

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

No. 906

Section: COMMUNITY

Title: Addressing
Student and Constituent
Concerns

Adopted: April 27, 1981

Revised: June 27, 2019

906 ADDRESSING STUDENT AND CONSTITUENT CONCERNS

Purpose

The Board of Education (the “Board”) recognizes there may be times when a family or community member will need to address a concern or may disagree with a decision or action taken by The School District of Philadelphia (the “District”) personnel. To maintain strong relationships with these partners it is important that they have an opportunity to make their concerns known to the District and that their concerns be addressed in a fair, accessible, and timely manner.

The purpose of this policy and its associated procedures are to: (1) provide a process to address concerns, problems, issues, and questions raised by students and constituents; (2) clarify the procedures for the communication and resolution of concerns; and (3) facilitate systematic improvements by the periodic review of such matters.

Definitions

Central-Level Concern – concerns brought to the central office for resolution.

Concern – the matter for which the constituent is seeking resolution at the school-level or District-wide, that is not related to child abuse or hazing.

Constituent – students, guardians/parents of currently enrolled students, and community members will be referred to as constituents for the purpose of this policy.

Family Engagement Liaison (Liaison) – District staff trained and experienced in supporting schools, families and community members through their knowledge of District programs, policies and procedures. Liaisons serve as a neutral party, collaborating with central-office personnel to ensure a fair process that equitably and reasonably addresses concerns received from constituents.

Resolution – the response provided by the school or the central office to address a constituent’s concern, which aim for joint agreement. It is acknowledged, however, that, from time to time, concerns may not be resolved to the complete satisfaction of the constituent.

School-Level Concern – concerns brought to the school’s attention and resolved by the person closest to the concern or by the school principal.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Board directs the Superintendent or their designee to develop procedures that allow for constituents to present concerns and be assured of an orderly review and response. All parties to the concern process will be treated, and will treat others with dignity and respect.

The process of addressing concerns relies on the cooperation of constituents, school staff and central offices. All parties involved have a responsibility to take part in the concern resolution process. The objective of the Board’s policy is to address concerns in a manner that is consistent with local, state, and federal laws as well as District administrative procedures. It is understood that all parties must attempt to resolve the concern with the staff member most closely involved with the situation. It is acknowledged that, from time to time, concerns will not be resolved to the complete satisfaction of the constituent.

Mandatory Regulatory Guidelines:

The District believes that concerns and grievances are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible and that staff should be given every opportunity to resolve concerns as quickly and efficiently as possible. There shall be no retaliation for engaging in the constituent concern process.

The District will implement a process for resolving concerns, which will include:

1. Identify steps the constituent will take to formally submit their concern to the District. [1]
2. Detail the roles of schools, District offices and administrators in resolving concerns. [3]
3. Track and monitor the progress for responding to individual concerns and requests.
4. Archive, categorize and analyze requests and responses.

5. Produce reports for analysis and review by the Superintendent on a quarterly basis.

The District places trust in its employees and shall act to protect them from unreasonable or abusive conduct.

Concerns should first be brought to school staff. Constituents may request further consideration through the central-level concern process if they are not satisfied with the resolution. Concerns will be brought as follows:

- A. To a teacher or school-based staff member (school-level);
- B. Then to a principal or school-based supervisor (school-level); and
- C. Then to a Family and Community Engagement representative (central-level).

Constituents that have not received a satisfactory resolution after completing the process may then submit a concern formally to the central office in one of five ways:

1. Contact the school's assigned family engagement liaison located online at www.philasd.org/schoolprofiles
2. Call the central office main number – (215) 400 - 4000
3. Walk-in to the Parent and Family Resource Center – 440 N. Broad Street between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.
4. Email ask@philasd.org
5. Complete the District's Online Concern form located at www.philasd.org/face/concerns

Constituents who need help with a concern in a language other than English can receive support from the FACE office by calling (215) 400 – 4180, option 4 for assistance in navigating any of the steps outlined in this process.

In the event that the District uses an alternative dispute resolution process for a specific constituent concerns, FACE will help the constituent identify the appropriate process and assist as appropriate.

Legal References:

1. Pa. Public School Code, 24 P.S. § 510.2(v)
2. Pa. Public School Code, 24 P.S. § 2070.9
3. 22 PA Code 235.1 et seq
4. Pol. 218 – Student Conduct and Discipline
5. Pol. 219 – Student Complaint Process
6. Pol. 233 – Suspension and Expulsion
7. Pol. 249 – Bullying/Cyberbullying

8. Pol. 317.1 – Educator Misconduct
9. Pol. 806 – Child Abuse
10. Pol. 824 – Maintaining Professional Adult/Student Boundaries
11. Pol. 918 – District-Wide Parent and Family Engagement Policy
12. Pol. 248 – Harassment and Discrimination of Students
13. Pol. 317 – Conduct/Disciplinary Procedures
14. Pol. 806 – Child Abuse

Related Information:

1. [Procedures for Parent Appeal](#)
2. [School Police Officers \(SPO\) Compliant Process](#)