
SCHOOL DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Background

The Division supports the right of parents and staff to make inquiries into the conduct of operations at schools. In the interests of open communication, the Superintendent believes inquiries must first be directed to the individuals most directly involved in the operations in question. If the individual is not satisfied with the response at that level, they are to be encouraged to follow the channels of communication as appropriate.

School Dispute Resolution Procedures for Parents/Guardians/Independent Students

1. The Superintendent or designate will ensure, in cooperation with principals, that parents/guardians are provided with the opportunity to express their concerns.
2. In cases where parents/guardians have a concern, the communication process outlined below will be followed.
 - 2.1 To support a resolution, parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss their concerns directly with their child's teacher.
 - 2.2 After consulting with the teacher, if resolution is not achieved, parents/guardians may escalate their concerns to the Principal.
 - 2.3 After consulting with the Principal, if resolution is not achieved, parents/guardians may escalate their concern and steps taken for resolution (see steps 2.1 and 2.2) to the Assistant Superintendent.
 - 2.4 If the parent/guardian feels their concern has not been adequately addressed by the Assistant Superintendent, the parent/guardian may escalate their concern to the Superintendent.
 - 2.5 If resolution of the issue is not achieved at the Superintendent level, the individual shall be advised of their right to an appeal to the Board if:
 - 2.5.1 The matter significantly affects the education of a student; and,
 - 2.5.2 The steps outlined in procedural steps 2.1 through 2.4 have been adhered to.
3. Complaints concerning operations can be resolved with the parties involved. On occasion, the Superintendent/designate or a trustee may receive a request to intervene in school affairs. In this event the complaint will be resolved according to the following:
 - 3.1 Upon receiving an inquiry, the Superintendent or designate will ascertain if all local avenues for resolution have been considered in step 2. If not, the individual will be advised to do so as the first means of achieving resolution.

- 3.2 The trustee, as per Board Policy 3, Role of the Trustee, upon receiving an inquiry will refer the parent back to the school and inform the Superintendent of the complaint. The complaint will then be dealt with as outlined above.
4. If all local avenues have been exhausted, the Superintendent or designate will work with the individual and school-based administrators to resolve the issue.

Dispute Resolution Procedures for Staff

Informal/Verbal Concerns

1. It is recommended that the staff member address their concern directly with the person or persons involved. However, if the staff member would prefer to discuss this issue with their supervisor, they may do so following the steps outlined in 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 below.
2. When addressing the concern with the person or persons involved, alternatives to be considered include the following:
 - 2.1 Clarify the source of the conflict to determine steps to resolution.
 - 2.2 Listen actively to consider all perspectives of a situation.
 - 2.3 Model neutral language to maintain a calm and open dialogue.
 - 2.4 Determine mutually agreed upon strategies to meet a common goal.

Internal Formal Complaints

3. Before making a formal complaint to the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, it is recommended that the staff member address their concern in person or in writing to the person or persons involved. If the individual feels their concern has not been adequately addressed by the person against whom the complaint has been lodged, or would prefer to discuss the issue with their supervisor, a formal complaint can be filed as outlined below.
 - 3.1 Teacher & School Support Staff > School Administration > Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources > Superintendent
 - 3.2 Custodians & Central Office Support Staff > Direct Supervisor > Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources > Superintendent
 - 3.3 If your conflict is with your supervisor, proceed to the next person in the chain of communication listed above (sections 3.1 and 3.2).
4. Those who have experienced sexual harassment/abuse are encouraged to refer to Administrative Procedure 160: Safe, Caring, Welcoming, and Respectful Learning Environments for Students, Employees, and Volunteers.

Nothing in this administrative procedure precludes an individual's freedom to submit a complaint regarding the conduct of a teacher or teacher leader to the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission.

Reference:

Section 31, 32, 33, 34, 41, 42, 52, 53, 55, 67, 68, 196, 197, 204, 222, 225, 226 Education Act
Administrative Procedure 160: Safe, Caring, and Welcoming & Respectful Learning Environments
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Teaching Profession Act
Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and Teacher Leaders