

4.3.9 – Process for Resolving Parental Concerns and/or Other Complaints

Complaints Related to Personnel, Curriculum, Student Discipline, or Other Management or Operational Issues

It is the intent of the Board of Directors of the Van Buren School District to be responsive to the community it serves and to continuously improve the quality of the educational program offered in its schools. The Board and the District welcome constructive criticism when it is offered with the intent of improving the quality of the system's educational program or the delivery of District services.

The Board formulates, sets goals, and adopts policies to achieve the District's vision and elects a Superintendent and other staff to implement policy. All administrative functions of the District are delegated to the Superintendent who is responsible for the effective administration and supervision of the District. The Superintendent delegates many of these responsibilities to staff employed by the district.

Resolution of Parental/Patron Concerns

Individuals with complaints concerning personnel, curriculum, and student discipline (including specific discipline policies), or other day-to-day operational or management issues should address those complaints according to the following sequence:

- Level One: Teacher or other staff member against whom the complaint is directed
- Level Two: Principal (or appropriate supervisor)
- Level Three: Superintendent (or designee)

School staff shall work with concerned parents and patrons to define the problem, develop possible solutions, and implement the solution to the extent possible.

Except where statutorily allowed or required, student discipline and personnel matters may not be discussed in Board meetings. Individuals with complaints regarding such matters are required to follow the sequence outlined above.

Unless authorized by the Board as a whole for a specific purpose, no individual Board member has any authority when acting alone. District constituents are reminded that the Board serves as a finder of fact, not unlike a jury, in matters such as student expulsions and personnel discipline. For this reason, the Board may not be involved or informed prior to a Board hearing on particular disciplinary matters.

Complaints Related to Use of Federal Funds

Complaints related to district use or administration of federal funds generated through specific programs identified by the Arkansas Department of Education and authorized in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act may be taken directly from a patron or by referral from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). If taken directly from a patron, the complaint may be submitted by either a signed statement or by a certified, recorded deposition or statement in which the complainant is identified.

Complaints related to use of federal funds shall be addressed in the following manner:

1. The complaint shall be referred to the Director of Federal Programs, who shall assemble a team of not less than two people to investigate the complaint.
2. Throughout the investigation, sufficient notes and records will be taken and maintained to substantiate the findings of the investigation.
3. The team will interview the complainant and others as necessary to enable the team to make a determination of the validity of the complaint. The team may consult with individuals with knowledge or expertise in the matter which is the subject of the complaint to include legal counsel.
4. The investigation of complaints referred by the ADE shall be completed within 30 work days of receipt of the complaint unless a longer time period has been approved by the ADE.
5. The investigation of complaints made directly to the district shall be completed within 40 work days unless there are extenuating circumstances; in such case, a preliminary report shall be made within 40 work days of receipt of the complaint, which shall include an explanation of the unusual circumstances requiring additional time to complete the investigation.
6. The report of the conclusions of the investigation shall be given to the complainant. It shall contain a summary of the allegations of the complaint, a summary of the investigative actions taken by the team, a summary of the findings concerning each alleged violation or implied violation, a statement of corrective actions needed to resolve the issues involved in each allegation and finding of complaint.

Legal Reference:

Approved by Board of Education 4/14/09