

Complaint Procedures For Federal Programs

July 2019

A. Grounds for a Complaint

Any individual, organization or agency (“complainant”) may file a complaint with the Jefferson County Board of Education, if that individual, organization or agency believes and alleges that the Jefferson County Board of Education or an individual school within the Jefferson County School System is violating a Federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing.

B. Federal Programs for Which Complaints Can Be Filed

1. Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Education Agencies (LEA)
2. Title I, Part B, Subpart 3: Even Start Family Literacy
3. Title I, Part C: Education of Migrant Children
4. Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
5. Title II, Part A: Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund
6. Title II, Part D: Enhancing Education Through Technology
7. Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement
8. Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment
9. Title V Part B, Rural and Low-Income Schools
10. Title IX, Part E, Subpart 1, Section 9503: Complaint Process for Participation of Private School Children
11. Title X, Part C - McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
12. School Improvement 1003(a) and 1003(g) (SIG)
13. Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)
14. CARES/ARP/ESSER

C. Complaints Originating at the Local Level

As part of its Assurances within ESSA program grant applications and pursuant to Section 9306 within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), an LEA accepting federal funds also agrees to adopt local written procedures for the receipt and resolution of complaints alleging violations of law in the administration of covered programs. Therefore, for complaints originating within the Jefferson County School System, a complaint should not be filed with the Georgia Department of Education until every effort has been made to resolve the issue through local written complaint procedures. If the complainant has tried to file a complaint at the local

level to no avail, the complainant must provide the Georgia Department of Education with written proof of their attempt to resolve the issue at the local level.

D. Filing a Complaint

A complaint must be made in writing and signed by the complainant. The complaint must include the following:

1. A statement that the LEA has violated a requirement of a Federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program;
2. The date on which the violation occurred;
3. The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (include citation to the Federal statute or regulations);
4. A list of the names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information;
5. Whether a complaint has been filed with any other government agency, and if so, which agency;
6. Copies of all applicable documents supporting the complainant's position; and
7. The address of the complainant.

The complaint must be addressed to:

Jefferson County School System
Attn: Superintendent of Schools
1001 Peachtree Street
Louisville, GA 30434

Once the complaint is received by the Superintendent of Schools, it will be copied and forward to the appropriate Federal Program Director.

E. Investigation of Complaint

Within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint, the Superintendent or his or her designee will issue a Letter of Acknowledgement to the complainant that contains the following information:

1. The date the LEA received the complaint;
2. How the complainant may provide additional information;
3. A statement of the ways in which the LEA may investigate or address the complaint; and
4. Any other pertinent information.

If the complaint involves a school, the LEA will also send a copy of the Letter of Acknowledgement to the building administrator, along with a copy of the complaint. The LEA will contact the school to clarify the issues and review the complaint process. If the complaint cannot be resolved through this contact, the LEA will invite the school to submit a written response to the LEA, and to provide a copy of the response to the complainant.

Appropriate LEA staff will review the information and determine whether:

1. Additional information is needed;
2. An on-site investigation must be conducted;
3. Other measures must be taken to resolve the issues raised in the complaint; or
4. A Letter of Findings can be issued.

If additional information or an investigation is necessary, the LEA will have sixty (60) days from receipt of the information or completion of the investigation to issue a Letter of Findings.

If the Letter of Findings indicates that a violation has been found, corrective action will be required and timelines for completion will be included.

Either the 30-day or the 60-day timelines outlined above may be extended, if exceptional circumstances exist. The Letter of Findings will be sent directly to the complainant, as well as the other parties involved.

F. Rights of Appeal

If an individual, organization or agency is aggrieved by the final decision of the LEA, that individual, organization or agency has the right to request review of the decision by the Georgia Department of Education.

For complaints filed pursuant to Section 9503 (20 U.S.C §7883, complaint process for participation of private school children), a complainant may appeal the LEA's decision to the Georgia Department of Education no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the complainant receives the Letter of Findings. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the LEA's decision and include a complete statement of the reasons supporting the appeal.

Nothing in this procedure is intended to prohibit the parties from resolving a problem prior to formal filing of a written complaint. At any stage of processing the complaint, the parties may mutually agree to attempt mediation as an alternative dispute resolution.