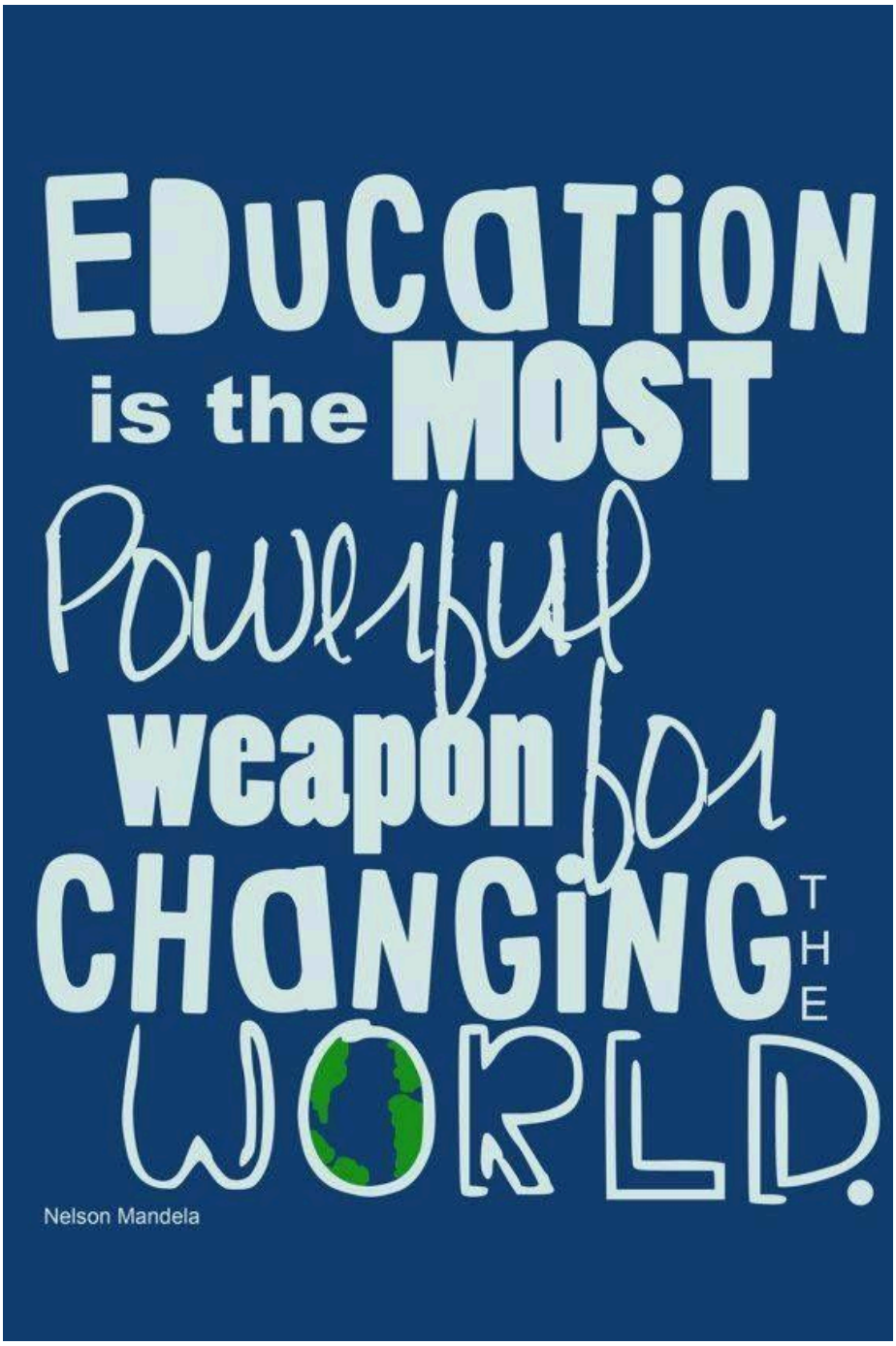
Franklin School Handbook

2025-2026



BERGENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Mrs. Guadalupe Ruiz-Catala, Vice President

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DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Christopher M. Tully……Superintendent of Schools
201-385-8202

Mrs. Darlene Markman…….. ……. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum
201-385-6250

Mrs. JoAnn Khoury-Frias…….. Business Administrator and Board Secretary
201-385-8801

Mr. Shane Biggins ……Director of Personnel
201-385-8020

Franklin Elementary School

Principal
Mr. Everett B. Thompson 201-385-8581, ext. 3301

Secretary
Mrs. Debbie Sullivan 201-385-8581, ext. 3310

Guidance Counselor:
Ms. Kathrine Villone 201-385-8581, ext. 3711

School Nurse:
Mrs. Maidelys Lopez-Dominguez 201-385-8581, ext. 3320

Child Study Team:

Learning Disability Teacher Consultant Mrs. Catherine Cordes 201-385-8581, ext. 3350
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BERGENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CHILDREN COME FIRST

OUR MISSION

THE MISSION OF THE BERGENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT IS TO OFFER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT ENABLE ALL STUDENTS TO BECOME SELF-DIRECTED, LIFELONG LEARNERS WHO ARE SUCCESSFUL IN COLLEGE AND THE WORKPLACE WHILE DISPLAYING A STRONG SENSE OF CITIZENSHIP. THE DISTRICT PROVIDES A SAFE AND NURTURING SETTING DESIGNED TO PREPARE STUDENTS WITH 21ST CENTURY SKILLS CONSISTENT WITH COMMON CORE STANDARDS. THE BERGENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT FOSTERS PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATIONAL, OPERATIONAL, AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY.

DISTRICT OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVE PUBLIC RELATIONS AND THE PERCEPTION OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT
OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE FINANCIAL STABILITY AND ABILITY TO MAINTAIN FACILITIES

Franklin School's Mission Statement

Our mission is

- As a school is to equip our young people with the skills and mindset to thrive and then take on the world.
- To foster an enthusiastic, creative community of learners prepared to continue their intellectual, emotional, and physical development.
- To educate all students to the highest levels of academic achievement.
- To enable students to reach and expand their potential, and to prepare them to become productive, responsible, ethical, creative, and compassionate members of society.

Franklin School's Vision

We are committed to ensuring an excellent education for all students and we will accomplish this task by providing rigorous lessons and instruction that will bring out the greatness that dwells within all of them.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Following federal and state anti-discrimination legislation, the Bergenfield School District has established the following procedure for addressing Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 infractions. The purpose of the grievance procedure is to provide students, employees, and parents/guardians with a procedure by which they can seek a remedy for alleged violations related to discrimination based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, ancestry, natural origin, physical and/or mental challenge, social or economic status.

Procedure

1. The grievant must present the written complaint to the person responsible for the alleged discrimination for his/her consideration/resolution.

2. If not satisfied, the grievant may appeal, in writing, to the Principal, whose responsibility it is to investigate and respond to the grievant within a reasonable time.

3. If not satisfied, the grievant may appeal, in writing, to the District Affirmative Action Officer, a position held by the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum. The District Affirmative Action Officer will consult with the Superintendent of Schools before rendering a decision.

4. If the grievant is not satisfied at this level, an appeal may be made to the Bergenfield Board of Education, which will hear the complaint. A local board hearing will be conducted in a manner that affords due process to all parties involved in the complaint, including written notice of the hearing dates, the right to counsel, the right to present witnesses, the right to cross-examine, and the right to present written statements. The decision of the Board shall be by a majority of the members.

5. Upon receipt of the Board's written decision, the grievant may pursue the complaint by filing with the Office for Civil Rights, Washington, DC.

ATTENDANCE: STUDENT

1. "Attendance is a pupil's presence in school and the classroom to which he/she is assigned at the times scheduled for instruction or other school activities.
    a. A pupil will be considered to have attended school if he/she has been present at least 4.5 hours during the school day.
2. "Excused absence" is a pupil's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one or more of the following reasons (**with a note from the parent or a doctor's note**):
    a. The pupil's illness
    b. Family illness or death
    c. Educational opportunities
    d. Excused religious observances, under N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16
    e. Where appropriate, when consistent with the Individual Education Programs, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, accommodation plans under 29 U.S.C. §§ 794 and 705(20), and individualized health care plans under N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-23
    f. The pupil's suspension from school
    g. The pupil's required attendance in court
    h. Interviews with a prospective employer or with an admissions officer of an institution of higher education
    i. Examination for a driver's license
    j. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day

k. An absence for a reason not listed above, but deemed excused by the parents/guardians, upon written request by the pupil's parent or legal guardian to the building principal or designee stating the reason for the absence and requesting permission for the absence to be an excused absence

3. "Truancy" is a pupil's absence from all or part of the school day without the knowledge of the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s). A pupil will also be considered truant if he/she:
    a. Leaves school at lunch time without written consent and without being signed out of school by a parent or legal guardian
    b. Leaves school without permission when school is still in session
    c. Leaves class because of illness and does not report to the school nurse as directed
    d. Is present in school but is absent from class without approval. Such truancy from class is a "class cut."
4. "Unexcused absence" is a pupil's absence for all or part of a school day for any reason other than those listed in A2 above.

Tardy

Students arriving at school after the 8:35 bell will be considered ***Tardy to School***. Only a note from a parent or guardian will allow the tardiness to be excused.

Notice to School of a Pupil's Absence:

1. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) is requested to call the school office to report their child(ren) absence before 9:00 A.M. However, if a child is absent and no call or an absent note is received from the home, the school will call each parent or legal guardian to verify the child's absence. Parents/guardians are asked to call their child's school if they have any other questions.

Bell Schedule:

	First Bell	Dismissal
Grades Pre-K - Five	8:30 A.M.	3:10 P.M.
Lunch Grades Pre-K - Five	11:30 A.M.	12:15 P.M.

Readmission to School after an Absence

1. A pupil returning from an absence of any length mu***st present to their teacher a written statement, dated and signed by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult pupil, of the reasons for the absence.***
2. ***A note explaining a pupil's absence for non-communicable illness for more than 3 days of school days must be accompanied by a physician's statement of the pupil's illness.***

3. ***A pupil who has been absent because of having or being suspected of having a communicable disease must present to the principal written evidence of being free of communicable disease, per policy no. 8451.***

Denial of Promotion of Grade Level

An elementary pupil will be retained at grade level, under policy no. 5410, when he/she has been absent 20 or more school days, whatever the reason for the absence, except that absences for the observance of religious holidays and during a pupil's suspension will not count toward the total. Exceptions to this rule may be made for pupils whose absences are excused and who have demonstrated through completion of home assignments and/or home instruction that they have mastered the proficiencies established for the assigned courses of study.

School District Response to Unexcused Absences during the School Year

1. For up to four cumulative unexcused absences, the building principal or designee shall:
    a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the pupil's parent or legal guardian of each unexcused absence before the start of the following school day;
    b. Investigate the cause of each unexcused absence, including contact with the pupil's parent or legal guardian;
    c. Develop an action plan in consultation with the pupil's parent or legal guardian, designed to address patterns of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular attendance;
    d. Proceed per the provisions of N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11, if a potentially missing or abused child abuse situation is detected; and
    e. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
2. For between five and nine cumulative unexcused absences, the building principal or designee shall:
    a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the pupil's parent or legal guardian of each unexcused absence before the start of the following school day;
    b. Conduct a follow-up investigation, including contact with the pupil's parent or legal guardian, to determine the cause of each unexcused absence.
    c. Evaluate the appropriateness of the action plan developed under 1.c. above;
    d. Revise the action plan, as needed, to identify patterns of unexcused absences and establish outcomes based upon the pupil's needs and specify the interventions for achieving the outcomes,

supporting the pupil's return to school and regular attendance that may include any or all of the following:

i. Refer or consult with the building's Intervention and Referral Services Team, according to N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-8;
ii. Conduct testing, assessments, or evaluations of the pupil's academic, behavioral, and health needs;
iii. Consider an alternate educational placement.
iv. Make a referral to a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resources.
v. Refer to the court program designated by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts; and
vi. Proceed per the provisions of N.J.S.A. 9:6 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-11, if a potentially missing or child abuse situation is detected.
vii. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

3. For cumulative unexcused absences of ten or more, the pupil between the ages of six and sixteen is truant, according to N.J.S.A. 18A: 38-27, and the building principal or designee shall:
    a. Make a mandatory referral to the court program required by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts;
    b. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the pupil's parent or legal guardian of the mandatory referral.
    c. Continue to consult with the parent or legal guardian and the involved agencies to support the pupil's return to school and regular attendance.
    d. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate; and
    e. Proceed per N.J.S.A. 18A: 38-28 through 31, Article 3B, Compelling Attendance at School, and other applicable State and Federal statutes, as required.

Emergency Contacts

Emergency contact information, address, and phone numbers must be updated so that communication can be swift when a student needs immediate assistance. Students will only be released to adults named on the Census Verification Form.

ATTENDANCE: TEACHERS & STAFF

All teachers and staff must sign in by the contracted time, each day (8:20 A.M.). They are also expected to indicate their departure from the building at the close of school (3:20 P.M.) in the same manner.

If you are to be absent, please use the *Frontline* substitute service as soon as possible. The earlier you register an absence, the easier it will be for the district to provide a substitute. The Board of Education utilizes *Frontline* absence management services. Please log on to https://login.frontlineeducation.com/sso/bergenfield (using the phone number and PIN) or call (1-800-942-3767) to enter an absence by choosing the type of absence and the date necessary. Assistance regarding this process is available from the administration and/or via several online guides and tutorials. Personal days must be entered at a minimum of 48 hours in advance and are approved online. Absences due to illness must be confirmed by 6:45 am on the day of the absence. It is expected that lesson plans are emailed to both administrators and the main office secretarial staff the evening before or early in the morning on the day of an absence.

If you know that you are going to be absent the next day for conferences, field trips, etc., please notify the administration to determine whether *Frontline* must be contacted by you or whether it will be handled by the administration.

LEAVE FOR DEATH IN THE FAMILY

Leave with pay following a death in the immediate family (wife, husband, son, daughter, mother, father, sister, brother, grandparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law) shall be fixed from the date of the death until one day beyond the date of the burial or final disposition. Extension of leave of this classification shall be at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools. Leave with pay for one day may be granted for the reason of the death of a relative other than one in the immediate family.

LEAVE FOR PERFORMANCE OF LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY

Leave to serve on a jury shall be granted without loss of pay provided the proper documentation is provided. Leave for acquiescing to a court or other valid subpoena may be granted without loss of pay; it is dependent on circumstances and should be submitted in writing to the Superintendent of Schools. Otherwise, the leave will be granted with a deduction from pay equal to the substitute rate of pay.

LEAVE FOR PERSONAL EMERGENCIES

Leave for up to three days each year for personal emergencies may be granted with pay. Reasons for leave in this category may include illness in the family, religious holidays, death of friends, graduation of members of the immediate family, marriage (self/children), house closing, moving, or other reasons at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools.

REQUEST TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE

Teachers are encouraged to attend conferences and meetings for the purpose of improving instruction at Franklin School. If granted, then staff members will receive monies to attend on a fair and equitable basis. Request forms are available in the Main Office.

DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTED CLASS STATUS

Illegal discrimination/harassment applies to a broad array of claims based on protected class status. Protected class status includes age, gender, pregnancy, race, color, national origin, ancestry, familial status, perceived disability, atypical hereditary, religion, creed, marital status, domestic partnership status, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, military status, HIV status, AIDS status, handicap/disability, genetic information, cellular trait, or blood trait.

Employees should complain promptly to the affirmative action officer regarding any claim related to discrimination, including harassment. If you believe you are being harassed, tell the harasser in no uncertain terms that the particular conduct must stop immediately and that the behavior is unwelcome. District grievance procedures and policies provide for prompt and equitable resolution of all discrimination complaints, including harassment based on protected class status. Harassment, intimidation, and bullying not based upon a protected class should be reported to the principal, not to the affirmative action officer.

The affirmative action officer will promptly investigate discrimination. The affirmative action officer will serve as a neutral and objective investigator. No one other than the affirmative action officer may conduct an

investigation, not even a preliminary investigation. The Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum will serve as the district affirmative action officer.

General Operational Procedures

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Teachers/staff must indicate their presence in the building by initialing the faculty/staff roster (Main Office) when entering and leaving.

BEA contract language states:

Teachers will be required to report for duty by 8:20 a.m. and must stay until 3:20 p.m.

Also, any coverage of classes or operations must be approved by the Principal.

FACULTY PARKING

Staff members will be assigned a parking spot. Do not park in fire lanes, visitor, bus, or handicapped parking or any other unauthorized locations.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Each teacher is required by state law to be certified for the teaching position he/she holds. THIS IS THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH TEACHER. All appropriate and updated certificates should be filed with the district's Personnel Office. Each teacher should be familiar with the requirements for his/her position. Information can be secured from the County Superintendent of Schools through its certification department.

LESSON PLANS AND SEATING CHARTS

Lesson plans are to be completed following the expected components outlined at the start of the school year. They should be designed for a minimum of one week of lessons and prepared in advance. Lesson plans are to be submitted to the principal by 8:30 a.m. on Monday for the current week in Atlas. The plans should be specific

and contain enough detail so that an observer or substitute can follow the daily procedures. **Emergency plans and seating charts should be available in your substitute folder, located in your classroom, and noted in *Frontline,* the location of the folder.** Additionally, contained therein should be any confidential or significant information regarding students that would be critical knowledge for a substitute. If a plan is used, a replacement must be submitted immediately. It is suggested to use the Infinite Campus seating chart feature.

Infinite Campus

Daily attendance is to be entered by ***8:45*** a.m. daily. Student grading is to be kept in Infinite Campus, as we generate report cards from the data in Infinite Campus.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Continued professional growth of all certified personnel is encouraged and now mandated by state regulations, which require that teachers log 20 hours of professional development per year. All personnel are encouraged to maintain active membership in professional organizations and to attend and participate in their meetings. Teachers are expected to participate in local in-service training, professional meetings, and the Staff Development Program.

PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATIONS

There are certain professional obligations to students, parents/guardians, and the school that are shared by all teachers and administrators. These include reading and responding to emails/memos/phone messages in a timely manner (typically within 24 business hours), faculty meetings, corridor supervision, professional committees, attendance at all Open House nights, individual parent/guardian and teacher conferences, duties of a general nature assumed for school social events (weekends and evenings), and for approved extra-curricular activities.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONFERENCES AND OPEN HOUSE NIGHT

Parents/Guardians Conferences and Open House Night are designed to allow person-to-person contact of teachers with students and parents/guardians. These contacts will be centered on seeking solutions and directions for a student so that achievement might be improved.

Three Conference Nights are scheduled for each of the first three marking periods. Parents/Guardians receiving Progress Reports are encouraged to come to school to discuss their child's achievement.

A fourth night is designated as an Open House to allow parents to meet teachers, briefly preview the course content and ask questions pertinent to the functioning of the classes attended by their son/daughter.
All teachers are required to attend these four events. Schedules, including professional classes, should be arranged so that all teachers will be available for these events.

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENTAL MEETINGS

Faculty or departmental meetings will be held on the 1st and 2nd Wednesdays of each month immediately following student dismissal. **All teachers are required to reserve this time for that purpose.** Special meetings may be called as needed.

KEYS

School, classroom, and storage security is critical and requires your special attention. The keys issued to you are your responsibility and must be in your possession at all times. Do not lend keys/swipe cards to students at any time, not even for a few seconds. If keys are lost or misplaced, report this to the office immediately upon discovery of the loss.

DISPLAY OF THE AMERICAN FLAG

The American Flag will be displayed in each classroom and each school building according to law.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The flag salute and oath of allegiance will be conducted on every school day. Students not wishing to stand and participate in the flag salute may remain seated, provided they do not do anything to disrupt the saluting process.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES AND/OR EXERCISES

No religious services shall be held in the school at any time.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

New Jersey law, regarding pupil absence from school due to religious holidays, states that:

1. Any student absent from school because of a religious holiday may not be deprived of any award, eligibility, or opportunity to compete for any award because of such absence.

2. Pupils who miss a test or examination because of an absence on a religious holiday must be given the right to take a make-up or an alternate test or examination.

3. The pupil must present a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian to be entitled to the privileges set forth above.

4. Any absence because of a religious holiday must be recorded in the school register or in any group or class attendance record as an excused absence.

5. Such absence must not be recorded on any transcript or employment application form or any similar form.

Class work should continue as normally as possible on religious holidays. Students should not be encouraged to take "a day off" because no new work is to be covered. Tests, labs, and projects may be scheduled as long as students taking a religious holiday are given every opportunity to make up those assignments.

A list of this year's religious holidays may be found in the appendix.

DRESS CODE

When school is in session, the style of dress will be "business appropriate." "Business appropriate" includes khakis, Dockers®, and dress pants. Teachers/support staff will at all times adhere to the rule of no jeans, sneakers, sweatpants, T-shirts, flip-flops, halter tops, and the like. The principal may announce dress-down days on specific occasions. All employees must wear a Bergenfield Employee ID badge at all times and it must be completely visible.

DCP&P - REPORTING OF VARIOUS OFFENSES

All school personnel, including teaching staff members, support staff members, and volunteers, are charged by law with the responsibility for reporting suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. The suspicion of child

abuse and/or neglect may be based on the complaints of the child or on the direct observations of the staff member/volunteer. If child abuse and/or neglect is suspected by you, then the matter must be reported by you to DCP&P immediately (1-877-652-2873) and per law. You are not to advise the principal first; the principal must be notified immediately after your report is made to DCPP. However, if the principal is the subject of your DCPP call, then immediately notify the superintendent that you have called DCPP. The matter must then be reported by the principal to the Bergenfield Police Department per district policy.

You have immunity from liability for any reports made in good faith. Failure to report is punishable by law and will also subject you to school district discipline. Failure to report places the child in danger and exposes the district and you to liability for monetary damages.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

An electronic communication is defined as "a communication transmitted utilizing an electronic device, including but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, or computer." Staff may not:

1. Engage in improper fraternization with students using social networking websites on the Internet;
2. List current students as "friends" on social networking sites; or
3. Engage in inappropriate contact via email or phone.

All teachers and staff shall adhere to the following guidelines when sending or receiving messages via internal or external email:

1. All messages shall pertain to legitimate school business.
2. Personnel shall not reveal passwords to others.

E-mail correspondence with parents should be kept brief. It is best to respond to an email from a student's parent by acknowledging that you have received the email and by requesting to speak with the parent on the telephone or in person.

GRADES

Teachers must communicate achievement results and assignment information to parents and students in a timely, consistent manner. All assignments and assessments should be corrected, documented, and returned to students within five school days of the due date. **Teachers should also have documented communication with the parents of any student who exhibits poor academic progress.**

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING (HIB)

Bullying, harassment, and intimidation are defined as any gesture, written, verbal, physical act, or electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory handicap, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school property and that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the institution or the rights of other students and that:

1. a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his person or damage to his property; or
2. has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school; or
3. creates a hostile educational environment by interfering with the student's education or by severely or pervasively causing personal or emotional harm to the student; or
4. Infringes on the rights of the student at the school by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

School employees (or contracted service providers) who have witnessed or have reliable information that a student has been subject to harassment, intimidation, or bullying must verbally report the information to the school principal and/or the anti-bullying specialist on the same day they discover the information. In addition to verbal reports, the HIB Reporting form must be completed and returned to the principal and/or anti-bullying specialist. The school employee and the principal or anti-bullying specialist must complete a written report within two school days of the initial verbal/HIB Report. All staff members are immune from civil liability for reports made in good faith. Reprisal and retaliation are prohibited against any person who reports acts of student harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

The principal shall inform the parents/guardians of all students involved that an incident of HIB has been reported. The principal may discuss, as appropriate, the availability of counseling and other intervention services. An investigation must be initiated by the anti-bullying specialist within one day of the incident being reported verbally and the investigation must be conducted by the school anti-bullying specialist. The principal may appoint additional personnel to assist, if necessary. The investigation must be prompt, thorough, and efficient. The investigation will permit reports that are oral, written, or electronic.

The anti-bullying specialist's investigation must be completed within ten (10) school days of the written incident report. The school anti-bullying specialist may amend the original report to reflect information anticipated but not yet received by the end of the ten (10) day period.
Teachers and staff members must always monitor for further incidents of bullying, harassment or intimidation. Warn students of the consequences of continued behavior.

The school anti-bullying specialist's investigation results must be reported to the superintendent within two school days of completion. The superintendent may take or recommend appropriate action, including providing intervention services, establishing training programs to reduce HIB or enhance school climate, imposing discipline, and/or ordering counseling.

The results of the investigation and action taken or recommended by the superintendent must be reported to the Board of Education no later than its next meeting following the completion of the investigation.

Information about the investigation must be provided to parents/guardians of students who are parties to the investigation. This report must be in writing within five (5) school days after reporting the results to the Board of Education and must include the nature of the investigation, whether the district found evidence of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying, whether discipline was imposed or if services were provided to address the harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying. A parent/guardian may request a hearing before the Board of Education after receiving the information. The Board of Education hearing must be held within ten (10) days of the parental request. The hearing is to be conducted during an executive session to protect confidentiality. The school anti-bullying specialist may testify about the incident, recommendations for discipline or services, and any programs instituted to reduce such incidents.

The Board of Education must issue, at its next meeting following the receipt of the report, a written decision affirming, rejecting, or modifying the superintendent's decision. The parent/guardian may appeal the board's decision to the Commissioner of Education within 90 days of issuance of the board's decision.

INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SERVICES

The New Jersey Administrative Code at NJAC 6A:16-8.1 through 8.3 requires that each school must maintain a multidisciplinary team for the planning and delivery of services to all students. The system is designed to provide services to students experiencing learning, behavior, or health difficulties and to assist faculty who have difficulties in addressing these students' needs. I&RS referral forms are available in the main office and online in Panorama..

PEOSHA, RIGHT TO KNOW and DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS

The Board of Education follows the New Jersey Public Employees' Occupational Safety and Health Act (PEOSHA) to ensure the development and enforcement of occupational safety and health regulations for all employees within the school district. All employees have the right to know about hazardous substances in the workplace and the community. A Right to Know Central File is available for review in the main office of each school.

The Board of Education prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of any controlled dangerous substance by any person in any school building, on school grounds, or during any activity or event sponsored by the Board. Every employee of this district must, as a condition of employment, agree to be bound by this policy. An employee who violates the prohibitions or reporting requirements of this policy will be subject to discipline, which may include dismissal or certification of tenure charges, as appropriate. An employee whose involvement with drugs results in a conviction for a crime of the third degree or above or for an offense touching his or her position will be deemed to have forfeited his or her public employment, according to N.J.S.A. 2C:51-2.

RESPECT IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

1. STAFF MEMBER ROLE

   a. Staff members (teaching and support staff members, bus aides, paraprofessionals, secretaries, central office staff, building and grounds personnel, food service personnel, technology staff, and community education staff and providers) and pupils should have a relationship that is based on cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect.
   b. As an authority figure and role model in the classroom and school community, the staff member is expected to exercise good judgment when interacting with pupils.
   c. Staff members entrusted with the care and custody of pupils and/or working in the school environment must ensure that their interactions with pupils remain clearly within the confines of a professional and appropriate relationship.
   d. Teaching staff members have a responsibility to provide an orderly learning environment that:

i. Enables the pupil to develop an open and inquiring mind; and
ii. Motivates each student to perform to his/her potential.

e. The role of the staff member is that of a resource person, mentor, or guide through the educational process.
f. Staff members shall refrain from using insults and sarcasm when addressing pupils as a way of forcing compliance.

2. INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS

a. Staff members are encouraged to take an interest in each individual pupil; such interest must remain professional and appropriate.
b. Partiality must be avoided and professional ethics must be considered at all times.
c. Excessive informal and social involvement with individual pupils gives rise to charges of partiality.
d. Interactions between staff and pupils that go beyond the appropriate staff member/pupil relationship may include, but are not limited to:
    - Any type of sexual or inappropriate physical contact with pupils or any other conduct that might be considered sexual harassment under the Board's policies on Harassment and Sexual Harassment of pupils (kissing; wrestling/roughhousing with a pupil; hugs, pats, and hand-holding; permitting a pupil to sit on one's lap; asking for or giving pupils a massage; or stroking a pupil's hair;
    - Phone calls, letters, tapes, or other communications of a sexual or personal nature;
    - Inappropriate electronic communications not related to school, including but not limited to, email messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, Internet blogs, Internet chat rooms, Internet posting and web sites, social networks (such as Twitter, Facebook, and MySpace);
    - Allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in obscene, pornographic, or suggestive discussion, display, or photography;
    - Singling out a particular pupil or pupils for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal staff/pupil relationship;
    - Asking for a date, or dating between staff and pupils;
    - Comments about a pupil's dating partner or potential dating partner;
    - Situations of unequal power between staff members and pupils (employing pupils, babysitting, odd jobs, tutoring, etc.)
    - Confiding in a pupil about teachers' family, personal and/or work issues; and
    - Threatening behavior.

3. INTERACTIONS WITH PARENTS

a. The Board emphasizes calm and respectful learning environments.
b. No parent, guardian, or family member may be disrespectful to school staff.
c. Vulgarity and threats are strictly forbidden and engaging in such conduct will require the individual to leave the premises or be charged with trespass.

4. STUDENTS' RESPECT FOR STAFF MEMBERS

a. Students must treat all staff with respect and courtesy.

b. Students should not violate the rights of staff or interfere with staff members' efforts in performing their jobs.

5. REPORTING AND INVESTIGATIONS

a. The principal will notify the affirmative action officer of all reported instances involving inappropriate staff/pupil relations.
b. The affirmative action officer or designee will investigate all reported violations (except those involving criminal sexual contact or sexual assault, which must be immediately reported to law enforcement for investigation) and will submit a final report to the superintendent of schools.
c. The affirmative action officer or designee, upon reviewing an initial report, or the superintendent, upon reviewing the investigation report, may take such appropriate action as necessary or as provided for by law.
    i. This may include, *but is not limited to*, notifying law enforcement and/or the Division of Youth and Family Services.

SECTION 504 SERVICES AND PROTECTION UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

Section 504 is a federal law prohibiting discrimination in and by educational institutions (receiving federal funds) based on disability. The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal law providing similar protections, but this law is not limited to educational institutions. The laws are substantially similar. These laws apply to students, staff, and the general community. In order to be eligible for protection or services, an individual must have a defined physical or mental impairment that substantially impairs a "major life activity."

1. **Services and Protections for Students:** A very limited number of students may be eligible for Section 504 accommodations and who are not otherwise eligible for services as a "classified" child eligible for special education.
2. **Services and Protections for Staff:** Staff members who believe they are eligible for Section 504 or ADA protections or services and who seek reasonable accommodations in the workplace are personally responsible for requesting the Office of Human Resources and the District's Affirmative Action Office.

STUDENT HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES

For all student health-related issues, it is the teacher's responsibility to confer with the school nurse.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. Child Find: Location, referral and identification of students eligible for special education services
    a. The NJ Administrative Code at NJAC 6A:14-3.3 requires that the district maintain written procedures for district students age 3-21, (and students in nonpublic schools located within the district), concerning the location and referral of students who may have a disability due to physical, sensory, emotional, communication, cognitive or social difficulties. Referral requirements also apply to migrant and homeless students as well as to students who may have a disability, even though they are advancing from grade to grade. Referrals may be made by instructional, administrative and other district professional staff, parents, and state agencies.
        i. Referral by Parent: A written request by a parent for evaluation shall be considered a referral and shall be forwarded without delay to the CST for consideration.

ii. Early Intervention: Intervention in the general educational setting is provided to students exhibiting academic difficulties, and shall be utilized, as appropriate, prior to referral for special education evaluation. See the *Intervention and Referral Services Program* section for specifics.

iii. ALL STAFF IN the GENERAL EDUCATION SETTING must maintain written documentation, including data stating the type of intervention, frequency and duration of each intervention, and the effectiveness of each intervention.

2. Eligibility for Special Education and related services
    a. A student shall be determined eligible and classified eligible for special education and related services when it is determined that a student has one or more of the disabilities defined below and that the disability adversely affects the student's educational performance and the student needs special education and related services.
3. Categories of Disabilities
    a. Auditory impaired, autistic, cognitively impaired, communication impaired, emotionally disturbed, multiply disabled, deaf/blind, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, preschool child with a disability, social maladjustment, specific learning disability, traumatic brain injury, visually impaired.

4. Individualized Education Program
    a. There must be a current IEP in effect at the beginning of each school year for every classified student. Every IEP shall be accessible to each teacher and each service provider who is responsible for providing IEP services. You are required to be familiar with the IEP prior to providing services.
    b.
5. Behavioral Strategies and Behavioral Intervention Plans
    a. In the case of a student whose behavior impedes his/her learning or that of others, the IEP should include positive behavioral interventions and supports to address the behavior.

STUDENT RECORDS

State law defines student records as information related to an individual student gathered within or outside the school system and is maintained within the school system, regardless of the physical form in which it is maintained.

The school district must ensure limited access to pupil records. In order to maintain the confidentiality of student records, they may be accessed only in the school office and with permission of the principal. Certified school personnel may access only the student records of those for whom they have assigned educational responsibility

BUILDING SECURITY

All steps must be taken to ensure, to the utmost, that students are not placed in circumstances in which they might be unlawfully taken from the school building. **THE SCHOOL STAFF MUST KNOW EXACTLY WHERE EACH STUDENT IS AT ALL TIMES, AND HE/SHE MUST BE UNDER ASSIGNED TEACHER SUPERVISION THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL DAY.**

Additional precautions to be taken for maximum security include the following:

Security Guards will be responsible for admitting people into the building and checking identification.

- Each member of this staff has the right and the responsibility to question strangers in the building. You might comment to a stranger: "Have you been to the main office?" "May I help you?" "I am going in that direction and will show you the way, etc."
- Always be certain that you place your keys in a secure and safe place, preferably on your person. Know where they are at all times. Never give your keys to a student or ask students to unlock files, cabinets or your classroom. All personal belongings, such as pocketbooks, laptop computers, digital cameras, etc., must be kept in the locked closet at all times to prevent theft.
- All entrances will be locked from the outside. The main entrance as well as the door by the playground are equipped with a key-card reader for entry by teachers.
- All staff must have his/her ID badge visible at all times.
- Dismissal is hand-to-hand. If you are responsible for the dismissal of students, you must know who is authorized to receive the student during dismissal.

VISITOR SECURITY

Except for the purpose of attending functions to which the public at large has been invited, no person shall enter the school building without providing identification and the reason for the visit to our security guards. Security will then first make their presence known to the principal or other person in charge of the building.

The principal or person in charge and security may grant permission sought by the person entering said building. A person found in a building that entered the same without first having reported to the office of the principal or person in charge shall be liable to prosecution on charges of trespassing and be subject to such penalties as the law shall allow.

IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT THE ABOVE GUIDELINES ON SECURITY BE STRICTLY FOLLOWED. Each of us has a special responsibility in this regard.

No visitors or volunteers should be wandering the hallway, making unannounced visits to classrooms and activities, or making unannounced entry into building offices. All visitors (including regular visitors/volunteers such as PA persons) must follow the building rules set forth above. All visitors must display a visitor pass sticker at all times while in the school during school hours.

CLASS COVERAGE POLICY/ SUPERVISION DUTY POLICY

You are required to be at your assigned duty station at the appointed time unless you have prior permission from the principal to do otherwise.

Failure to be present to supervise and/or failure to appropriately supervise students jeopardizes student safety. Such failures expose the School District and you to liability for monetary damages.

Emergencies do arise and must be recognized. **Only in the event of an emergency may a teacher leave the classroom or other duty station.** The need to use the copier or to visit another staff member is never considered an emergency or an appropriate reason to leave your assigned duty station.

An adjoining class teacher must watch the classrooms if a teacher must leave his/her classroom or post. A teacher watching two classrooms must station himself/herself in the hallway, NOT at the desk. Both rooms must be visible to the teacher at all times. The teacher is now fully responsible for supervising both groups of students.

If you need coverage for a duty station, you must make arrangements in advance with a colleague to cover your area.

D) CORRIDOR SUPERVISION: FACULTY RESPONSIBILITY

All staff members share responsibility for the active supervision of pupils in corridors. Whenever students are changing location as a group, a teacher must be actively supervising the students in the corridor. At no time should an entire class travel from one location in the building to another unaccompanied by a teacher.

Staff members should:
1. prevent loitering in boys' and girls' rooms
2. Encourage students to report to class promptly during morning arrival
3. actively prevent running or boisterous conduct in corridors
4. actively disperse "gatherings" or groups of students
5. be responsible for maintaining orderly pupil conduct in corridors

All teachers are to report promptly to and remain at their designated post after school to maintain order and encourage dismissal in an orderly manner.

EMERGENCY CARDS FOR STUDENTS

Classroom teachers are responsible for distributing the district emergency card to each student on the first day of school. The importance of the information on this emergency card should be fully explained to students. Students cannot be released from school to any person other than the parent/guardian without written permission from the parent/guardian, except that there is a presumption that both parents have rights unless a judicial Order has been presented to the school or district stating otherwise. Listing names of those who can be contacted in case of an emergency on the emergency card constitutes written permission.

Classroom teachers are required to collect the card and check it for completeness of information. By Friday, September 19, 2025, teachers are expected to have obtained the emergency card for each of their students. *Teachers are to hold the forms until Mrs. Sullivan asks for them.*

If any student's emergency card is still missing at that time, it is the **teacher's responsibility to follow up by contacting the home and obtaining the necessary filled-out emergency card**. If, after contacting the home, the completed emergency card is still not returned, please inform the principal. During the year, all teachers should be alert to signs that the information on the emergency form may no longer be valid. Emergency information should be updated whenever necessary. Please notify the office staff when you are aware of possible changes in information.

FIRE DRILL AND BUILDING EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Please review the following information with all of your students:

1. During fire drills and building evacuations, all students and personnel are to follow the exit instructions as posted at the room entrance.
2. Teachers are to take the red Emergency Binder (which contains an attendance list and Emergency Evacuation Procedures), organize their students, turn off lights, close the door and exit the building with students in a single file line. If an exit is impassable or obstructed, be aware of and use the nearest alternative exit.
3. Students are to remain silent as they exit and re-enter the building in a single file.

4. Take attendance at your designated assembly area. In the case of a real fire or other critical event, you will be asked to provide the names of those students who are not in your class.
5. Staff and students may re-enter the building when instructed to do so by someone in authority.
6. Everyone should re-enter the building in the same manner they exited.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Affirmative Action Officer
The Affirmative Action Officer has the responsibility to coordinate and implement the district's efforts to comply with the regulations of N.J.A.C. 6A:7 and to promote a working and learning environment free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

Shane Biggins
Director of Personnel
(201) 385-8020
sbiggins@bergenfield.org

Steps to File an Affirmative Action Grievance
If you think you experienced discrimination:

- Fill out the grievance form available on the district website at: https://www.bergenfield.org/departments/personnel/affirmative-action
- Contact the Affirmative Action Officer listed above for an appointment
- There will be an intake session and an investigation will be launched
- The results/conclusion of this investigation will be sent to you in writing
- You are guaranteed confidentiality, but not anonymity as witnesses must be questioned

Appeal Process

- If unsatisfied with the results of the Affirmative Action investigation, the grievant may appeal to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee
- If unsatisfied with the superintendent or his/her designee's decision, the grievant may appeal to the Board of Education
- If unsatisfied with the Board's decision, the grievant may appeal to the Executive County Superintendent
- The grievant has the right to bypass this process and appeal directly to the:
    - Commissioner of Education;
    - Equal Employment Opportunity Commission;
    - U.S. Office of Civil Rights;
    - U.S. Department of Education; or
    - N.J. Division of Civil Rights

Resources
Southern Law Center: www.tolerance.org
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity: www.napequity.org
USDOE Office of Civil Rights: www.ed.gov/ocr

504 PROCEDURES FOR STAFF MEMBERS

Employee 504 Officer: Mr. Shane Biggins

Address: 225 West Clinton Avenue, Bergenfield, NJ 07621

Email: sbiggins@bergenfield.org

Phone: 201-385-8020 ext. 1811

- Staff members can request a Section 504 plan by completing the district's Request for Accommodations form and submitting it to the Employee 504 Officer and Director of Personnel, Mr. Shane Biggins
- The request will be reviewed by the Employee 504 Officer and a meeting to will be scheduled.
- The Employee 504 Officer will review the documentation provided by the employee. If the employee does not wish to discuss medical information directly with the 504 Officer, he or she will be given the option to have their physician discuss the concerns and recommended accommodations with the district's physician in order to maintain the privacy of staff medical records.
- A determination of the staff member's qualification for a 504 accommodation plan will be made and a plan drafted if appropriate.
- The Employee 504 Officer will inform in writing any administrator who supervises the employee or who is responsible for fulfilling the accommodation, about the plan.
- Medical information will not be disclosed to any party during this exchange.

504 Grievance Procedures

Anyone who feels he or she has been discriminated against based upon his or her 504 plan or feels that the plan has not been followed in accordance with how it was written may file a grievance. The grievance should be submitted to:

Darlene Markman, District 504 Coordinator
225 West Clinton Avenue Bergenfield, NJ 07661
dmarkman@bergenfield.org
201-385-6250

- A grievance is filed by submitting an informal complaint to the district 504 Coordinator using the contact information provided. This complaint may be rendered in person or through written correspondence with the District 504 Coordinator. Grievances should be filed within 60 calendar days of the alleged infraction.
- The District Coordinator will investigate the complaint within 7 working days and attempt to informally resolve the issue with the appropriate staff member(s).
- The District 504 Coordinator will investigate and document the complaint and provide a written decision to the complainant within seven working days of receipt of the initial complaint.

District 504 Appeal Process

If the complainant is not satisfied with the District 504 Coordinator's written decision, he or she may appeal the decision.

- Within (3) working days of receipt of the initial decision, the complainant may appeal the decision by submitting in writing the circumstances that warrant the grievance.
- The 504 Coordinator will appoint a qualified hearing officer within 7 working days of receiving the written appeal.
- The impartial hearing officer will afford the complainant an opportunity to present information relevant to the

grievance.
- The hearing officer will provide a written decision to both the complainant and the 504 Coordinator within (7) working days of the hearing.

*Those individuals who remain dissatisfied with the decision rendered by the hearing officer can submit a written appeal to the Bergenfield Board of Education, provided that they have submitted a written appeal to the Superintendent of Schools within (3) working days of receiving the hearing officer's decision.

*The board may, but is not required, to hold a hearing to review the appeal.

*The complainant may request mediation and due process in accordance with the law if they remain unsatisfied with the decision rendered by the district's Board of Education.

For a more detailed view of the 504 Accommodation Plan Procedures, Grievances and Appeals, please review District Policy and Regulation 2418 – Section 504 if the Rehabilitation
Act of 1973 Students
Board Policy 2418
Board Regulation 2418

Title IX

The purpose of this Title IX grievance is to gather essential, factual information regarding an alleged action of sexual harassment in violation of Title IX and district policy 5751.

According to district policy 5751:
"Sexual harassment" (34 CFR §106.30(a)1,2,3 means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

A. An employee of the school district conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the school district on a student's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;

B. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a student equal access to the school district's education program or activity; or

C. "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. §1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. §12291(a)(30)."

District policy 5751 can be found in its entirety on the Bergenfield Public School District Website Title IX page, accessible through this link: Title IX Policy

If you have any questions about this form, or the Title IX investigation process, or need to submit the completed form, please contact:

Darlene Markman
District Title IX Coordinator
dmarkman@bergenfield.org
201-385-6250 X 1901

Title IX Grievance Process

The school district will use the grievance process outlined in 34 CFR§106.45 and Board Regulation 5751 to address formal complaints of sexual harassment.

1. Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator. This report may be made at any time, including non-business hours, utilizing the phone, email or street address information listed for the Title IX Coordinator. This must be filed within (180) calendar days of the alleged infraction.

2. Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the school district will follow a grievance process:
    - The Title IX Coordinator must contact the Complainant to acknowledge receipt of the grievance within (2) business days.
    - The Title IX Coordinator shall provide written notice to all known parties within (5) business days of receipt of the grievance.
    - The Title IX Coordinator shall provide the investigator with a copy of the formal complaint if the Title IX Coordinator is not the investigator.

3. The investigator shall investigate the allegations contained in a formal complaint within (45) calendar days. Should the timeline need to be delayed due to circumstances outside of the investigator's control, written notice will be provided to all parties involved.

4. The decision-maker, who cannot be the same person as the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator, shall issue a written determination regarding the complaint within (60) calendar days of the initial grievance. Appeals are not included in this (60) calendar day time frame.
    - The decision-maker will facilitate a written question-and-answer period between the parties.
    - The decision-maker's written determination will be issued to all parties simultaneously and will include:
        - Identification of allegations as defined in Board Policy and Regulation 5751
        - A description of the steps taken from the receipt of the complaint through the determination.
        - Findings of fact supporting the determination;
        - A rationale for the result of each allegation, including any determination regarding responsibility, disciplinary sanctions the decision-maker imposed on the accused that directly relate to the Complainant, and procedures and permissible bases for the parties to appeal the determination.

Appeals

1. The Complainant and Accused shall have an equal opportunity to appeal the determination and sanctions. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Title IX Coordinator within (10) calendar days following the issuance of the notice of determination.

2. A party may appeal only on the following grounds; the appeal shall identify the ground(s) for appeal and specific arguments supporting each.
- There was a procedural error in the hearing process that materially affected the outcome. Procedural error refers to alleged deviations from school district policy, and not challenges to policies or procedures themselves.
- There is new evidence that was not reasonably available at the time of the hearing and that could have affected the outcome.
- The decision-maker had a conflict of interest or bias that affected the outcome.
- The determination regarding the policy violation was unreasonable based on the evidence before the decision-maker. Appealing on this basis is available only to a party who participated in the hearing; and
- The sanctions were disproportionate to the hearing officer's findings.

3. The Superintendent shall designate an appeal officer for each appeal. The appeal officer shall not be the

same person as the decision-maker, the investigator, or the Title IX Coordinator

4. The Title IX Coordinator shall notify all parties of the appeal, and all parties shall have an opportunity to submit a written statement in response to the appeal, within (10) calendar days of the notification.

5. The Title IX Coordinator shall inform the parties that they have an opportunity to meet with the appeal officer separately to discuss the proportionality of the sanction.

6. The appeal officer shall decide the appeal considering the evidence presented at the hearing, the investigation file, and the appeal statements of both parties. In disproportionate sanction appeals, the input the parties provided during the meeting may also be considered.

7. The appeal officer shall summarize their decision in a written report that will be sent to the Complainant and Respondent within twenty calendar days of receiving the appeal.

8. Involved parties have the right to bypass this process and appeal directly to any of the following:

- The Commissioner of Education;
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission;
- US Office of Civil Rights;
- US Department of Education; or
- NJ Division of Civil Rights