

POLICY

STAFFORD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

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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 district Problem Solving Flow-Chart/Chain of Command is available on the District's website and should be utilized to address any and all concerns. The Problem Solving Flow-Chart/Chain of Command is adopted herein by reference

If the matter cannot be resolved by informal discussions between or among the *interested* parties or as set forth above, then the matter may be appealed at successive levels of authority, up to and including the Board of Education.

The complaint and its immediate resolution will be reduced to writing at the first and at each successive level of appeal as necessary and appropriate.

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 fifteen working days after the appeal is filed, except that the Board shall have thirty calendar days to make its decision.



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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, as appropriate to the request, either address the matter directly or 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. In such circumstances, the committee will report its findings to the Superintendent and 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.

Where appropriate and in accordance with applicable law, a complainant shall be notified that a decision of the Board may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education.

Adopted: 22 July 2004
Revised: 09 June 2011
Revised: 15 August 2013

