

**Policy**

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COMMUNITY COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES

Any resident, parent, or guardian in the Riverton School District has the right to present a request, suggestion, complaint or grievance concerning district personnel, the program, or the operations of the district. At the same time, the Riverton Board of Education has a duty to protect its staff from harassment. It is the intent of this policy to provide the means for judging such public complaint and grievance in a fair and impartial manner.

It is the desire of the Riverton Board of Education to promptly rectify any misunderstanding between the public and the school district by direct discussions of an informal type among the interested parties. More formal procedures shall be employed only when such informal discussions fail to resolve the differences.

All written or verbal complaints where the complainant identifies himself/herself shall be acknowledged promptly. No anonymous complaints shall be considered by the board.

The board of education welcomes inquiries about and constructive criticism of the district's programs, equipment, operations and personnel.

The Chief School Administrator shall develop procedures to investigate and solve problems promptly, and to provide accurate factual information in answer to inquiries. Such procedures shall conform to state law and applicable negotiated agreements.

Parents/guardians and pupils will be informed of the proper avenues to follow in the school.

When a board member is confronted with an issue, he/she will withhold comment, commitment and/or opinion and refer the complaint or inquiry to the Chief School Administrator.

Only in those cases where satisfactory adjustment cannot be made by the Chief School Administrator and the staff shall communications and complaints be referred to the board of education for resolution.

Any requests, suggestions, complaints or grievances reaching the administration or board shall be referred to the Chief School Administrator for consideration according to the following procedure.

A. Matters Regarding a Teaching Staff Member:

First Level:

If a matter is specifically directed toward a teaching staff member, the matter must be directed initially to the concerned staff member who shall discuss it promptly with the complainant and make every effort to provide a reasoned explanation or take appropriate action within his/her authority and district rules and regulations.

The Chief School Administrator may be contacted for consultation or guidance at anytime during this process.

Second Level:

If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved at the first level, it shall be discussed by the complainant with the Chief School Administrator. This discussion should include:

COMMUNITY COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES (continued)

1. The specific nature of the complaint and a brief statement of the facts that gave rise to the complaint.
2. The respect in which it is alleged that the complainant (or child of the complainant) has been effected adversely.
3. The action, which the complainant wishes taken, and the reasons why it is believed that such action should be taken.

Should the matter be resolved in conference with the Chief School Administrator, upon her/his discretion the board may or may not be advised of the resolution, depending upon the severity of the matter.

Should the matter still not be resolved, or if it is one beyond the Chief School Administrator's authority and requires board involvement, the complainant shall request in writing, a hearing by the board.

Upon receipt of the request, the board will schedule a hearing at its next regularly scheduled meeting, if practicable.

**B. Matters Regarding An Administrative Staff Member:**

In the case of a complaint directed toward an administrative staff member, the general procedure specified in Part A shall be followed. The complaint shall be discussed initially with the person toward whom it is directed. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved at this level, the matter shall be brought, as required, to higher levels terminating with the board.

**C. Matters Regarding A Non-Certificated Staff Member:**

In the case of a complaint directed toward a non-certificated staff member, the complaint is to be directed initially toward the person's superior. The matter shall then be brought, as required, to higher levels in the manner prescribed in Part A.

**D. Matters Regarding A Program In Operation:**

If the request, suggestion or complaint relates to a matter of district or school policy, procedure, program or operation, it should be directed to the Chief School Administrator in the manner prescribed in Part A.

Adopted: April 24, 2001  
NJSBA Review/Update: July 2009  
Readopted:

Key Words

Community Complaints and Inquiries, Complaints, Inquiries

**Legal References:** N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. Open Public Meetings Act  
N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1 General mandatory powers and duties  
N.J.S.A. 18A:54-20 Powers of board (county vocational schools)  
N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq. Examination and copies of public records ("Open Public Records Act")

COMMUNITY COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES (continued)

**Possible**

<b><u>Cross References:</u></b>	*1120	Board of education meetings
	*3570	District records and reports
	*4112.6	Personnel records
	*4116	Evaluation
	4148	Employee protection
	*4212.6	Personnel records
	4248	Employee protection
	*5145.6	Student grievance procedure
	*6144	Controversial issues
	*6161.1	Guidelines for evaluation and selection of instructional materials
	*6161.2	Complaints regarding instructional materials
	*6163.1	Media center/library
	*9010	Role of the member
	*9020	Public statements
	9123	Appointment of board secretary

\*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.

FIRST READING: Board of Education Meeting: 9/22/09

SECOND READING & ADOPTION: Board of Education Meeting: 10/27/09