



## **A PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS FOR DISTRICT & COMMUNITY**

The Board of Education welcomes comments and suggestions for improvement from the citizens whom it serves. Constructive criticism of the schools is welcome whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to allow the schools to do their tasks more effectively. However, the Board has confidence in its professional staff and desires to support their actions in order that they be free from unnecessary, spiteful or negative criticism and complaints. Therefore, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole, or to a Board member as an individual, it will promptly be referred to the school administration for study and possible solution.

Since individual Board members have no authority to resolve complaints, other than by formal Board action, Board members shall refer persons making complaints about the schools to the most immediate level at which the problems can be resolved and, as may be necessary, through lines of organization to the Superintendent of Schools. The Board expects that the administration will develop a procedure for receiving complaints courteously and that it will take steps to make a proper reply to the complainant. Follow-up shall be in the form of a written memorandum to the Board members when deemed appropriate by the Superintendent.

Anonymous complaints provide little avenue for investigation, response or redress of the complaint. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board that such complaints will be pursued only when required by federal or state statutes or regulations. An unsigned complaint or anonymous telephone call will not be the sole basis for action by the Board.

The Administration should make parents, students, staff, and members of the public aware of the proper channels of communication and appeal. Complaints for which specific resolution procedures are provided by other Board policy, state or federal statute or regulation, or applicable Board administrators shall be directed through those channels. The appropriate method for the public to address a situation is for that individual to first contact the School (the Teacher if the issue is within the classroom) and/or the School Administration if the issue is centered around a more general concern. After speaking/meeting at the School level, the individual may contact the Central Office in order to have their concern investigated at that level. The decision of applicable Board Administrators regarding a student must include notice of the next step of appeal. Any appeal from the decision of the Superintendent to the Board shall be in writing and signed.

Complaints should be resolved at the lowest possible level of authority. If the complaint cannot be resolved at the building level, either party is encouraged to bring the matter to the attention of the Superintendent of Schools.

If all other remedies have been exhausted and a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the complaint may be appealed to the Board. No appeal will be heard by the Board unless the accusations are presented to the Board through the Superintendent, or other appropriate administrative staff in the matter of a direct complaint against the Superintendent. The Board will not consider or act upon complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate administrative level or complaints for which specific resolution procedures have been established that do not include Board review. If the Board decides to hear the complaint, the Board shall make a decision which shall be sent to all interested parties. The Board's decision is final unless alternative relief is prescribed by statute.

Upon receipt of a written petition signed by one percent of the voters or fifty voters, whichever is greater, and which have been verified by the Torrington Town Clerk, the Board shall hold a public hearing within three weeks of receipt of the petition, at a time and place designated by the Board, on any any question specified in the petition.

(cf. 1220 - Citizens' Advisory Committees)

(cf. 5145.2 - Freedom of Speech/Expression)

(cf. 6144 - Controversial Issues)

(cf. 6161 - Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection)

Legal Reference: *Keyishian v. Board of Regents* 385 U.S. 589, 603 (1967)

*President's Council, District 25 v. Community School Board No. 25* 457 F.2d 289 (1972), cert. denied 409 U.S. 998 (1976)

*Minarcini v. Strongsville City School District*, 541 F. 2d 577 (6th Cir. 1976).

*Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982).

Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of Education, 9/9/81).

Connecticut General Statutes

10-238 Petition for hearing by board of education.

Policy revised: January 14, 2019

Policy #1001- A Process for Addressing Concerns & Complaints for District & Community:  
Adopted and Approved on September 26, 2023.