

Community Relations

Constituent Service

In order to ensure timely and appropriate communication with constituents who contact a Board member with a question, concern or request for information, the Board shall institute a formal constituent services process. To that end the Board shall require the Superintendent to develop, implement, and maintain administrative procedures that clearly articulate how the constituent services process will function.

As elected officials and trustees acting on behalf of the public, the members of the New London Board of Education have an obligation to be accessible to the public and assist constituents with suggestions, questions, or complaints regarding the New London Public Schools. Board members must provide service to constituents, but in doing so should not involve themselves in administrative matters or management.

Defining Constituent Service

- **Constituents** are the students and staff of the New London Public Schools, residents of New London, the parents and guardians of students who attend the New London Public Schools and the educational community at large.
- **Governance** is the primary role of the New London Board of Education. Governance involves ensuring the delivery of required educational and support services in the district by providing oversight and policy to the Superintendent regarding those services and the desired outcome associated with those services. Governance is strategically based guidance and policy focused on effecting the improvement of the school district
- **Management** is the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools, who is an employee of the Board of Education and operates within district policies established by the Board and all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Management includes directing staff, allocating resources, administering programs and providing support services to improve the school district's effectiveness and to successfully achieve the goals established by the current Strategic Operating Plan.
- **Appropriate constituent service** is defined as each Board member, through the Superintendent of Schools, ensuring that management takes responsibility for helping constituents receive the educational services that the Connecticut State Department of Education intends the New London Public Schools to provide, using the district's resources allocated for those services.
- **Inappropriate constituent service** is defined as Board member involvement in the management or delivery of specific services or the desired result, even if the problem is serious and/or the Board member's involvement is minimal. This includes an obligation not to offer special advantage to employees, parents, students, vendors or any other person or entity outside regular management decision-making processes established by policy or management directive to guarantee fairness and equity.

Employees as Constituents

Employees are required to follow the established protocol in requests for information, complaints, and suggestions. When employees approach Board Members with work related issues, Board Members will direct them to follow the appropriate procedure as delineated in their employment contract, otherwise this policy will apply.

Employees who have followed this policy shall not be disciplined regarding their communication with Board Members, or for advocating for their own child(ren).

Protocol for Constituent Service

1. The Superintendent of Schools designates the Manager of Executive Support Services as the primary contact person to receive, review, refer and track constituent service requests.
2. Constituent service requests should be resolved at the lowest possible level of authority.
3. The Manager of Executive Support Services will establish a process to record and track constituent service requests, the resolution to each request and the feedback provided to Board members.
4. The Superintendent and the Board will receive feedback on constituent requests, the resolution and patterns in requests, as well as system improvements made as a result of constituent service requests, as needed
5. Anonymous complaints provide little avenue for response or redress of the complaint. An unsigned complaint will not be read or acted upon at any meeting of the Board and anonymous telephone complaints will not be brought to the Board by any individual Board member, administrator or other district employee. Anonymous complaints can, however, be submitted to the Office of the Superintendent in writing or via phone and can also be submitted through the New London Public Schools incident form on the district website. These complaints will be recorded and reviewed.
6. Constituents will be made aware of the proper channels of communication and appeal. Complaints for which specific resolution procedures are provided shall be directed through those channels.
7. If all other remedies have been exhausted and a constituent service request cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the request may be appealed to the Board of Education. No appeal will be heard by the Board and no charges or accusations against an employee will be investigated unless the accusations are reduced to writing, signed by the party making the complaint, and presented to the Board through the Superintendent.

8. For simple requests for information which Board members have knowledge of and can provide, Board members may respond in the following ways:
 - a. Provide information and carbon copy (cc:) the Manager of Executive Support Services on the response so that it may be logged appropriately.
 - b. Refer the constituent to the appropriate office
 - c. Refer the issue to the primary contact for constituent service requests
 - d. Request a response from the Superintendent to be drafted on behalf of the Board

Policy Adopted: October 24, 2013

Policy Revised: January 23, 2020

NEW LONDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
New London, Connecticut

New London Board of Education
Constituent Service Flowchart

