

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS CONCERNING THE SCHOOLS

In order to promote fair, timely, and constructive communication, the following procedures shall govern the resolution of complaints not handled in another formal procedure. Every effort should be made to resolve a complaint at the lowest possible stage, including directly with the employee and supervisor prior to lodging a complaint with the Chief School Administrator/Superintendent. Duplicate hearings shall be avoided and prior decisions on the same matter held before the Association of Labor Relations Agency (ALRA), Professional Teaching Practices Commission (PTPC), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), special services due process, legal proceeding, or grievance procedures in collective bargaining agreements may be deferred to avoid costly duplicate hearings. Parents/guardians are encouraged to attempt to orally resolve concerns with the staff member personally.

1. If a complaint is not satisfactorily resolved by informal procedures, the complainant may file a written complaint within 20 working days of the act or event, which is the subject of the complaint. Unless otherwise specified written complaints shall be initially filed with or referred to the principal or immediate supervisor. If the complaint regards a principal or central office administrator, the written complaint shall be initially filed with or referred to the Superintendent or designee. If the written complaint concerns the Superintendent, it shall be initially filed with or referred to the Board President. Complaints regarding discrimination if not resolved should be submitted to the appropriate personnel as outline in policy.
2. A written complaint should be submitted on the form provided but must include the name of each employee involved and a brief but specific summary of the complaint and the facts surrounding it. It must also include a specific description of a prior attempt to discuss the complaint with the employee involved and the failure to resolve the matter.
3. Within five days of receipt of a written complaint the Superintendent or designee will assign an appropriate personnel to review and investigate the complaint consistent with the above. The principal or immediate supervisor shall investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the person(s) involved. If the complaint is resolved, the principal will so advise all concerned parties, including the Superintendent or designee.
4. If the complaint remains unresolved after review by the principal or the immediate supervisor, the written complaint may be referred to the Superintendent or designee for final appeal. Verbal complaints must be rendered to writing on the form provided. The Superintendent may schedule a meeting to discuss the appeal, if further information is needed. Written notice of the Superintendent's decision will be made available within thirty (30) days of receipt of the written complaint or appeal. The decision will be final.

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5. If a complainant has complained of race or gender discrimination and is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision, he or she may submit a further complaint in writing to the School Board within five (5) working days of that decision. If the matter is timely submitted, the School Board will conduct a hearing on the complaint in accordance with the provisions of 4 AAC 06.560 and issue a final decision within sixty (60) days of the date of its initial filing. A person dissatisfied with the School Board's decision may file a complaint with the Commissioner of Education within 180 days of the event or conduct complained of, on a form provided by the Department of Education.

The below guidelines shall also be followed in the handling complaints.

1. All matters related to a complaint shall be kept confidential to the extent possible.
2. No reprisals shall be taken against any participant in a complaint procedure by reason of such participation.
3. Complaints will be processed as rapidly as possible. Time limits are provided and shall be followed at each step of the complaint procedure. The number of days indicated are to be considered as a maximum, and efforts should be made to expedite the process when possible. The time limits indicated may be waived or extended only by mutual agreement or for good cause.
4. If specified or adjusted time limits expire, the complaint may proceed to the next step. Any complaint not taken to the next step within prescribed time limits shall be considered settled on the basis of the answer given at the preceding step.
5. Although parties are encouraged to attempt to resolve the issue through the utilization of these procedures, nothing in this policy shall prohibit any student, parent, applicant or employee from filing a complaint directly with the Alaska Commission for Human Rights, Equal Opportunity Commission, Office of Civil Rights, or filing a grievance through an applicable collective bargaining agreement.

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
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