

POLICY 304-5

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

The Department of Education as well as the Hawaii State Board of Education from time to time receives complaints from members of the public regarding the public education system. The Board of Education believes that a clear process that provides members of the public a means to share their concerns with the Department of Education is important to public confidence.

The Board of Education's primary responsibility is specified by the Hawaii State Constitution to be policy-making. When considering most complaints or concerns, the Board evaluates the extent to which they are addressed by current policy or the extent to which they suggest the need for modified or new policies. When a complaint about school personnel is made to the Board as a whole or to a Board member individually, the Board member shall inform the Superintendent, who shall inform the complainant of the normal channels for reporting complaints about school personnel. The complaint will ordinarily be referred for study and possible solution to the school administrator who directly supervises the staff member involved. The staff member will be advised of the nature of the complaint and be given opportunity to respond to the complaint.

The Board encourages the resolution of public complaints at the level closest to which they occur. As such, when resolving school-level matters, the school principal or designee should be contacted first for further study and solution. If the matter remains unresolved and it appears necessary, the administration, complainant or staff member involved may request a meeting with the school's Complex Area Superintendent for the purpose of fuller study. As the matter is studied, all parties involved may be requested by the CAS to attend meetings for the purposes of presenting facts and evidence, making further explanations, clarifying issues and dispensing with hearsay and rumor. After consulting with the Complex Area Superintendent and receipt of a written decision, or should the matter continue to remain unresolved, the matter may be referred to the office of the Superintendent. At each level of review, the parties shall make reasonable efforts to facilitate communication.

[Approved: 02/17/2015 (as Board Policy 304.5); amended: 06/21/2016 (renumbered as Board Policy 304-5)]

Former policy 1110-9 history: approved: 07/25/1996