

**WILLIAMS UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

Education Code 35186 mandates that districts establish policies and procedures to address complaints regarding insufficiency of textbooks and instructional materials, teacher vacancy or misassignment, and emergency or urgent facilities conditions that pose a threat to the health and safety of students or staff. These procedures are no longer required for complaints of deficiencies related to the provision of intensive instruction and services to students who have not passed one or both parts of the high school exit examination after the completion of grade 12 since that categorical program was eliminated pursuant to AB 97 (Ch. 47, Statutes of 2013).

Education Code 35186 requires that districts post notices concerning these complaint procedures in each classroom. 5 CCR 4680-4687 further delineates legal requirements for the complaint form and notice. See the accompanying exhibits for a sample notice and complaint form.

It is recommended that districts use these procedures only for complaints regarding insufficiency of textbooks and instructional materials, teacher vacancy or misassignment, and emergency or urgent facilities conditions. The uniform complaint procedures specified in 5 CCR 4600-4670 should be used, as required, for a complaint alleging (1) failure to comply with state and federal laws governing educational programs; (2) unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying; (3) violation of the prohibition against requiring students to pay fees, deposits, or other charges unless authorized by law; (4) noncompliance with legal requirements pertaining to the local control and accountability plan; (5) retaliation against a complainant or other participant in the complaint process or anyone who has otherwise acted to uncover or report alleged wrongdoing in the district; or (6) any other complaint as specified in a district policy; see BP/AR 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures.

For procedures related to complaints about employees, see BP/AR 1312.1 - Complaints Concerning District Employees.

For complaints concerning the district's adoption and selection of specific instructional materials, see BP/AR 1312.2 - Complaints Concerning Instructional Materials.

For complaints regarding the district's nutrition program, see BP 3555 - Nutrition Program Compliance.

**Types of Complaints**

The district shall use the procedures described in this administrative regulation only to investigate and resolve the following: (Education Code 35186; 5 CCR 4680-4683)

**1. Complaints regarding the insufficiency of textbooks and instructional materials, including any complaint alleging that:**

a. A student, including an English learner, does not have standards-aligned textbooks or instructional materials or state- or district-adopted textbooks or other required instructional materials to use in class.

b. A student does not have access to textbooks or instructional materials to use at home or after school. This does not require two sets of textbooks or instructional materials for each student.

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c. Textbooks or instructional materials are in poor or unusable condition, have missing pages, or are unreadable due to damage.

d. A student was provided photocopied sheets from only a portion of a textbook or instructional materials to address a shortage of textbooks or instructional materials.

*(cf. 6161.1 – Selection and Evaluation of Instructional Materials)*

**2. Complaints regarding teacher vacancy or misassignment, including any complaint alleging that:**

a. A semester begins and a teacher vacancy exists.

b. A teacher who lacks credentials or training to teach English learners is assigned to teach a class with more than 20 percent English learners in the class.

*(cf. 4112.22 – Staff Teaching English Language Learners)*

c. A teacher is assigned to teach a class for which the teacher lacks subject matter competency.

*Teacher vacancy* means a position to which a single designated certificated employee has not been assigned at the beginning of the year for an entire year or, if the position is for a one-semester course, a position to which a single designated certificated employee has not been assigned at the beginning of the semester for an entire semester. (Education Code 35186; 5 CCR 4600)

*Beginning of the year or semester* means the first day classes necessary to serve all the students enrolled are established with a single designated certificated employee assigned for the duration of the class, but not later than 20 working days after the first day students attend classes for that semester. (5 CCR 4600)

*Misassignment* means the placement of a certificated employee in a teaching or services position for which the employee does not hold a legally recognized certificate or credential or the placement of a certificated employee in a teaching or services position that the employee is not otherwise authorized by statute to hold. (Education Code 35186; 5 CCR 4600)

*(cf. 4112.2 – Certification)*

*(cf. 4113 – Assignment)*

**3. Complaints regarding the condition of school facilities, including any complaint alleging that:**

a. A condition poses an emergency or urgent threat to the health or safety of students or staff.

*Emergency or urgent threat* means structures or systems that are in a condition that poses a threat to the health and safety of students or staff while at school, including, but not limited to, gas leaks; nonfunctioning heating, ventilation, fire sprinklers, or air-conditioning systems; electrical power failure; major sewer line stoppage; major pest or vermin infestation; broken windows or exterior doors or gates that will not lock and that pose a security risk; abatement of hazardous materials previously undiscovered that pose an immediate threat to students or staff;

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structural damage creating a hazardous or uninhabitable condition; or any other condition deemed appropriate. (Education Code 17592.72)

b. A school restroom has not been cleaned, maintained, or kept open in accordance with Education Code 35292.5.

*Clean or maintained school restroom* means a school restroom has been cleaned or maintained regularly, is fully operational, or has been stocked at all times with toilet paper, soap, or paper towels or functional hand dryers. (Education Code 35292.5)

*Open restroom* means the school has kept all restrooms open during school hours when students are not in classes and has kept a sufficient number of restrooms open during school hours when students are in classes. This does not apply when the temporary closing of the restroom is necessary for student safety or to make repairs. (Education Code 35292.5)

*(cf. 3514 – Environmental Safety)*

*(cf. 3517 – Facilities Inspection)*

**Filing of Complaint**

Education Code 35186 requires that complaints be investigated and resolved within the timelines specified below. During the Federal Program Monitoring (FPM) process, California Department of Education (CDE) staff will expect to see statements regarding the filing of the complaint, the investigation, timelines, and the complainant's right to appeal to the Governing Board and to appeal facilities complaints to the CDE, as detailed in the following section and the section "Investigation and Response" below.

A complaint alleging any condition(s) specified in the section "Types of Complaints" above shall be filed with the principal or designee at the school in which the complaint arises. The principal or designee shall forward a complaint about problems beyond his/her authority to the Superintendent or designee in a timely manner, but not to exceed 10 working days. (Education Code 35186; 5 CCR 4680)

**Investigation and Response**

The principal or designee shall make all reasonable efforts to investigate any problem within his/her authority. He/she shall remedy a valid complaint within a reasonable time period not to exceed 30 working days from the date the complaint was received. (Education Code 35186; 5 CCR 4685)

Complaints may be filed anonymously. If the complainant has indicated on the complaint form that he/she would like a response to the complaint, the principal or designee shall report the resolution of the complaint to him/her at the mailing address indicated on the complaint form within 45 working days of the initial filing of the complaint. At the same time, the principal or designee shall report the same information to the Superintendent or designee. (Education Code 35186; 5 CCR 4680, 4685)

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Education Code 48985 specifies that, when 15 percent or more of the students enrolled in a particular school speak a single primary language other than English, all notices, reports, statements, or records sent to the parents/guardians of such students be written in English and in the primary language. Education Code 35186 requires that, when Education Code 48985 is applicable, any response requested by the complainant must be written in English and in the primary language in which the complaint was filed.

When Education Code 48985 is applicable and the complainant has requested a response, the response shall be written in English and in the primary language in which the complaint was filed. (Education Code 35186)

If a complainant is not satisfied with the resolution of a complaint, he/she has the right to describe the complaint to the Governing Board at a regularly scheduled meeting. (Education Code 35186; 5 CCR 4686)

For any complaint concerning a facilities condition that poses an emergency or urgent threat to the health or safety of students or staff as described in item #3a in the section "Types of Complaints" above, a complainant who is not satisfied with the resolution proffered by the principal or Superintendent or designee may file an appeal to the Superintendent of Public Instruction within 15 days of receiving the district's response. The complainant shall comply with the appeal requirements specified in 5 CCR 4632. (Education Code 35186; 5 CCR 4687)

All complaints and written responses shall be public records. (Education Code 35186; 5 CCR 4686)

*(cf. 1340 - Access to District Records)*

**Reports**

On a quarterly basis, the Superintendent or designee shall report, to the Board at a regularly scheduled public Board meeting and to the County Superintendent of Schools, summarized data on the nature and resolution of all complaints. The report shall include the number of complaints by general subject area with the number of resolved and unresolved complaints. (Education Code 35186; 5 CCR 4686)

**Forms and Notices**

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure a Williams complaint form is available at each school. However, complainants need not use the district's complaint form in order to file a complaint. (Education Code 35186; 5 CCR 4680)

Education Code 35186 requires that the district's complaint form contain the elements stated in the following paragraph. In addition, Education Code 35186 requires that a notice be posted in each classroom in each school in the district, as specified below. See the accompanying exhibits for a sample form and classroom notice.

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The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the district's complaint form contains a space to indicate whether the complainant desires a response to his/her complaint and specifies the location for filing a complaint. A complainant may add as much text to explain the complaint as he/she wishes. (Education Code 35186; 5 CCR 4680)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a notice is posted in each classroom in each school containing the components specified in Education Code 35186. (Education Code 35186)

*Legal Reference:*

*EDUCATION CODE*

*234.1 Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying*

*1240 County superintendent of schools, duties*

*17592.72 Urgent or emergency repairs, School Facility Emergency Repair Account*

*33126 School accountability report card*

*35186 Williams uniform complaint procedures*

*35292.5 Restrooms, maintenance and cleanliness*

*48985 Notice to parents in language other than English*

*60119 Hearing on sufficiency of instructional materials*

*CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5*

*4600-4670 Uniform complaint procedures*

*4680-4687 Williams uniform complaint procedures*