

Complaints Concerning Staff and Programs

Program; Policy and Procedures; Actions and Decision Complaints

The Bellevue School District promotes a culture that is welcoming and open, defined by mutual respect and shared responsibility, and treats parents, staff, students, and citizens with respect and dignity. The district is committed to resolving concerns and complaints about school and district programs, policies, procedures, actions, and decisions of employees in an effective, efficient, and timely manner by initiating the complaint with the person(s) who has (have) the lowest level of authority in resolving the matter. Teachers, staff, or administrators charged with responsibility for programs, policies and/or procedures, and/or supervision of employees expect that parents, staff, students or citizens (complainants) will bring their complaints to them for resolution first before making a formal complaint. For complainants whose first language is not English, the district will make every effort to provide an interpreter to assist the complainant in resolving their concerns and complaints.

At any time in the review process described below, the Bellevue School District may transfer the complaint for review under another process defined in other Bellevue School District policies including but not limited to Policy 3207 (Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying), Policy 3210 (Nondiscrimination), Policy 3241 (Classroom Management, Corrective Actions and Punishment), Policy 2151 (Interscholastic Athletics), Policy 5010 (Non-Discrimination and Affirmative Action), Policy 5011 (Sexual Harassment) and grievance procedures outlined in collective bargaining agreements which more appropriately address the issues involved.

A failure by the complainant to file a timely appeal of a response at any step of the process will end the complaint. A failure by the District to provide a timely response at any step shall entitle the complainant to file an appeal at the next step in the review process. If a District response is provided after expiration of a timeline, but before an appeal to the next step has been filed, the appeal must be filed within five school business days of the expired timeline.

Complaints

Complainants are entitled and encouraged to share their complaint(s) by scheduling a meeting or communicating, either orally or in writing, the issue(s) directly to the person responsible for the program, event, action, or decision.

When addressing informal complaints, the involved parties should:

- A. Begin the conversation with the acknowledgement that each is operating with the best of intentions.
- B. Work collaboratively to understand the other's point of view.
- C. Work to resolve the concern through conversation before initiating a formal complaint.

Formal Complaint - Step 1

When a complaint has not been resolved through informal attempts at resolution, the complainant may initiate a formal complaint which must be in writing within 30 calendar days of the attempt at informal resolution to the person responsible for the program, event, action,

or decision. Informal complaints not resolved at the school level by a principal or assistant principal will proceed directly to Step 2 of this process. The formal written complaint shall be directed to the person responsible for the program, policy and/or procedure, and/or supervision of personnel and shall include:

- A. Detailed statement of the complaint
- B. Steps taken to address the complaint
- C. Suggested resolution(s) to be considered

The person responsible for the program, policy and/or procedure, and/or supervision of personnel shall meet with the complainant for the purpose of understanding the complaint and what resolution(s) has already been considered. The person responsible for the program, policy and/or procedure, and/or supervision of personnel provide a written decision addressing the complaint within 10 calendar days upon receipt of the complaint.

Formal Complaint - Step 2

If the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, the complainant may appeal the resolution of the complaint to the following person in writing within 5 calendar days of the resolution:

- If the original complaint was sent to a principal or assistant principal, and is not resolved at the school level, the appeal should be directed to the appropriate Executive Director of Schools.
- If the original complaint was sent to any other employee, the appeal should be directed to that employee's supervisor.

The person receiving the appeal shall meet with the complainant for the purpose of understanding the complaint and what resolution(s) has already been considered. The information gathered will be considered and the complaint will be addressed in writing within 10 calendar days upon receipt of the unresolved complaint. Any appeal at Step 2, shall be final except for appeals to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, other agencies or the courts, as provided by law.

This procedure is not to be used for disciplinary matters covered by WAC 392-400.

Staff Complaints

If the formal complaint concerns a staff member, that person shall be notified of the complaint and provided with a copy of the written complaint as soon as is reasonably possible, but not later than the meeting between the complainant and supervisor. The staff member will be afforded all rights of due process as an employee, terms delineated in the collective bargaining agreement (if applicable) and as a citizen.

Date: 5.14, 10.15, 6.16