

DRAFT Formal Public Complaint Policy 4.50.032-P
Community Engagement Plan
September 10, 2020

The PPS Board Policy and Governance Committee is considering revisions and updates to Formal Public Complaints Policy 4.50.032-P in order to provide clarity for complainants and staff who respond to complaints and for members of the Board when appeals to complaint responses are considered.

Background

The PPS formal complaints process is an important tool for students, parents/guardians and families to pursue when resolving issues and concerns at school however, in most cases, it is recommended that families work directly with school-based staff, teachers and administrators to address problems where relationships between staff, students and families are strongest. When informal efforts aren't successful, the formal complaints policy may be an effective method for families.

In 2017, the PPS Board of Education considered and approved substantial revisions to Formal Complaints Policy 4.50.032-P. Now that the revised policy has been implemented for more than two academic years, staff and Board members have identified additional minor revisions to be considered by the Policy and Governance Committee.

Community engagement approach

Staff recognizes that there are established stakeholders (past complainants) who should be contacted to seek input regarding proposed revisions to the policy and also to ascertain what works well and identify areas for improvement as users of the policy. The community engagement process will provide an opportunity to gather feedback from a broader, more diverse set of students and families within the PPS community. A review of the total number of formal complaints filed since 2014 reveals a pattern of only one demographic (White families) accessing the district's formal complaint process. While some racial diversity was observed among the complainants who accessed this service during the 2019-2020 school year, it is likely that barriers exist for historically underserved and non-White populations. It is our intent to reach out to a variety of student and family groups during the engagement process to ensure that all students and families have the access, information and tools needed to resolve school-based issues effectively.

Stakeholders and audiences

The following table outlines the revisions and associated stakeholders and audiences staff proposes to include in the community engagement plan. Timeline TBD based on Committee input.

Current Policy Revision and Issue for Discussion	Suggested Language and/or Approach	Recommended Engagement for Students Most Impacted by Decision	Suggested Revisions to another policy (i.e. Administrative Directive)
<p>I. Page 4 section D #2: clarify the definition of “assistance” the district may provide a complainant when preparing a written complaint.</p> <p>II. Clarify that to be eligible, complainants must reside within the PPS boundary.</p> <p>III. State explicitly that once an issue has been considered at all levels, the same issue cannot be resubmitted for consideration by the same complainant.</p>	<p>I. Add to that section the following sentence: “A list of resources can be found <u>here</u> (with a hyperlink to a list of examples/types of resources offered).</p> <p>II. Add the following sentence to the policy: “The formal complaint policy and associated process applies to residents living within the PPS boundary.</p> <p>III. Add the following sentence to the policy: “Complaints that have been previously filed, investigated and responded to on behalf of the District and/or Board cannot be refiled per Oregon Administrative Rule.”</p>	<p>The following activities are recommended to solicit general feedback and for engagement regarding specific policy revisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact previous student complainants ● Contact previous BIPOC complainants ● Present and discuss policy and revisions with student affinity groups (TBD) ● Conduct a BIPOC family focus group (via CBOs Latino Network, IRCO, others) ● Survey all previous complainants ● Interview conflict resolution experts (PSU, City of Portland Ombudsman) 	