

**PROCESSING PARENTAL/CITIZEN COMPLAINTS
JONES COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
CONFIDENTIALITY PROCEDURES**

The Board of Education and professional staff of the Jones County School District have jointly adopted a specific procedure to ensure that Parental/Citizen complaints are given respectful attention and that the integrity and confidentiality of all concerned is upheld.

To protect the confidentiality of all concerned, it is imperative that any school employee in receipt of either an Oral Complaint (Section A) or a Written Complaint (Section B) treat such complaint as confidential and further that said complaint not be reproduced in any form, nor disclosed or discussed with any person/persons other than those identified as proper recipients of a complaint; i.e., the principal involved or the superintendent.

Section C requires that board members will consider hearing a complaint in executive session, thereby also insuring that matters discussed therein remain confidential.

Further, any written record must be distributed strictly in accordance with Section A-2, B-1 and B-3 and paragraph D.

Finally, all persons are hereby cautioned to treat both oral and written materials dealing with Parental/Citizen complaints as confidential and in accordance with the adopted policy of the Jones County School District.

PARENTAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

This policy has been established to ensure that a citizen's complaint is given respectful attention and that the integrity of all concerned is upheld.

The term "complaint" in this policy is restricted in meaning to that criticism of particular school employees, by a citizen of Jones County School District, which includes and/or implies a demand for action by school authorities.

A. Oral Complaint

1. A complaint which comes first to the employee against whom it is directed shall be listened to courteously. The employee shall try to resolve the difficulty by explaining the background and educational purposes involved. The employee shall refer the complaint to the principal if the complainant remains unsatisfied. Complaints terminated on this level shall be logged on the employee's contact log.
2. A complaint which comes first to the principal or superintendent shall be listened to courteously. There shall be no commitments, admissions of guilt, or threats. A complaint which involves a particular employee shall be referred to the employee immediately by the principal or superintendent. A conference shall be recommended between the complainant(s) and the employee criticized. If the complainant has already conferred with the employee criticized and remains unsatisfied, the principal or superintendent will immediately invite the complainant to file his complaint in writing and provide the complainant with the appropriate form; FORM (1), together with a complete copy of the District's complaint policy.
3. Any other school employee or Board of Education member who receives a complaint shall refer the complainant to the employee criticized. The procedure in paragraph one shall then be followed.

4. No further action shall be taken unless the complainant submits a written record. Efforts to improve the school operation shall continue.

B. Written Complaint FORM (1)

1. A copy of the written complaint shall be given to the employee criticized. A written reply from the employee will be required. The criticized employee shall have the right to counsel. NOTE: All persons involved must treat the written complaint and response as confidential material.

2. The principal and/or superintendent shall schedule a conference with the complainant, the criticized employee, and other personnel selected by either the administration or the criticized employee who could contribute to settling the problem.

3. If the complaint is settled to the mutual satisfaction of all parties involved, in step 2, a written statement outlining how the complaint was resolved will be drawn up by the administrator involved. A copy of the complaint, the criticized employee's response, and the written statement outlining how the complaint was resolved will be placed in the District's "Complaint File".

C. Board of Education Action

The Board will consider hearing the complaints only when the complaints cannot be resolved by the administrator and employee involved. Matters referred to the Board must be in writing and specific in the terms of the complaint and action desired.

1. The Board will only consider or act on complaints that have been explored and processed in accordance with this procedure by the appropriate administrative level.

2. When the Board considers complaints, it shall do so in executive session in the presence of the complainant(s) and the employee against whom the complaint has been raised.

All parties to such executive sessions shall have the right to the representative of their choosing, the right to present evidence, and the right to cross-examine the witnesses.

The Board shall conduct the meeting(s) in a fair and just manner. Hearsay evidence shall be discounted by the Board in such proceedings.

The Board has the right to request a disinterested third party to act as a hearing officer to help the Board reach a mutually satisfactory solution.

D. Written Solution

Solution on any level of the Complaint shall be logged. NOTE: All persons involved must treat this completed form as confidential material.

Parental Complaint Forms can be found on Jones County School website

<https://jonesco.k12.sd.us/default.aspx>