

A. OPPORTUNITIES TO ADDRESS CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

The Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) is committed to providing an effective means for parents and the community to voice concerns and complaints. The board also strives to resolve concerns and complaints whenever possible. To this end, the board has established the following processes:

1. informal resolutions of specific concerns (see section B, General Process, below);
2. public hearings and public comments at board meetings on subjects of concern to parents and the community (policy for Public Participation at Board Meetings);
3. a procedure for parental concerns regarding the curriculum (policy 3210, Parental Request to Review Instructional Materials);
4. specific processes for addressing disciplinary consequences (policies in the 4300 series);
5. processes as provided by law for students with disabilities (policies 3520, Special Education Programs/Rights of Students with Disabilities, 4022/7231, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities, and 4307, Disciplinary Action for Exceptional Children/Students with Disabilities);
6. a grievance procedure for addressing concerns regarding specific decisions, especially when there are concerns that board policy or law has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated (policies 4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure); and
7. procedures for reporting and resolving complaints of discrimination, harassment, or bullying on the basis of sex, disability, or other personal characteristic (policies 4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law; 1720/4030/7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex; 1725/4035/7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process; 1726/4036/7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process; and 4329/7311, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited).

Numerous other policies provide opportunities for parental input, including policy 4002, Parental Involvement.

B. GENERAL PROCESS

Complaints that are not specifically designated to be addressed in other policies should be addressed in the following manner.

1. The complaint should be received and addressed at the level closest to which the complaint originated. For example, a complaint regarding a classroom issue should be heard first by the teacher. A complaint regarding the school in general should be addressed first by the principal.
2. Any board member or employee receiving a complaint should verify that the complaint has been appropriately referred to him or her and if not, assist the complainant by identifying the appropriate personnel to receive the complaint.
3. Once appropriately referred, if the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the complaint, the complainant should be informed of the options for further review of the complaint.
4. A complaint or series of complaints that raise significant issues about the educational program or the operation of the schools is an opportunity to further examine the success of the school system in meeting its goals and objectives. When feasible, a group representing various perspectives and interests, such as teachers, administrators, students and parents, should discuss the issue and make recommendations to appropriate personnel or to the board.

The superintendent shall communicate the requirements in this policy to board members and employees on a regular basis.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -47

Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy 4002), Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law (policy 4020/7230), Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex (policy 1730/4030/7235), Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process (policy 1725/4035/7236), Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process (policy 4036/7237), Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 4010), Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities (policy 4022/7231), Public Participation at Board Meetings, Parental Request to Review Instructional Materials (policy 3210), Special Education Programs/Rights of Students with Disabilities (policy 3520), Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), Disciplinary Action for Exceptional Children/Students with Disabilities (policy 4307), Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited (policy 4329/7311)

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