

# POLICY

## BOARD OF EDUCATION MOUNT OLIVE TOWNSHIP

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### 9130 PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Any person or group having a legitimate interest in the schools of this district may present a request, suggestion, or complaint concerning district personnel, the educational program, instructional or resource materials, or the operations of the district. The Board directs the establishment of procedures for the hearing and settlement of requests and complaints that provide a means for resolving them fairly and impartially, permit appropriate redress, and protect district personnel from unnecessary harassment.

When a Board member is confronted with an issue, he/she will withhold comment, commitment and/or opinion and refer the complaint or inquiry to the Superintendent, who shall review the complaint according to established procedures.

Only in those cases where satisfactory adjustment cannot be made by the Superintendent and the staff shall communications and complaints be referred to the Board for resolution.

Any misunderstandings or disputes between the public and school district staff should, whenever possible, be settled by direct, informal discussions among the interested parties. It is only when such informal meetings fail to resolve differences that more formal procedures shall be employed. A complaint about a school program or personnel should be addressed to the building principal; a complaint about instructional or resource materials should be addressed to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent shall establish procedures for the hearing of requests and complaints regarding district personnel, the educational program, instructional and resource materials, and the operation of the school district. Procedures will be governed by the following guidelines:

1. Anonymous communications and/or complaints will be forwarded to the Superintendent, who shall immediately consult with the Board Attorney to determine future handling and any necessary related follow up.



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2. Complaints must be set forth in writing and provide sufficient evidence to warrant an administrative investigation.
3. The matter will be resolved initially, wherever possible, by informal discussions between or among the interested parties.
4. A matter that cannot be resolved informally may be appealed at successive levels of authority, up to and including the Board of Education.
5. The complaint and its immediate resolution will be set forth in writing at the first and at each successive level of appeal.
6. A reasonable period of time, not to exceed 10 calendar days, will be permitted for the filing of an appeal in writing at each successive level. A decision at each level of appeal must be rendered in writing no later than 10 calendar days after the appeal is filed except that the Board shall have 30 days.
7. In the case of complaints about instructional or resource materials, the initial complaint must set forth in writing the author, title, and publisher of the materials as well as those specific portions of the material or the work to which objection is taken; the complainant's familiarity with the work; the reasons for the objection; and the use of the work in the schools. The Superintendent shall appoint a committee of professional staff members and community representatives to review the challenged material against the standards for the selection of resource materials established by Board policy. The committee will report its findings to the Board. No challenged material may be removed from the curriculum or from a collection of resource materials except by action of the Board of Education, and no challenged material may be removed solely because it presents ideas that may be unpopular or offensive to some.



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Any Board action to remove material will be accompanied by the Board's statement of its reasons for the removal.

8. A complainant shall be notified that a decision of the Board may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education.

### Chain of Command for Public Complaints and Inquires

The following procedures will apply to the handling of public complaints and inquires:

- A. Neither the Board as a whole, nor any individual Board member, will entertain or consider communications or complaints from school employees, parents/guardians, students or other citizens. Such communications will be referred to the Superintendent.
- B. Complaints and inquires should be written and sent to the Superintendent.
- C. The Superintendent will make every effort to resolve the problem with the persons immediately involved.
- D. When satisfaction has not been achieved at this level, the Board will accept written complaints or inquiries.
- E. Citizens who request a Board hearing shall present written complaints or grievances to the Board Secretary in sufficient detail. After reviewing the evidence submitted by the Superintendent, the Board will, if it deems advisable, grant a hearing to the parties interested.
- F. District employees who work under a bargaining unit contract shall follow the provisions of that contract when filing complaints or grievances.
- G. The Board may defer decisions regarding complaints and inquires presented initially at public Board meeting.



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## Public Complaints and Inquiries

It is hoped that citizens will make every effort to resolve problems that involve teachers or administrators with the personnel involved. The Superintendent must be consulted on all matters that involve the school personnel and the community as per Board of Education policy.

Adopted: 29 June 1998

Revised: 12 October 2015  
12 November 2018

