

PUBLIC CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

The School Board and District staff welcome concerns and complaints from the public. A concern is defined as “a cause of anxiety or worry.” A complaint is defined as “a statement that a situation is unsatisfactory or unacceptable.” For the purposes of this policy, the terms are used interchangeably and the process for resolving concerns or complaints is identical.

The School Board relies on District teachers, staff, and administrators to resolve concerns or complaints of the public. It is the policy of the District to provide for resolutions first at the level most directly involved and in an informal manner starting with the teacher or staff member, and then building principal/administrative supervisor. If resolution cannot be accomplished at these two levels, the matter may be appealed to the Assistant Superintendent.

Then, if necessary, further appeal may be made to the Superintendent with an opportunity for further review by the Board of Education (see Appendix 1).

Nothing in this policy or its implementing procedures is intended to supersede timelines or procedures specified in other policies of the District or in other applicable legally-mandated timelines or processes.

Anonymous statements are discouraged. Statements of concern from identifiable individuals are encouraged. The appropriate office or employee will be made aware of the stated concern.

Adoption Date: September 14, 1987

Amended Dates: April 23, 2018 and October 28, 2019

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Procedures

School District staff are expected to respond to complaints and concerns in a respectful, timely, and otherwise appropriate manner. These procedures are intended to address public complaints and concerns.

A. Submitting a Complaint

To ensure that District staff will respond to the issue as a formal complaint under these procedures and to avoid miscommunication, the District strongly encourages all complaints under these procedures to be submitted in writing. Staff have discretion to notify a complainant that a verbal complaint is being treated and processed in the same manner as a formal, written complaint under these procedures. Complaints should be first made to the school employee most closely involved in the situation or issue. In particular:

1. Complaints about matters relating to individual employees that have not been resolved informally via direct communication with the employee, should be made to the employee's immediate supervisor. An individual employee shall, unless prohibited by law, be advised of the nature of the complaint and shall be given opportunity for explanation, comment, and presentation of the facts as he or she sees them and when appropriate to do so.
2. Complaints about a school-wide matter should be made to the building principal.
3. Complaints about a district-level matter such as transportation, finances, policies, etc., should be made to the administrator who is responsible for the function in question.
4. Complainants not sure of whom to contact should contact the Office of the Superintendent to obtain further direction.
5. If an individual Board member receives a complaint or other communication from a student, parent or guardian, District employee, or other person that appears to require further investigation on the part of the District and/or that appears to call for a response from the District, the Board member should (1) inform and encourage the individual to follow the District's Complaint Procedure (this policy 870, 870-Rule, and Appendix 1) and (2) inform the Superintendent of the concern. However, in highly unusual circumstances where such referral to the Superintendent may not be appropriate, the Board member should instead contact the Board President (who may involve District legal counsel) or alternatively request a special meeting of the Board.

The Board shall be notified of written and signed complaints, which are being investigated by the Superintendent, which are about the Superintendent, or which are addressed to the Board, unless prohibited by law.

Anonymous complaints are strongly discouraged. The Superintendent will determine what follow-up, if any, is made in response to an anonymous complaint. The further procedures described in this Rule will not be applied to anonymous complaints.

870-Rule (cont.)

There is no absolute deadline for the filing of a complaint. However, the District can usually respond most effectively when the complaint is filed shortly after the occurrence of the event(s) giving rise to the complaint. Timeliness may be considered in the response to any complaint or appeal.

B. Appeals and Requests for Reconsideration

Complaints not resolved following communication with the employee(s) most closely involved in the situation or issue may be appealed or brought forward for reconsideration using the following procedure:

1. If no resolution has been reached with the teacher or staff member, the complainant shall notify the building principal/administrative supervisor.
2. If resolution is still not reached after talking to the building principal/administrative supervisor, the complainant shall notify the Assistant Superintendent.
3. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the Assistant Superintendent's response on appeal/reconsideration, the complainant may request a final administrative review/reconsideration of the complaint from the Superintendent. The Superintendent will then provide the final administrative response to the complaint.
4. Complaints not resolved at the Superintendent level may be appealed to the Board. Appeals to the Board shall be made in writing to the Board President. The Superintendent shall in conjunction with other staff prepare a report with information about the complaint, the District's response(s) and recommendations to the Board. The Board shall base its decision on this report unless it desires to meet with the complainant, meet with any staff member, order further investigation, or otherwise supplement the record. The Board reserves the right to summarily affirm or reverse the final administrative response with or without further comment or explanation.

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AASD Complaint Procedure

Appleton Area School District staff are committed to working closely with parents and guardians to resolve issues and concerns in a way that is mutually agreeable.

What are the steps to follow when you have a concern, question, or problem that needs attention?

1 First, contact the **classroom teacher or staff member**. If there is a serious issue, you may wish to schedule a face-to-face meeting rather than phone.

2 If no resolution has been reached, or if your concern is school wide, please contact the school's **Principal/ Administrative Supervisor**.

3 If resolution is still not reached, please contact the **Assistant Superintendent** assigned to your school at (920) 852-5300 x-60113.

4 Unresolved issues may be appealed to the **Superintendent** at (920) 852-5300 x-60111 or email Superintendent@ascd.k12.wi.us.

5 The final step in the District appeal process is the Board of Education. Appeal requests should be submitted in writing to the **President of the Board of Education** at AASD Scullen Leadership Center, P.O. Box 2019, Appleton, Wisconsin 54912-2019, or email AASDBoard@ascd.k12.wi.us.