



TITLE I COMPLAINT RESOLUTION POLICY

Introduction

ESEA, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires State Educational Agencies (SEAs) to adopt written procedures for “receiving and resolving any complaint alleging violations of the law in administration of programs.” In accordance with this legislative requirement, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Division of Federal Programs has adopted the following procedures after presenting them to the Committee of Practitioners.

Definition

A “complaint” is a written, signed statement filed by an individual or an organization. It must include:

- a) A statement that PDE or a local educational agency (LEA) has violated a requirement of federal statute or regulations which apply to programs under the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA.
- b) The facts on which the statement is based.
- c) Information on any discussions, meetings or correspondence with PDE or the LEA regarding the complaint.

Complaint Resolution Procedures

1. **Referral** – Complaints against schools should be referred to the Director of Federal Programs:
Dr. Jane L. Coughenour
3590 O’Neil Blvd.
McKeesport, PA 15132
412.948.1317
jcoughenour@mckasd.net
2. **Notice to School** – The Director of Federal Programs will notify the school Superintendent and Principal that a complaint has been received. A copy of the complaint will be given to the Superintendent and Principal with directions given for the Principal to respond.
3. **Investigation** – After receiving the Principal’s response, the Director of Federal Programs, along with the Superintendent, will determine whether further investigation is necessary. If necessary, the Director of Federal Programs and the Superintendent may do an onsite investigation at the school.
4. **Opportunity to Present Evidence** – The Director of Federal Programs may provide for the complainant and the Principal to present evidence.
5. **Report and Recommended Resolution** – Once the Director of Federal Programs has completed the investigation and the taking of evidence, a report will be prepared with a recommendation for resolving the complaint. The report will give the name of the party bringing the complaint, the nature of the complaint, a summary of the investigation, the recommended resolution and the reasons for the recommendation. Copies of the report will be issued to all parties involved. The recommended resolution will become effective upon issuance of the report.
6. **Follow up** – The Director of Federal Programs and the Superintendent will ensure that the resolution of the complaint is implemented.
7. **Time Limit** – The period between the Director of Federal Programs receiving the complaint and resolution of the complaint shall not exceed thirty (30) calendar days. The timeframe that a State Educational Agency (SEA) has for responding to a complaint from parents, teachers, or other individuals concerning violations of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) section 8501 regarding the participation by private school children and teachers is 45 days. In addition, the Secretary must investigate and resolve an appeal of an SEA’s resolution of a complaint within 90 days.
8. **Right to Appeal** – Either party may appeal the final resolution to the Department of Education. Appeals should be addressed as follows:

Ms. Susan McCrone
Chief Division of Federal Programs
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street, 5th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126- 0333