Public Complaints

The Bethany Board of Education (Board) welcomes comments and suggestions for improvement from the citizens whom it serves. Constructive criticism of the school is welcome whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to allow the school to do their tasks more effectively. However, the Board has confidence in its professional staff and desires to support their actions in order that they be free from unnecessary, spiteful, or negative criticism and complaint. Therefore, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a Board member as an individual, it will promptly be referred to the administration for study and possible solution.

Since individual Board members have no authority to resolve complaints, other than by formal Board action, Board members shall refer persons making complaints about the school to the most immediate level at which the problems can be resolved and, as may be necessary, through lines of organization to the Superintendent. The Board expects that the administration will develop a procedure for receiving complaints courteously and that it will take steps to make a proper reply to the complainant. Follow-up shall be in the form of a written notice to the Board members.

Anonymous complaints provide no avenue for response or redress of the complaint. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board that such complaints will not be pursued. 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 Bethany Public School District employee. The administration will not act on any anonymous complaint.

Parents/guardians should 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. The decision of the Principal regarding a student must include notice to the parent/guardian of the next step of appeal. Any appeal from the decision of the Superintendent to the Board shall be in writing and signed.

Complaints should be resolved at the lowest possible level of authority. If the complaint cannot be resolved at the school level, either party is encouraged to bring the matter to the attention of the Superintendent.

If all other remedies have been exhausted and a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the complaint may be appealed to the Board. 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. When appropriate, discussion of the complaint may be held during Executive Session.

The Board will not consider or act upon complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate level or complaints for which specific resolution procedures have been established that do not include Board review. If the Board decides to hear the complaint, the Board shall make a decision which shall be sent to all interested parties. The Board's decision is final.

Upon receipt of a written petition signed by one percent (1%) of the voters or fifty (50) voters, whichever is greater, the Board of Education shall hold a public hearing on any question specified in the petition within three (3) weeks of receipt of the petition.

Challenged Material

A procedure for processing and responding to criticism of approved library or instructional materials shall be established and followed. This procedure shall include a formal, signed complaint of standard format and an appointed internal school professional committee to re-evaluate the material in question for compliance with standards set forth by State and Federal laws and adopted Board of Education policies.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes § 10-238

Keyishian v. Board of Regents 385 U.S. 589, 603 (1967)

President's Council, District 25 v. Community School Board No. 25 457 F. 2d 289 (1972), cert. denied 409 U.S. 998 (1976)

Minarcini v. Strongsville City School District, 541 F. 2d 577 (6th Cir. 1976)

Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico, 457 U. S. 853 (1982)

Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of Education, 9/9/81)

Policy adopted: September 9, 1991
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Policy revised: December 8, 2021
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Source: CABE and BPSD