

File KE – PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

~~When a staff member receives a complaint, the School Committee expects the staff member to do so courteously and to make an appropriate reply.~~

The School Committee believes that complaints and concerns are best addressed and resolved as close to their origin as appropriate to the circumstances. Thus, the Committee encourages individuals to present and discuss any complaints they may have with the staff member against whom the complaint is directed whenever appropriate. **When a staff member receives a complaint, the School Committee expects the staff member to do so courteously and to make an appropriate reply.** If the individual is not comfortable addressing the matter with the staff member, or if the matter remains unresolved after doing so, the individual may address the complaint to the Building Principal or **their** designee or to the Superintendent of Schools or **their** designee. **Should dissatisfaction remain after discussion with staff, principal and/or Superintendent, the complainant may contact the School Committee Chair, who may arrange for the School Committee to address the matter if the Chair deems appropriate. For complaints regarding the conduct or performance of the Superintendent, the complaint should be addressed to the School Committee.**

Some complaints fall into a different category.

The School Committee relies on the professional staff to design and implement instructional programs, courses of study and academic schedules that will forward the educational goals of the school system, align with state standards, and respond to the changing needs of students. If a parent or legal guardian of an Arlington Public Schools student has a complaint about an adopted curriculum, instructional resource, or academic matter, they shall first discuss the matter with their teacher. If they then wish to continue the complaint, they shall follow this process:

~~Whenever a complaint is made directly to the School Committee as a whole or to a School Committee member as an individual, it will be referred to the school administration for study and possible solution, provided that the School Committee may directly address complaints regarding the conduct or performance of the Superintendent where appropriate.~~

1. Written complaint – Building Level

The parent or legal guardian shall give a written statement to the Principal outlining their concerns and providing additional background information as required. The Principal shall review the complaint, and if desired by either party, schedule a meeting to discuss the complaint. The Principal shall respond in writing within 2 weeks, also sending a copy of the complaint and the response to the Superintendent or their designee.

2. Written complaint – District Level

If the parent or guardian is not satisfied with the Principal's response, they may provide a written statement to the Superintendent outlining their concerns, background information, and why the principal's response was not satisfactory. In most cases, the statement shall be referred to the Deputy Superintendent, who shall review the complaint, confer with the

Superintendent as appropriate, and respond in writing within two weeks. Copies of the complaint and response shall be sent to the Chair of the School Committee, who shall forward a copy to the full School Committee.

3. Additional responses

If the parent or guardian is unsatisfied with the Deputy Superintendent's response, they can provide a written statement to the Superintendent outlining their concerns, background information, and why the Deputy Superintendent's response was not satisfactory. The Superintendent has the authority to determine whether, after following these steps, the complaint provides sufficient grounds to warrant the calling of an Academic Matters Review Committee, or other formal response. (The composition, charge, deliverable(s) and timelines pertaining to the Academic Matters Review Committee are outlined in File KE-R.)

When complete, the Academic Matters Review Committee's report and recommendations, along with the Superintendent's decision, shall be transmitted to the complainant within 5 business days. Copies shall be provided to the School Committee Chair, who shall forward copies to the full Committee.

~~Should dissatisfaction remain after the above steps have been taken, the complainant may contact the School Committee Chair, who shall arrange for the School Committee to address the matter if the Chair deems appropriate.~~

If the parent or guardian is not satisfied with the Superintendent's response, they may appeal this decision to the School Committee Chair, who shall determine how the matter will be handled.

Complaints regarding academic matters from community members who are not parents or guardians of current students may be made in writing to the Superintendent and/or the School Committee, or presented at public comment. These complaints shall be acknowledged, and if appropriate, shall be issued a response.

Whenever a complaint is made directly to the School Committee as a whole or to a School Committee member as an individual, it shall be referred to the school administration for study and possible solution, provided that the School Committee may directly address complaints regarding the conduct or performance of the Superintendent where appropriate.

Reference:

File: KE-R: ACADEMIC MATTERS REVIEW COMMITTEE