

UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

BUCKEYE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

The Governing Board recognizes that the District has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs. The Board encourages the early, informal resolution of complaints whenever possible and appropriate. To resolve complaints which cannot be resolved through such informal process, the Board has adopted a uniform system of complaint process.

The District's Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) shall be used to investigate and resolve any complaint alleging:

- District violation of applicable state or federal law or regulations governing consolidated categorical aid programs, child nutrition programs, and special education programs
- unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) in District programs and activities against any person based on his/her actual or perceived characteristics of race or ethnicity, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, religion, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or genetic information, or any other characteristic identified in Education Code 200 or 220, Government Code 11135, or Penal Code 422.55, or based on his/her association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics
- District violation of the prohibition against requiring students to pay fees, deposits, or other charges for participation in educational activities
- non-compliance with legal requirements related to the implementation of the local control and accountability plan (LCAP) (Education Code 52075)
- retaliation against a complainant or other participant in the complaint process or anyone who has acted to uncover or report a violation subject to this policy

The District shall protect all complainants from retaliation. In investigating complaints, the confidentiality of the parties involved shall be protected as required by Law. As appropriate for any complaint alleging retaliation or unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), the Superintendent or designee shall keep confidential the identity of the complainant and/or the subject of the complaint, if he/she is different from the complainant, as long as the integrity of the complaint process is maintained.

When an allegation that is not subject to the UCP is included in a UCP complaint, the district shall refer the non-UCP allegation to the appropriate staff or agency and shall resolve the UCP-related allegation(s) through the District's UCP.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide training to district staff to ensure awareness and knowledge of current law and related requirements, including the steps and timelines specified in the District's board policy and administrative regulation.

COMPLIANCE OFFICERS

The Board of Trustees designates the following compliance officers to receive and investigate complaints and ensure district compliance with law:

- Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services
- 5049 Robert J. Mathews Parkway, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762
- 530-677-2261 or 916-985-2183

NOTIFICATIONS

The District's UCP policy and administrative regulation shall be posted in all district schools and offices, including staff lounges. The Superintendent or designed shall annually provide written notification of the District's UCP, including information regarding unlawful student fees and local control and accountability plan (LCAP) requirements, to students, employees, parents/guardians, the district advisory committee, school advisory committees, and other interested parties.

District Responsibilities

All UCP-related complaints shall be investigated and resolved within 60 calendar days of the District's receipt of the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to an extension of the timeline. (5 CCR 4631)

The compliance officer shall maintain a record of each complaint and subsequent related actions, including steps taken during the investigation and all information required for compliance with 5 CCR 4631 and 4633.

All parties involved in the allegations shall be notified when a complaint is filed and when a decision or ruling is made. However, the compliance officer shall keep all complaints or allegations of retaliation or unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) confidential except when disclosure is necessary to carry out the investigation, take subsequent corrective action, conduct ongoing monitoring, or maintain the integrity of the process. (5 CCR 4630, 4964)

Filing of Complaint

All complaints shall be filed in accordance with the following:

- A written complaint alleging district violation of applicable state or federal law or regulations governing consolidated categorical aid programs, child nutrition programs, and special education programs may be filed by any individual, public agency, or organization. (5 CCR 4630)
- Any complaint alleging noncompliance with the law regarding the prohibition against requiring students to pay student fees, deposits, and charges or any requirement related to the LCAP may be filed anonymously if the complaint provides evidence, or information leading to evidence, to support an allegation of noncompliance. A complaint about a violation of the prohibition against the charging of unlawful student fees may be filed with the principal of the school. However, any such complaint shall be filed no later than one year from the date the alleged violation occurred. (Education Code 49013, 52075)
- A complaint alleging unlawful discrimination (including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) may be filed only by a person who alleges that he/she personally suffered unlawful discrimination or by a person who believes that an individual or any specific class of individuals has been subjected to it. The complaint shall be initiated no later than six months from the date when the alleged discrimination occurred, or six months from the date when the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination. The time for filing may be extended for up to 90 days by the Superintendent or designee for good cause upon written request by the complainant setting forth the reasons for the extension. (5 CCR 4630)
- When a complaint alleging unlawful discrimination (including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) is filed anonymously, the compliance officer shall pursue an investigation or other response as appropriate, depending on the specificity and reliability of the information provided and the seriousness of the allegation.
- When the complainant or alleged victim of unlawful discrimination (including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) requests confidentiality, the compliance officer shall inform him/her that the request may limit the District's ability to investigate the conduct or take other necessary action. When honoring a request for confidentiality, the District shall nevertheless take all reasonable steps to investigate and resolve/respond to the complaint consistent with the request.
- If a complainant is unable to put a complaint in writing due to conditions such as a disability or illiteracy, district staff shall assist him/her in the filing of the complaint. (5 CCR 4600)

Investigation of Complaint

Within 10 business days after the compliance officer receives the complaint, the compliance officer shall begin an investigation into the complaint.

Within one business day of initiating the investigation, the compliance officer shall provide the complainant and/or his/her representative with the opportunity to present the information contained in complaint to the compliance officer and shall notify the complainant and/or his/her representative of the opportunity to present the compliance officer with any evidence, or information leading to evidence, to support the allegations in the complaint. Such evidence or information may be presented at any time during the investigation.

In conducting the investigation, the compliance officer shall collect all available documents and review all available records, notes, or statements related to the complaint, including any additional evidence or information received from the parties during the course of the investigation, shall individually interview all available witnesses with information pertinent to the complaint, and may visit any reasonably accessible location where the relevant actions are alleged to have taken place. To investigate a complaint alleging retaliation, unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) the compliance officer shall interview the alleged victim(s), any alleged offenders, and other relevant witnesses privately, separately, and in a confidential manner. As necessary, additional staff or legal counsel may conduct or support the investigation.

A complainant's refusal to provide the District's investigator with documents or other evidence related to the allegations in the complaint, failure or refusal to cooperate in the investigation, or engagement in any other obstruction of the investigation may result in the dismissal of the complaint because of a lack of evidence to support the allegation. (5 CCR 4631)

In accordance with law, the District shall provide the investigator with access to records and other information related to the allegation in the complaint and shall not in any way obstruct the investigation. Failure or refusal of the District to cooperate in the investigation may result in a finding based on evidence collected that a violation has occurred and in the imposition of a remedy in favor of the complainant. (5 CCR 4631)

The compliance officer shall apply a "preponderance of the evidence" standard in determining the veracity of the factual allegations in a complaint. This standard is met if the allegation is more likely to be true than not.

Report of Findings

Unless extended by written agreement with the complainant, the compliance officer shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of the District's investigation and decision, as described in the section "Final Written Decision" below, within 60 calendar days of the District's receipt of the complaint. (5 CCR 4631)

Final Written Decision

The District's decision on how it will resolve the complaint shall be in writing and shall be sent to the complainant. (5 CCR 4631)

In consultation with district legal counsel, information about the relevant part of a decision may be communicated to a victim who is not the complainant and to other parties that may be involved in implementing the decision or affected by the complaint, as long as the privacy of the parties is protected.

Appeals to the California Department of Education

Any complainant who is dissatisfied with the District's final written decision may file an appeal in writing with the CDE within 15 calendar days of receiving the District's decision. (Education Code 49013, 52075; 5 CCR 4632) The complainant shall specify the basis for the appeal of the decision and whether the facts are incorrect and/or the law has been misapplied. The appeal shall be accompanied by a copy of the locally filed complaint and a copy of the District's decision. (5 CCR 4632)

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El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

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For more information on the Uniform
Complaint Process contact:
Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services