

## **Cottonwood Joint School District No. 242**

### **COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

**4110**

#### Public Complaints and Suggestions

The Board is committed to providing an effective means of parents and the community to voice concerns and offer suggestions to improve the operation of the Cottonwood School District #242. The Board also strives to resolve matters raised by members of the school community whenever possible. To this end, the Board has established the following process to address concerns, complaints, and suggestions that do not fall within the scope of:

1. Any District complaint policy;
2. Policy 2530 Learning Materials Review; or
3. Any other complaint or appeal process specifically provided in policy.

Each complaint or suggestion shall be considered on its merits.

#### Suggestions

The Board believes that a continuing two-way dialogue between the schools and the public is necessary. It shall be the policy of the Board to give consideration to suggestions posed to the Board by residents of the District, students of the District and their parents/guardians, and District employees and volunteers. Those wishing to make suggestions should submit them in writing to the appropriate school administrator, to the Superintendent, or to the Board clerk to forward to the Trustees as appropriate.

#### Complaints

Complaints will be processed according to the step-by-step process outlined below. However, if a person designated to hear a complaint is the subject of the complaint, the process will begin at the next highest step and the process shall be modified as needed to meet the objectives of this policy. If a complaint is directly based on official Board action, the complaint shall be directed to the Clerk of the Board. The complaint may be heard by the Board at the sole discretion of the Board.

#### Level 1: Address Complaint with Employee Involved or at the Level of the Complaint

The complaint should be received and addressed with the employee involved or at the level closest to which the complaint originated. For example, a complaint regarding a classroom issue should be heard first by the teacher. A complaint regarding the school in general should be addressed first by the building principal.

Any employee receiving a complaint should verify whether the complaint has been appropriately referred to them and, if not, assist the complainant by identifying the appropriate employee to receive the complaint.

Once appropriately referred, the employee should work with the complainant to resolve the issue. If the complainant is unable to resolve the matter with the employee, the employee should direct them to this policy.

#### Level 2: Principal

If the complaint is not resolved at Level 1, the complainant may provide a written complaint to the building principal stating:

1. The nature of the problem and the date the complainant attempted to address the matter as described in Level 1; and
2. The remedy requested.

It must be signed and dated by the complainant. The written complaint must be filed with the principal within 60 days of the event or incident, or from the date the complainant could reasonably become aware of such occurrence.

The principal may investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint within 30 school business days. If either party is not satisfied with the principal's decision, the complaint may be advanced to Level 3 by requesting in writing that the Superintendent review the principal's decision. This request must be submitted to the Superintendent within 15 days of the principal's decision.

#### Level 3: Superintendent

If the principal with whom the complaint was filed in Level 2 is also the Superintendent, the complainant may skip Level 3 submit and appeal to the Board within 15 days as described in the last paragraph of Level 3.

Upon receipt of the request for review, the Superintendent may schedule a meeting between the complainant, and other parties, and the principal. They may be afforded the opportunity to either dispute or concur with the principal's report. The Superintendent shall decide the matter within ten days of the meeting and shall notify the parties in writing of the decision.

If either party is not satisfied with the decision of the Superintendent, the Board is the next avenue for appeal. A written appeal must be submitted to the Board within 15 days of receiving the Superintendent's decision. The Board is the policy-making body of the school, however, and appeals to that level must be based solely on whether or not policy has been followed. Any individual appealing a decision of the Superintendent to the Board bears the burden of proving a failure to follow Board policy.

#### Level 4: The Board

When the Board receives a written appeal of the decision of the Superintendent in which the complainant alleges a failure to follow Board policy, the matter may be placed on the agenda of the Board for consideration at the earliest time convenient to the Board.

The Board has the sole discretion in determining how to handle the complaint review, including but not limited to the option of solely reviewing the written record and making a determination or seeking to speak with both sides of a complaint during a properly noticed meeting of the Board.

A decision by the Board shall be made and reported in writing to all parties within 30 days of the Board's review, whether by written record or via meeting with the parties. The decision of the Board will be final.

Cross References:     2530   Learning Materials Review  
                          3060   Education of Homeless Children  
                          3085   Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Policy  
                          3085P  Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedure, Requirements  
  And Definitions  
                          4120   Uniform Complaint Policy  
                          5250   Certificated Staff Complaints  
                          5800   Classified Employment, Assignment and Complaint  
                          5800P  Classified Employee Complaint Procedure

Policy History:

Adopted on: November 21, 2016

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