

COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS OR PARENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Bangor School Committee recognizes that parents and students may have questions or concerns relative to the services provided by the Bangor School Department. Such questions and concerns should be resolved as promptly as possible and preferably directly among the individuals involved. To those ends, the following procedures are established.

It should be noted that several approaches are possible:

1. The question or complaint may be raised in a confidential discussion with the teacher, principal, or superintendent. However, such questions or complaints generally must be considered as "informational" only and cannot be used to directly resolve the issue.
2. The preferred approach is to meet with the person or persons directly involved so that all views may be heard, and a satisfactory solution may be mutually developed. A joint meeting of the parent, student and teacher should resolve many questions. Including the guidance counselor may be helpful in many instances.
3. Students or parents may request a conference with the principal which should include the teacher and/or counselor whenever appropriate, in addition to the student and parent.
4. The Superintendent of Schools should be informed by the student, parent, or employee of any complaint which has not been satisfactorily resolved under steps 1, 2, or 3 above. The superintendent will actively seek to establish the facts and opinions relative to the issue, meet individually or collectively with the individuals involved, and resolve the issue if possible in a manner consistent with this policy.

This policy shall be disseminated widely and shall be available in the office of each school. A copy should be given to the aggrieved party by the guidance counselor, principal, or superintendent at the earliest stage of any complaint. The superintendent shall establish a means for evaluation of the complaint process by the aggrieved parties.

COMPLAINTS CONCERNING STUDENT OR NON-EMPLOYEE

Students or their parents having a school-related complaint concerning the actions of any student or other non-employee of the Bangor School Department should contact the appropriate teacher, counselor, or principal, requesting a conference at a mutually convenient time. The school employee so contacted should attempt to clarify the issue and resolve the problem through listening to and considering the view of all persons concerned. (Should a school employee other than the principal be so contacted, that employee may and should refer the issue to the appropriate principal if, in the employee's opinion, the issue is beyond the scope of reasonable resolution at the classroom or counseling level.)



The decision of the principal normally shall be considered as final. However, a written appeal may be directed to the Superintendent of Schools who will determine whether all pertinent facts have been considered and whether a reasonable decision has been rendered. The Superintendent shall either approve the administrative decision or shall indicate appropriate alternative action within ten (10) working days of receipt of such a written appeal.

COMPLAINTS CONCERNING SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

Students or their parents having a school-related complaint concerning the actions or inaction of any employee of the Bangor School Department should contact the appropriate principal, requesting a conference at a mutually convenient time. The principal shall attempt to clarify the issue and resolve the problem through listening to and considering the views of all persons concerned.

Should the principal be unable to effect a satisfactory solution, the issue shall be referred to the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent shall establish procedures for obtaining the view of all concerned as well as collecting relevant data from other sources if appropriate. The solution recommended by the Superintendent of Schools shall be considered as the final administrative decision on behalf of the Bangor Superintendent.

Any formal complaint regarding an employee of the Bangor School Department which is used in any manner to evaluate the employee shall be brought to the attention of the employee by the principal or Superintendent of Schools so that the employee may have an opportunity to present the employee's views of the issue in a timely manner.

Appeals from the Superintendent's decisions shall be made in writing by aggrieved party or legal counsel of the aggrieved and shall be submitted to the Bangor School Committee via the Superintendent of Schools. Upon receipt of a written appeal, the Superintendent shall notify the Chairman of the Bangor School Committee; the latter shall determine whether a special meeting shall be called or whether a portion of the next regular meeting shall be devoted to a hearing on the issue.

All appeals heard by the Committee shall be in executive session unless otherwise mutually agreeable to the Committee and the aggrieved party. The aggrieved party and the Committee may but shall not be required to be represented by counsel.

Normally the Superintendent, on behalf of the Committee, will advise the aggrieved party within ten days of receipt of the written appeal as to the date set for a hearing before the Committee. Such hearing shall be within thirty (30) days of the written appeal. The Committee shall announce its decision, through the Chairman or the Superintendent, within ten (10) days following the completion of the hearing. Should the aggrieved party fail to appear, except for causes beyond the direct or indirect control of the aggrieved, the matter shall be considered as closed by the Committee and no further appeal on the issue will be considered.

RETRIBUTION PROHIBITED

It must be emphasized that questions and complaints are expected as the Committee,



professional educators, parents, and students work together toward the objective of quality educational services. Individuals should be encouraged to raise informal questions while matters can more easily be resolved. Even when the more formal procedures outlined above must be followed, students, parents, and educators must understand that the objective is to resolve the issue to the benefit of all concerned.

Students, parents, and educators should not expect nor participate in retribution because a question is raised or a complaint pursued. The Superintendent of Schools should be notified immediately and directly by any student, parent, or employee of the Bangor School Department who believes that retribution has taken place as a result of a complaint under this policy.

VOTED: 6 September 1983

