

# Policy

## Egg Harbor Township Board of Education

**5710**

### **PUPIL GRIEVANCE**

Any person or group having a legitimate interest in the schools of this district shall have 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 Board has a duty to protect its staff from unnecessary harassment. It is the intent of this policy to provide the means for judging each public complaint and grievance in a fair and impartial manner and to seek a remedy where appropriate.

It is the desire of the Board to rectify any misunderstandings between the public and the school district by direct discussions of an informal type among the interest parties. It is only when such informal meetings fail to resolve the differences, shall more formal procedures be employed.

Any requests, suggestions, complaints or grievances reaching the Board, Board members, and the administration shall be referred to the Superintendent or School Business Administrator/Board Secretary for consideration according to district procedures.

In accordance with the policy of the Board, the following procedure shall be utilized in handling public complaints and grievances.

#### A. Matters Regarding a Teaching Staff Member

##### 1. First level

If it is a matter specifically directed toward a teaching staff member, the matter must be addressed, 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. As appropriate, the staff member shall report the matter, and whatever action may have been taken, to the building principal.

##### 2. Second level

If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved at the first level, it shall be discussed by the complainant with the building principal.

##### 3. Third level

If a satisfactory solution is not achieved by discussion with the building principal, a

written request for a conference shall be submitted to the Superintendent with a copy to the Board. This request should include:

- a. The specific nature of the complaint and a brief statement of the facts giving rise to it;
- b. The respect in which it is alleged that the complainant (or child of the complainant) has been affected adversely;
- c. The action which the complainant wishes taken and the reasons why it is felt that such action be taken.

Should the matter be resolved in conference with the Superintendent, the Board shall be advised of the resolution.

#### 4. Fourth level

Should the matter still not be resolved, or if it is one beyond the Superintendent's authority and requires a Board decision or action, the complainant shall request, in writing, a hearing by the Board.

The Board, after reviewing all material relating to the case, shall grant a hearing before the Board or before a committee of the Board. The complainant shall be advised in writing, of the Board's decision no more than ten days following the hearing.

#### 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; and 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 Noninstructional Staff Member

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

#### D. Matters Regarding a Program or Operation

If the request, suggestion, complaint, or grievance relates to a matter of district or school policy, procedure, program, or operation, it should be addressed, initially, to the building principal or the head of the nonprofessional department who is most directly concerned; and then brought, in turn, to higher levels of authority in the manner prescribed in Part A.

#### E. Matters Regarding Instructional Materials

If the request, suggestion, complaint or grievance relates to instructional materials such as textbooks, library books, reference works and other instructional aids used in the district, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. The criticism is to be addressed to the Superintendent in writing, and shall include: author, title, publisher, the complainant's familiarity with the material objected to, sections objected to by page and item, reasons for objection, in what school and class the material was used and how the material was used.

2. Upon receipt of the information, the Superintendent shall, after advising the Board of the complaint, appoint a review committee consisting of:

- a. The head of the department in which the material is being used;
- b. A teacher in the subject area;
- c. A library staff member;
- d. A Board member.

The Superintendent shall be a member ex officio of the committee.

3. The committee, in evaluating the questioned material, shall be guided by the following criteria:

- a. The appropriateness of the material for the age and maturity level of the students with whom it is being used;
- b. The accuracy of the material;
- c. The objectivity of the material;
- d. The use being made of the material.

4. The material in question may be withdrawn from use pending the committee's decision.

5. The committee's decision shall be reported to the Superintendent in writing within ten days following the formation of the committee. The Superintendent will advise the complainant in writing of the committee's decision, and advise the Board of the action taken or recommended.

6. The complainant may appeal this decision to the Board through a written request to the Superintendent, who shall forward the request and all written material relating to the matter to the Board.

7. The Board shall review the case and advise the complainant in writing of its decision within ten days.

Adopted: 10/22/2002