

Policy 1700: Uniform Complaint Procedure

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 10/27/2025 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 10/27/2025

Uniform Complaint Procedure

The Board establishes this Uniform Complaint Procedure as a means to address complaints arising within the District. This Uniform Complaint Procedure is intended to be used for all complaints except those governed by a specific process in state or federal law that supersedes this process or collective bargaining agreement. Matters covered by a collective bargaining agreement will be reviewed in accordance with the terms of the applicable agreement.

This uniform complaint procedure and accompanying Complaint Form (Policy 1700F(1)) shall be made available on the District's website (www.laurel.k12.mt.us) at a location which shall be included in all handbooks issued by the District.

The District will seek to respond to and resolve complaints without resorting to this formal complaint procedure and, when a complaint is filed, to address the complaint promptly and equitably. The right of a person to prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint filed hereunder will not be impaired by a person's pursuit of other remedies. Use of this complaint procedure is not a prerequisite to pursuing other remedies and use of this complaint procedure does not extend any filing deadline related to pursuit of other remedies.

A complaint is appropriate under this policy when an individual believes the District, its Board of Trustees, or an employee of the District, has violated the individual's rights or the rights of their child under state or federal law or Board policy. A complaint is not appropriate and therefore subject to dismissal when the basis for the complaint is disagreement with an action or omission of the District under circumstances where there has been no violation of the individual's rights or the rights of their child. Complaints against a building administrator shall be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent or District administrator shall be filed with the Board. Attempts to bypass this Uniform Complaint Procedure at any of its Levels shall be redirected by District officials at the appropriate level.

Common Areas of Concern School Policy

- Special Education Policy 2161
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act Policy 2162
- Challenges to Educational Materials (including library materials) Policy 2311
- Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy 3200
- Student Sexual Harassment Policy 3225
- Student Discipline Policy 3250
- Student Suspension and Expulsion Policy 3300
- Student Records Policy 3600
- District Employment Matters Policy Series 5000

Deadlines requiring District action in this procedure may be extended for reasons related but not limited to the District's retention of legal counsel and District investigatory procedures.

Level 1: Informal

An individual with a complaint should first attempt to discuss it with the appropriate employee or building administrator with the objective of resolving the matter promptly and informally in accordance with requirements of Policy 2158. If such resolution is not possible, the individual may choose to file a formal written complaint in accordance with specifications at Level 2 (see Policy 1700F(1) Complaint Form). If, however, the complaint involves allegations of sexual harassment, informal resolution with the alleged harasser is not encouraged, and a sexual harassment complaint should be submitted to the District's Title IX Coordinator in accordance with District Policy 3225 or 5012.

Level 2: Building Administrator

When a complaint has not been or cannot be resolved at Level 1, an individual may file a signed and dated written complaint (see Policy 1700F(1): Complaint Form) stating: (1) a description of the event(s) or incident(s) giving rise to the complaint, including the approximate date, time, and location of the incident(s) or event(s), as well as the identities of any witnesses to the incident(s) or event(s); (2) an explanation of the rights the complaining party believes to have been violated; and (3) the remedy or resolution requested. The written complaint must be filed within thirty (30) calendar days of the event or incident or from the date an individual could reasonably become aware of such event or incident. The applicability of the deadline is subject to review by the Superintendent to ensure the intent of this uniform complaint procedure is honored.

When a complaint alleges a violation of Board policy or procedure, the building administrator will investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint. The administrator will respond in writing to the complaint, within thirty (30) calendar days of the administrator's receipt of the complaint.

If the complainant has reason to believe the administrator's decision was made in error, the complainant may request, in writing, that the Superintendent review the administrator's decision. (See Level 3.) This request must be submitted to the Superintendent within fifteen (15) calendar days of the administrator's decision.

When a complaint alleges sexual harassment or a violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (the Civil Rights Act), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Administrator shall turn the complaint over to the applicable District nondiscrimination coordinator. The coordinator shall ensure an investigation is completed in accordance with the applicable procedure. In the case of a sexual harassment or Title IX complaint, the applicable investigation and appeal procedure is Policy 3225P or 5012P. In the case of a disability complaint, the coordinator shall complete an investigation and file a report and recommendation with the Administrator for decision. Appeal of a decision in a disability complaint will be handled in accordance with this policy.

Level 3: Superintendent

If the complainant appeals the administrator's decision provided for in Level 2, the Superintendent will review the complaint and the administrator's decision. The Superintendent will respond in writing to the appeal, within thirty (30) calendar days of the Superintendent's receipt of the written appeal. In responding to the appeal, the Superintendent may: (1) meet with the parties involved in the complaint; (2) conduct a separate or supplementary investigation; (3) engage an outside investigator or other District employees to assist with the appeal; and/or (4) take other steps appropriate or helpful in resolving the complaint.

If the complainant has reason to believe the Superintendent's decision was made in error, the complainant may request, in writing, that the Board consider an appeal of the Superintendent's decision. (See Level 4.) This request must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent, within fifteen (15) calendar days of the Superintendent's written response to the complaint, for transmission to the Board.

Level 4: The Board

Upon written appeal of a complaint alleging a violation of the individual's rights under state or federal law or Board policy which the Board of Trustees has authority to remedy, the Board may consider the Superintendent's decision. It is the role of the Board to review the decision of the Superintendent for compliance with applicable District policies. It is not the role of the Board to reinvestigate the matter, and the Board is entitled to rely upon the facts determined during an investigation conducted at Level 2 or 3. If a complaint is submitted alleging a violation of District policy by the Superintendent or the Clerk, the Board holds jurisdiction over the complaint as the supervisor of the Superintendent and the Clerk.

Upon receipt of a written request for appeal, the Chair will either: (1) place the appeal on the agenda of a regular or special Board meeting, (2) appoint an appeals panel of not less than three trustees to hear the appeal and make a recommendation to the Board, or (3) respond to the complaint with an explanation of why the appeal will not be heard by the Board of Trustees in accordance with this policy.

If the Chair appoints a panel to consider the appeal, the panel will meet to consider the appeal and then make a written recommendation to the full Board. The Board will report its decision on the appeal, in writing, to all parties, within thirty (30) calendar days of the Board meeting at which the Board considered the appeal or the recommendation of the panel. If the matter is heard by the Board or by an appeals panel, the Board shall have the authority to uphold the decision of the Superintendent; to reverse the decision of the Superintendent; to remand

the case back to the Superintendent for further investigation or other action deemed necessary by the Board; or any combination of the above.

Parents, students, and patrons should be aware that the Board’s authority and role in the District’s complaint procedures are limited in certain circumstances and not all issues arising within a school can or should be directly addressed by the Board. For example, the Board will not consider employee or student discipline issues unless and until the Superintendent brings the issue before the Board under Montana law. Also, employment issues arising under a collective bargaining agreement are addressed, when necessary, through the grievance procedure set forth in the collective bargaining agreement and not through Board action.

Montana Code Annotated

20-20-108
 20-3-210
 20-5-323

Description

Rescheduling Of School Election Canceled Due To Declaration Of State Of Emergency Or Disaster
 Controversy appeals and hearings
 Require trustees to adopt a grievance policy

Administrative Rules of Montana

10.55.701
 Title 10 Chapter 6

Description

Board of Trustees
 Rules of Procedure for All School Controversy Contested Cases Before the County Superintendent

United States Constitution

First Amendment

Description

Right to petition the Government for a redress of grievances

United States Code

20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.
 29 USC 701, et seq
 42 USC 12101, et seq.

Description

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
 Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Cross References

1400
 1420
 1420-NF(1)
 2132
 2158
 2158-P(1)
 2309
 2310
 2310-P(1)
 2311
 2311-P(1)
 2314
 2314-NF(1)
 2330
 3125

Description

[Board Meetings](#)
[School Board Meeting Procedure](#)
[School Board Meeting Procedure - Notice Regarding Public Comment](#)
[Student and Family Privacy Rights](#)
[Parent and Family Engagement and Educational Involvement](#)
[Parent and Family Engagement and Educational Involvement](#)
[Library Program and Materials](#)
[Selection of Library Materials](#)
[Selection of Library Materials - Selection of Library Materials Procedure](#)
[Instructional Materials](#)
[Instructional Materials - Selection, Adoption, and Removal of Textbooks and Instructional Materials](#)
[Instructional and Library Materials Review](#)
[Instructional and Library Materials Review - Citizens' Request for Reconsideration of Material Form](#)
[Controversial Issues and Academic Freedom](#)
[Education of Homeless Children](#)

Cross References

3125-NF(1)

3210

3225

3225-P(1)

3225-NF(1)

3226

4310

4316

5002

5010

5125

5240

Description[Education of Homeless Children - McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Dispute Resolution Form](#)[Equal Educational Opportunity and Nondiscrimination](#)[Sexual Harassment of Students](#)[Sexual Harassment of Students - Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure - Students](#)[Sexual Harassment of Students - Harassment Reporting Form for Students](#)[Bullying](#)[Public Complaints and Suggestions](#)[Accommodating Individuals With Disabilities](#)[Accommodating Individuals With Disabilities](#)[Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination](#)[Whistle Blowing and Retaliation](#)[Resolution of Staff Complaints](#)