

## 9130 – PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Any student, parent/guardian of a student in the district, or Pequannock Township resident 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 Principal.

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. The matter will be resolved initially, wherever possible, by informal discussions between or among the interested parties and the level of authority closest to the cause of the complaint.
2. A matter that cannot be resolved informally may be appealed at successive levels of authority, up to and including the Board of Education, unless otherwise stated in policy.
3. The complaint and its immediate resolution will be reduced to writing at the first and at each successive level of appeal.
4. A reasonable period of time, not to exceed ten working 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 ten working days after the appeal is filed.

# POLICY

## PEQUANNOCK TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

5. Formal complaints about instructional or resource materials shall be submitted in writing after first having an informal discussion with the school media specialist or teacher about the material in question. If such informal discussions fail to resolve the matter, the complainant must set forth in writing:

- a. the author, title, and publisher of the materials
- b. the specific portions of the material or the work to which objection is taken
- c. the complainant's familiarity with the work
- d. the reasons for the objection
- e. the use of the work in the schools as understood by the complainant.

If the matter is not resolved at the building level, the complaint will be forwarded to the Superintendent for further review. 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. Any Board action to remove material will be accompanied by the Board's statement of its reasons for the removal.

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

7. If the Board of Education makes a determination not to remove a challenged material, another challenge to that same material cannot be brought forth for the next 3 years.

Adopted: 24 January 2000

Revised and Adopted: 15 March 2023