course Periods without Educational Content, the remedy shall go to all affected pupils, parents, and guardians;
- e. for all other complaints within the scope of the Uniform Complaint Procedures, the remedy shall go to the affected pupil;

- f. with respect to a pupil fees complaint, corrective actions shall include a remedy where in good faith, by engaging in reasonable efforts, an attempt to identify and fully reimburse all pupils, parents and guardians who paid a pupil fee within one year prior to the filing of the complaint;

For complaints of unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), the decision may, as required by law, include:

- a. The corrective actions imposed on the individual found to have engaged in the conduct that relate directly to the subject of the complaint
- b. Individual remedies offered or provided to the subject of the complaint

#### **AR 1312.3(i)**

Systemic measures the school has taken to eliminate a hostile environment and prevent recurrence.

The decision may also include follow-up procedures to prevent recurrence or retaliation and for reporting any subsequent problems.

For complaints alleging unlawful discrimination based on state law (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, and bullying), the decision shall also include a notice to the complainant that:

1. He/she may pursue available civil law remedies outside of the district's complaint procedures, including seeking assistance from mediation centers or public/private interest attorneys, 60 calendar days after the filing of an appeal with the CDE. (Education Code 262.3)
2. The 60 days moratorium does not apply to complaints seeking injunctive relief in state courts or to discrimination complaints based on federal law. (Education Code 262.3)
3. Complaints alleging discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, gender, disability, or age may also be filed with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights at [www.ed.gov/ocr](http://www.ed.gov/ocr) within 180 days of the alleged discrimination.

#### **Corrective Actions**

When a complaint is found to have merit, the compliance officer may suggest to the Superintendent or designee any appropriate corrective action permitted by law. Appropriate corrective actions that focus on the larger school or district environment may include, but are not limited to, actions to reinforce district policies; training for faculty, staff, and students; updates to school policies; or school climate surveys.

For complaints involving retaliation or unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), appropriate corrective actions that focus on the victim may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Counseling
2. Academic support
3. Health services

For complaints involving retaliation or unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), appropriate corrective actions that focus on a student offender may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Transfer from a class or school as permitted by law
2. Parent/guardian conference
3. Education regarding the impact of the conduct on others
4. Positive behavior support
5. Referral to a student success team
6. Denial of participation in extracurricular or co-curricular activities or other privileges as permitted by law
7. Disciplinary action, such as suspension or expulsion, as permitted by law

The district may also consider training and other interventions for the larger school community to ensure that students, staff, and parents/guardians understand the types of behavior that constitute unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), that the district does not tolerate it, and how to report and respond to it.

If a complaint alleging noncompliance with the laws regarding student fees, deposits, and other charges or any requirement related to the LCAP is found to have merit, the district shall provide a remedy to all affected students and parents/guardians subject to procedures established by regulation of the State Board of Education. (Education Code 49013, 52075)

For complaints alleging noncompliance with the laws regarding student fees, the district shall attempt in good faith, by engaging in reasonable efforts, to identify and fully reimburse all affected students and parents/guardians who paid the unlawful student fees within one year prior to the filing of the complaint. (Education Code 49013; 5 CCR 4600)

If the district finds merit in a complaint regarding pupil fees; Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP); education of pupils in foster care; pupils who are homeless, former Juvenile Court pupils now enrolled in a school district, and pupils in military families; reasonable accommodations to a lactating pupil; course periods without educational content (grades 9-12); and Physical Education instruction minutes (grades 1-8), the district shall provide a remedy.

The remedy shall go to the affected pupil in case of complaints regarding:

- a. Course periods without educational content
- b. Reasonable accommodations to a lactating pupil, and/or
- c. Education of pupils in foster care, pupils who are homeless, former Juvenile Court pupils now enrolled in the district, and pupils in military families

The remedy shall go to all affected pupils and parents/guardians in the case of complaints regarding:

- a. Pupil fees
- b. Physical Education instructional minutes, and/or
- c. LCAPs

### **Appeals to the California Department of Education**

Any complainant who is dissatisfied with the district's final written decision may file an appeal in writing with the CDE within 30 calendar days of receiving the district's decision. (Education Code 49013, 52075; 5 CCR 4632)

The complainant shall specify the basis for the appeal of the decision and whether the facts are incorrect and/or the law has been misapplied. The appeal shall be accompanied by a copy of the locally filed complaint and a copy of the district's decision. (5 CCR 4632)

The appeal shall be sent with:

- a. A copy of the locally filed complaint
- b. A copy of the LEA Investigation Report

Upon notification by the CDE that the complainant has appealed the district's decision, the Superintendent or designee shall forward the following documents to the CDE: (5 CCR 4633)

A summary of the nature and extent of the investigation conducted by the district, if not covered by the decision:

1. A copy of the investigation file including, but not limited to, all notes, interviews, and documents submitted by the parties and gathered by the investigator
2. A report of any action taken to resolve the complaint
3. A copy of the district's uniform complaint procedures
4. Other relevant information requested by the CDE

Notice of the complainant's right to appeal the district's decision within 30 calendar days to the CDE and procedures to be followed for initiating such an appeal. In order to request an appeal, the complainant must specify and explain the basis for the appeal, including at least one of the following:

1. The LEA failed to follow its complaint procedures, and/or
2. The LEA Investigation Report lacks material findings of fact necessary to reach a conclusion of law, and/or
3. The material findings of fact in the LEA Investigation Report are not supported by substantial evidence, and/or
4. The legal conclusion in the LEA Investigation Report is inconsistent with the law, and/or
5. In a case in which the LEA found noncompliance, the corrective actions fail to provide a proper remedy.

SANTA BARBARA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Santa Barbara, California

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