



## **Administrative Regulation 1601 PUBLIC COMPLAINT AND RESOLUTION PROCESS**

**Responsible Office:** Office of the Deputy Superintendent

### **PURPOSE**

The Washoe County School District (District) Superintendent adopts this Administrative Regulation to establish a process for parents, legal guardians, emancipated minors, and/or members of the public residing in the Washoe County School District to submit and resolve Public Complaints.

### **DEFINITIONS**

1. "Discretionary functions or decisions" mean those actions which involve an element of individual judgment or choice and are based on considerations of social, economic, or political policy.
2. "General concerns about District services or the delivery thereof" for the purpose of this Regulation means any violation of District Board Policy, Administrative Regulation, Administrative Procedure, or Administrative Manual, as well as a violation of state or federal law.

### **REGULATION**

1. Scope of Public Complaints
  - a. Public Complaints cannot be filed against an individual Trustee.
  - b. Public Complaints cannot be filed about a decision of the Board of Trustees (Board).
  - c. The Superintendent has delegated the responsibility of the Public Complaint Process to the Deputy Superintendent, unless a Public Complaint raises a concern or issue with the Deputy Superintendent or an investigation is commenced under Section 5(b)(ii).
  - d. The District's Public Complaint Process enables parents, guardians, emancipated minors, and/or members of the public residing in our District community (Complainants) to bring specific concerns about District services or the delivery thereof to the District. The Complainant must clearly articulate facts and the specific violation of law or District policy, regulation, procedure, or manual in order for the complaint to be processed. A generalized grievance will not be considered.

- e. A Public Complaint may not be filed against the District, District employees, volunteers, agents, or contractors for any discretionary functions or decisions or the exercise of contractual duties.
- f. A Public Complaint may not be filed on an issue outside the scope of the public complaint process, within another resolution procedure, and/or on the same or similar issue that has already been addressed through the Public Complaint Process or another resolution procedure.
- g. At any level during the Public Complaint Process, if it becomes known to the District that there is a specific resolution process regarding the substance of the concern, the District will direct the Complainant to the appropriate resolution process and close the Public Complaint Process.
- h. At any level during the Public Complaint Process, if it becomes known to the District that the Complainant failed to meet the requirements of this Regulation, the District will inform the Complainant of the compliance issue and close the Public Complaint Process.

## 2. Informal Resolution Process

- a. A Complainant must first attempt to resolve a concern through the Informal Resolution Process.
- b. A Complainant must begin the Informal Resolution Process within 30 calendar days from the date the Complainant first knew, or should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to Complainant's concern(s).
- c. A Complainant filing a Formal Written Complaint before attempting the Informal Resolution Process will be directed back to the Informal Resolution Process.
- d. If a Complainant feels comfortable speaking with an employee about a concern(s) related to the employee, the Complainant should first discuss the concern directly with the employee.
- e. If the concern cannot be resolved with the employee, Complainants should present the issue to the building principal, supervisor, or designated site administrator in a timely manner.
- f. The Informal Complaint Resolution Process may occur via telephone call, written communication, or face-to-face conference.
- g. If a Complainant's concern is not resolved through the steps above, the individual may file a Formal Written Complaint according to the process below.

### 3. Formal Resolution Process

- a. The Formal Resolution Process commences upon District receipt of a formal written complaint on the designated Public Complaint Form (Form).
- b. The Form must be submitted within 14 calendar days from the date the Informal Resolution Process ended.
- c. The Form must be submitted to the lowest level administrator, not involved in the Informal Resolution Process, with authority to remedy the concern.
- d. If the Form is not submitted to the appropriate administrator, the receiving administrator will note the date and time the Form was received and immediately forward the Form to the appropriate administrator and notify the Complainant of those actions.
- e. Investigation Process
  - i. Upon receiving a Public Complaint Form, the administrator shall investigate the matter as follows:
    - 1) Within five business days, notify the Complainant in writing that the administrator received the Form.
    - 2) Arrange a conference with the Complainant regarding the particulars of the Complaint within 20 calendar days from receipt of the Form.
    - 3) Question witnesses that may have personal knowledge or information regarding the particulars of the Public Complaint.
    - 4) Provide the Complainant a written response/resolution within 20 calendar days after receiving all information deemed necessary by the administrator.
    - 5) The administrator's written response/resolution must provide Complainant notice of the right to appeal.
    - 6) If at any time during the Formal Complaint Process the Complainant becomes unresponsive or refuses to cooperate with the administrator, the administrator may close the Complaint and no appeal is available.

- 7) An administrator may submit a Confidential Request for Investigation Form (CRIF) with the Office of the General Counsel (OGC), if the administrator believes the investigation meets one or more of the following criteria:
  - a. Multiple witnesses;
  - b. Difficult or complex legal issues;
  - c. High risk of liability to the District;
  - d. Allegation of staff on student bullying; or
  - e. Any other matter at the discretion of the Office of the General Counsel and/or Superintendent.

#### 4. Appeal

- a. A Complainant that is not satisfied with the administrator's written response/resolution at the end of the Formal Resolution Process may appeal that response/resolution by writing a request for an appeal to the Deputy Superintendent within 10 calendar days from the day Complainant received the administrator's written response/resolution.
- b. The Deputy Superintendent, or designee, will assign the matter to an Appeal Review Officer (ARO). The appeal can only be based on one or both of the following grounds:
  - i. Procedural error that significantly affected the outcome of the investigation (i.e., insufficient evidence to support findings, substantiated bias, material deviation from established procedures); and/or
  - ii. To consider new evidence which was unknown or unavailable during the administrator's investigation and that could substantially impact the response/resolution. The appeal must include a summary of new evidence, why it was unavailable at the time of the investigation, and its potential impact.
- c. The ARO shall notify the appellant in writing that the ARO received the appeal within 10 days of receipt.
- d. Before considering the appeal, the ARO will determine whether the appeal is timely and raises one or more of the permissible grounds for appeal listed above.

- i. If the written appeal is not timely or does not raise one or more of the permissible grounds for appeal, the ARO will notify the appellant in writing, and the Complaint is closed.
  - e. An appeal decision will be based on the following:
    - i. Unless there is a request to consider new evidence as grounds for an appeal, the ARO will limit the appeal review to the investigation record and process. The ARO has the discretion to schedule a conference with the appellant or others involved with the investigation as part of the file review.
    - ii. The ARO will decide whether to grant or deny the appeal based on the specific grounds for appeal.
    - iii. The ARO may also remand the matter back to the original investigating administrator to consider new evidence.
  - f. The ARO shall review the file and issue a written Appeal Decision to the appellant within 20 business days from the ARO's notification of receipt.
  - g. The ARO shall provide copies of the written Appeal Decision to the administrators involved with the Formal Resolution Process.
  - h. Except in cases of remand back to the administrator in charge of the Formal Resolution Process, the decision of the ARO is final.
5. Complaints about the Superintendent
- a. Informal Resolution Process. Complainants with concerns regarding non-discretionary and non-contractual actions of the Superintendent must first submit the concerns to the Superintendent in writing. The Superintendent has the discretion to determine whether the matter warrants a conference with the Complainant. After reviewing the Complainant's concerns, the Superintendent will issue a written response/resolution to the Complainant as soon as practicable for the Superintendent.
  - b. Formal Resolution Process. If a Complainant is not satisfied with the Superintendent's written response/resolution, the Complainant may file a written formal complaint with the President of the Board of Trustees (Board President) as follows:
    - i. The Complainant(s) submitting the written complaint must sign it. The written complaint must contain the following information:

- 1) Complainant(s) name(s), mailing address, email address and telephone number;
  - 2) A description of the concern(s), including dates, times and what occurred;
  - 3) Names of people involved;
  - 4) Names of any witnesses;
  - 5) A description of what actions you have taken to resolve the concern(s), if any; and
  - 6) The requested resolution.
- ii. The Board President has the discretion to request an investigation through the Office of the General Counsel in order to discern the facts and circumstances of the matter.
  - iii. As the lowest level administrator, the Board President shall review the facts and circumstances of the matter. The Board President may issue a written response to the Complainant as soon as practicable for the Board President. A copy of the written response shall be provided to the Superintendent. The Board President's written response may:
    - 1) Close the Public Complaint with no action and no right for the Complainant to appeal; or
    - 2) Provide the Complainant with a written resolution of the Complaint. Any resolution that requires the Superintendent to take a certain action requires consent of the Superintendent. If the Superintendent does not consent to the Board President's resolution, the Board President may place the resolution on an agenda of the Board for action by the Board to direct the Superintendent.
  - iv. The President may not negatively impact or discipline the Superintendent without placing an item on an agenda for Board review and action. The placing of such an item on a Board agenda does not need Superintendent consent or approval.

#### 6. Additional Information

- a. Confidentiality. All Public Complaints will be treated as confidential to the extent possible and in compliance with state and federal law. Any

employee corrective actions that may be taken as a result of a Public Complaint are confidential and shall not be disclosed to the Complainant.

- b. Time Limits. All time limits, as outlined in this Administrative Regulation, shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent between the District and a Complainant.
- c. The Deputy Superintendent/designee has discretion to investigate any matter brought to his/her attention at any level during the Public Complaint Process.
- d. Consolidating Public Complaints. Public Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events should be addressed as one Public Complaint and at the lowest supervisory level possible.

### **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

- 1. This Administrative Regulation reflects the goals of the District's Strategic Plan and aligns/complies with the governing documents of the District, to include:
  - a. Board Policy 1600, Public Complaint and Resolution Process;
  - b. Board Policy 9055, Officers and Duties of the Board of Trustees; and
  - c. Board Policy 9110, Meeting Protocols.

### **REVISION HISTORY**

Date	Revision	Modification
12/3/1966	1.0	Adopted
1/14/1992	2.0	Revised
6/28/1994	3.0	Revised
9/9/1997	4.0	Revised
6/26/2007	5.0	Revised
9/4/2008	A (6.0)	Revised: Converted to CSI Procedure
10/01/2011	B (6.1)	Revised: changes to titles
4/21/2015	7.0	Converted to Administrative Regulation and revised
7/01/2015	8.0	Revised to add clarity to informal process, extend time limits

11/13/2015	9.0	Revised to remove accusations of staff or student bullying or discrimination; number change from 1312.
09/01/2021	10.0	Revised per Board Policy 1600 changes.
09/03/2025	11.0	Revised: Changed responsible office, updated scope of public complaints.
09/17/2025	12.0	Revised: minor formatting and typographical errors fixed.
01/20/2026	13.0	Revised: Added definition for "general concern" and clarified delegation of the Public Complaint process to the Deputy Superintendent.