

2:260 Uniform Grievance Procedure

Students, parents/guardians, employees, or community members should notify any Complaint Manager if they believe that the Governing Board, its employees, or its agents have violated their rights guaranteed by the State or federal Constitution, State or federal statute, or Board policy, or has a complaint regarding any one of the following:

1. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq.
2. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §791 et seq.
3. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000d et seq.
4. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq.
5. Sexual harassment prohibited by the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 430/70-5(a); Illinois Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/; and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq. (Title IX sexual harassment complaints are addressed under policy 2:265, *Title IX Grievance Procedure*)
6. Breastfeeding accommodations for students, 105 ILCS 5/10-20.60
7. Bullying, 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7
8. The misuse of funds received for services to improve educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged or deprived children
9. Curriculum, instructional materials, and/or programs
10. Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act, 820 ILCS 180/
11. Illinois Equal Pay Act of 2003, 820 ILCS 112/
12. Provision of services to homeless students
13. Illinois Whistleblower Act, 740 ILCS 174/
14. Misuse of genetic information prohibited by the Illinois Genetic Information Privacy Act, 410 ILCS 513/; and Titles I and II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, 42 U.S.C. §2000ff et seq.
15. Employee Credit Privacy Act, 820 ILCS 70/

The Complaint Manager will first attempt to resolve complaints without resorting to this grievance procedure. If a formal complaint is filed under this policy, the Complaint Manager will address the complaint promptly and equitably. A student and/or parent/guardian filing a complaint under this policy may forego any informal suggestions and/or attempts to resolve it and may proceed directly to this grievance procedure. The Complaint Manager will not require a student or parent/guardian complaining of any form of harassment to attempt to resolve allegations directly with the accused (or the accused's parent(s)/guardian(s)); this includes mediation.

Right to Pursue Other Remedies Not Impaired

The right of a person to prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint filed under this policy shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies, e.g., criminal complaints, civil actions, etc. Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies and use of this grievance procedure does not extend any filing deadline related to the pursuit of other remedies. If a person is pursuing another remedy subject to a complaint under this policy, the Joint Agreement will continue with a simultaneous investigation under this policy.

Deadlines

All deadlines under this policy may be extended by the Complaint Manager as he or she deems appropriate. As used in this policy, *school business days* means days on which the Joint Agreement's main office is open.

Filing a Complaint

A person (hereinafter Complainant) who wishes to avail him or herself of this grievance procedure may do so by filing a complaint with any Complaint Manager. The Complainant shall not be required to file a complaint with a particular Complaint Manager and may request a Complaint Manager of the same sex. The Complaint Manager may request the Complainant to provide a written statement regarding the nature of the complaint or require a meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student. The Complaint Manager shall assist the Complainant as needed.

For any complaint alleging bullying and/or cyberbullying of students, the Complaint Manager or designee shall process and review the complaint under Board policy 7:180, *Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment*, in addition to any response required by this policy.

For any complaint alleging sex discrimination that, if true, would implicate Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §1681 *et seq.*), the Title IX Coordinator or designee shall process and review the complaint under Board policy 2:265, *Title IX Grievance Procedure*.

For any complaint alleging harassment on the basis of race, color, or national origin, the Nondiscrimination Coordinator or a Complaint Manager or designee shall process and review the complaint under Board policy 2:270, *Discrimination and Harassment on the Basis of Race, Color, and National Origin Prohibited*, in addition to any response required by this policy.

For any complaint alleging sexual harassment or other violation of Board policy 5:20, *Workplace Harassment Prohibited*, the Nondiscrimination Coordinator or a Complaint Manager or designee shall process and review the complaint according to that policy, in addition to any response required by this policy, and shall consider whether an investigation under Board policy 5:120, *Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct; and Conflict of Interest*, should be initiated.

Investigation Process

The Complaint Manager will investigate the complaint or appoint a qualified person to undertake the investigation on his or her behalf. The Complaint Manager shall ensure both parties have an equal opportunity to present evidence during an investigation. The complaint and identity of the Complainant will not be disclosed except: (1) as required by law, this policy, or any collective bargaining agreement, (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or (3) as authorized by the Complainant.

The identity of any student witnesses will not be disclosed except: (1) as required by law, this policy, or any collective bargaining agreement, (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or (3) as authorized by the parent/guardian of the student witness, or by the student if the student is 18 years or age or older.

The Complaint Manager will inform, at regular intervals, the person(s) filing a complaint under this policy about the status of the investigation. Within 30 school business days after the date the complaint was filed, the Complaint Manager shall file a written report of his or her findings with the Special Education Director. The Complaint Manager may request an extension of time from the Special Education Director.

The Special Education Director will keep the Executive Committee informed of all complaints. If the complaint involves the Special Education Director or Governing Board member(s), the chairperson of the Executive Committee will keep the Governing Board informed of the complaint and its status.

Decision and Appeal

Within five school business days after receiving the Complaint Manager's report, the Special Education Director shall provide his or her written decision to the Complainant and the accused as

well as to the Complaint Manager. All decisions shall be based upon the *preponderance of evidence* standard.

Within 10 school business days after receiving the Special Education Director's decision, the Complainant or the accused may appeal the decision to the Executive Committee by making a written request to the Complaint Manager. The Complaint Manager shall promptly forward all materials relative to the complaint and appeal to the Executive Committee.

Within 30 school business days after an appeal of the Special Education Director's decision, the Executive Committee shall affirm, reverse, or amend the Special Education Director's decision or direct the Special Education Director to gather additional information. Within five school business days after the Executive Committee's decision, the Special Education Director shall inform the Complainant and the accused of the Executive Committee's action.

For complaints containing allegations involving the Special Education Director or Governing Board member(s), within 30 school business days after receiving the Complaint Manager's or outside investigator's report, the Governing Board shall provide its written decision to the Complainant and the accused, as well as to the Complaint Manager.

This policy shall not be construed to create an independent right to a hearing before the Special Education Director, Executive Committee or Governing Board. The failure to strictly follow the timelines in this grievance procedure shall not prejudice any party.

Appointing a Nondiscrimination Coordinator and Complaint Managers

Annually, by July 1st, a Nondiscrimination Coordinator and a male and a female Complaint Manager shall be appointed by the Executive Committee for the Joint Agreement. The Nondiscrimination Coordinator may serve as one of the Complaint Managers. The Nondiscrimination Coordinator also serves as the Joint Agreement's Title IX Coordinator.

The Special Education Director shall insert into this policy and keep current the names, office addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of the Nondiscrimination Coordinator and the Complaint Managers. The Special Education Director or designee shall ensure that students, parents/guardians, employees, and members of the community are informed of the contact information for the Joint Agreement's Nondiscrimination Coordinator and Complaint Managers on an annual basis.

Nondiscrimination Coordinator:

Mid-State Special Education

Name: Bobbi Fisher, Director

Address: 202 Prairie St., PO Box 46, Morrisonville, IL 62546

Email: bobbi.fisher@midstatespec.org

Telephone: 217-526-8121

Complaint Managers:

Name: Bobbi Fisher, Director

Name: Executive Committee Member: David Powell, Superintendent

Address: 202 Prairie St., PO Box 46,

Address: 1311 Vandalia Rd., Hillsboro, IL 62049

Morrisonville, IL 62546

Email: bobbi.fisher@midstatespec.org

Email: dpowell@hillsboroschools.net

Telephone: 217-526-8121

Telephone: 217-532-2942

CROSS REF.: 2:105 (Ethics and Gift Ban), 2:265 (Title IX Grievance Procedure), 5:10 (Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment), 5:20 (Workplace Harassment Prohibited), 5:30 (Hiring Process and Criteria), 5:90 (Abused and Neglected Child Reporting), 7:10 (Equal Educational Opportunities), 7:15 (Student and Family Privacy Rights), 7:20 (Harassment of Students Prohibited), 7:180 (Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment), 8:95 (Parental Involvement), 8:110 (Public Suggestions and Concerns)

Adopted: October 15, 2024

Midstate Special Education Coop