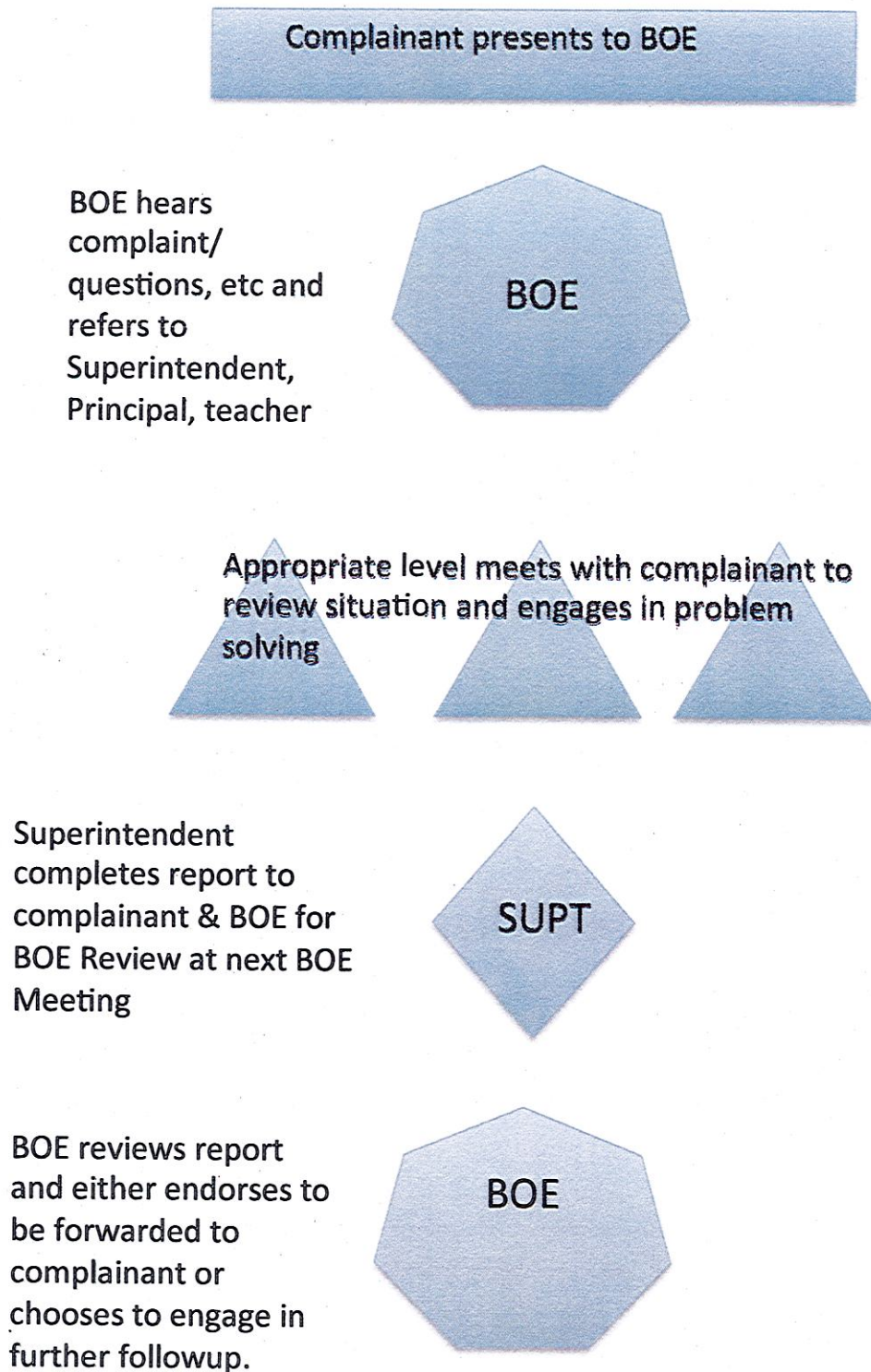


Board Response to Complainants at Meeting



Summary Report to Board of Education
Regarding Public Complaints/Suggestions/Questions
Presented to the Board of Education, Geneseo CUSD 228
September 10, 2015

At both the June Regular Board meeting and the August Regular Board meeting, the Board of Education heard complaints, concerns, and questions from members of the community. In the first case, the complainants had engaged in some dialogue with members of the high school faculty and administration related to their concerns; but no real dialogue with the superintendent. In the case of the complainant in August, no engagement had occurred with any staff or administration to the knowledge of the superintendent.

At question is how the Board of Education should address such concerns/complaints/suggestions/questions. The following is a review from the superintendent's perspective. Included with this review is what is believed to be pertinent existing board policies, board agreements, and information from the Illinois Association of School Boards. At the end of the day, I believe that we have the tools necessary to respond to complainants if we follow existing policies; regardless of whether a person approaches a board member at church or at a regular school board meeting.

Review of perspective toward Board of Education responsibility related to public meeting complaints/suggestions/questions

1. Existing Policy Review

When beginning to address the role of the Board of Education in responding to community concerns, it is important to first review policies from Section 2, which address the School Board and Board Governance.

2:10 School District Governance— states that "Official action by the Board may only occur at a duly called and legally conducted meeting at which a quorum is physically present... a Board member has no legal authority as an individual." This would help explain how a member may respond to questions or concerns outside of a regular meeting. For example, if a community member approached with a question regarding a student issue, the member would not have authority to "fix" a problem or perhaps even be able to answer the question, depending upon its complexity. Authority would only occur at the board table as one of seven voting members.

2:20 Powers and Duties of the School Board— covers the main powers and duties of the School Board. Two clauses in this policy may relate to the Board's response to community questions/concerns/complaints/suggestions; whether at a board meeting or outside a board meeting. First #4 talks about "Directing, through policy, the Superintendent, in his or her charge of the District's administration." #19 states that the Board has powers and duties of

"Communicating the schools' activities and operations to the community and representing the needs and desires of the community in educational matters." However, this really still does not address fully the scenario of a public member addressing a complaint/concern/question/suggestion at a Board meeting.

2:140 Communications To and From the Board— "welcomes communications from staff members, parents, students, and community members. Board members, individually, will not (a) reply to an email on behalf of the entire Board, or (b) engage in the discussion of District business with a majority of a Board quorum, effectively 3 or more members. This policy further indicates that

"If contacted individually, Board members will refer the person to the appropriate level of authority, except in unusual situations. Board members questions or communications to staff or about programs will be channeled through the Superintendent's office. Board members will not take individual action that might compromise the Board or District. There is no expectation of privacy for any communication sent to the Board or its members, whether sent by letter, email, or other means."

This policy then hearkens back to the first policy addressed, 2:10, and reinforces both Open Meetings Act implications, but more importantly begins to address channels of communication that have been recommended by both the Illinois Association of School Boards, and also was recently reviewed and approved by the Board of Education in reviewing all of Section 2 Board Policies.

2:260 Uniform Grievance Procedure— is a policy that provides redress for complainants when they have exhausted the 'chain of command' and are in need of some type of Complaint Manager or possibly to seek redress at the Board level. #9 under the items that may constitute a valid complaint (*Curriculum, instructional materials, and/or programs* would cover our two most recent complaints/questions/concerns). There may be scenarios where the Board would be advised to refer a complainant to convene with a District Complaint Manager dependent upon the nature of their concern.

8:110 Public Suggestions and Complaints— covers a significant portion of what we have been faced with during the past two regular board meetings. This policy, however, states in the first paragraph that "Public suggestions and/or complaints shall be referred to the appropriate level staff member or District administrator who is most able to respond in a timely manner. Each complaint or suggestion shall be considered on its merit." The Board of Education last reviewed this policy in March of 2008. I have included the current policy with some relevant highlights, as well as the most recent recommended change from the Illinois Association of School Boards, PRESS subscription. IASB does not have suggested procedures for this specific Board policy, but we have looked at our Operating Agreement, which all board members have signed off in commitment to in May, which explains in some "lay terms" how this is interpreted.

2. **Geneseo CUSD 228 Board of Education Operating Agreements**-- on page 3 of these operating agreements is a section entitled "Concerns from the Community and Staff". The first sentence emphasizes that "*When someone complains to us, we will listen carefully, remembering we are only hearing one side of the story.*" The agreement then reinforces directing the complainant to the appropriate level of response in the chain of command. The Board should consider establishing a procedure that creates a communication flow from complainant to appropriate referral to expectation of follow up report to complainant and Board of Education. The timelines for said review and reporting may be subject to the complexity of the issue, the time of the school year the complaint occurs and how many people are involved. But in general, it should be realistic that complainants who approach the Board at a meeting can be told that they will receive contact from either the superintendent or his/her designee, and that a formal response shall come from the Board following the next regular school board meeting. A flowchart to that effect is included with this report.

The Board of Education is certainly within its authority to make changes to existing policies (there is a policy describing that process as well) and it seems appropriate that there is some consensus, possibly even through a voted resolution to formalize agreement on future procedures, particularly as they relate to times when public participation leads to expectations for Board action/response.

School Board

School District Governance

The District is governed by a School Board consisting of 7 members. The Board's powers and duties include the authority to adopt, enforce, and monitor all policies for the management and governance of the District's schools.

Official action by the Board may only occur at a duly called and legally conducted meeting at which a quorum is physically present.

As stated in the Board member oath of office prescribed by the School Code, a Board member has no legal authority as an individual.

LEGAL REF.: 5 ILCS 120/1.02.
105 ILCS 5/10-1, 5/10-10, 5/10-12, 5/10-16.5, 5/10-16.7, and 5/10-20.5.

CROSS REF.: 1:10 (School District Legal Status), 2:20 (Powers and Duties of the School Board; Indemnification), 2:80 (Board Member Oath and Conduct), 2:120 (Board Member Development), 2:200 (Types of School Board Meetings), 2:220 (School Board Meeting Procedure)

Adopted By Board Action 11/06/1990
Amended By Board Action 03/03/1998
Amended By Board Action 11/14/2007
Amended by Board Action 06/11/2015

School Board

Powers and Duties of the School Board; Indemnification

The major powers and duties of the School Board include, but are not limited to:

1. Organizing the Board after each consolidated election by electing officers and establishing its regular meeting schedule and, thereafter, taking action during lawfully called meetings to faithfully fulfill the Board's responsibilities in accordance with State and federal law.
2. Formulating, adopting, and modifying Board policies, at its sole discretion, subject only to mandatory collective bargaining agreements and State and federal law.
3. Employing a Superintendent and other personnel, making employment decisions, dismissing personnel, and establishing an equal employment opportunity policy that prohibits unlawful discrimination.
4. Directing, through policy, the Superintendent, in his or her charge of the District's administration.
5. Approving the annual budget, tax levies, major expenditures, payment of obligations, annual audit, and other aspects of the District's financial operation; and making available a statement of financial affairs as provided in State law.
6. Entering into contracts using the public bidding procedure when required.
7. Providing, constructing, controlling, and maintaining adequate physical facilities; making school buildings available for use as civil defense shelters; and establishing a resource conservation policy.
8. Establishing an equal educational opportunities policy that prohibits unlawful discrimination.
9. Approving the curriculum, textbooks, and educational services.
10. Evaluating the educational program and approving School Improvement and District Improvement Plans.
11. Presenting the District report card and School report card(s) to parents/guardians and the community; these documents report District, School, and student performance.
12. Establishing and supporting student discipline policies designed to maintain an environment conducive to learning, including deciding individual student suspension or expulsion cases brought before it.
13. Establishing attendance units within the District and authorizing the administration to assign students to the schools.
14. Establishing the school year.
15. Requiring a moment of silence to recognize veterans during any type of school event held at a District school on November 11.
16. Providing student transportation services pursuant to State law.
17. Entering into joint agreements with other boards to establish cooperative educational programs or provide educational facilities.

18. Complying with requirements in the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. Specifically, each individual Board member must, if an allegation is raised to the member during an open or closed Board meeting that a student is an abused child as defined in the Act, direct or cause the Board to direct the Superintendent or other equivalent school administrator to comply with the Act's requirements concerning the reporting of child abuse.
19. Communicating the schools' activities and operations to the community and representing the needs and desires of the community in educational matters.

Indemnification

To the extent allowed by law, the Board shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless School Board members, employees, volunteer personnel (pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-22.34, 10-22.34a, and 10-22.34b), mentors of certified staff (pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a, 2-3.53b, and 105 ILCS 5/21 A-5 et. seq.), and student teachers who, in the course of discharging their official duties imposed or authorized by law, are sued as parties in a legal proceeding. Nothing herein, however, shall be construed as obligating the Board to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless any person who engages in criminal activity, official misconduct, fraud, intentional or willful and wanton misconduct, or acts beyond the authority property vested in the individual.

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/2-3.25d, 5/10, 5/17-1, and 5/27-1.
115 ILCS 5/
325 ILCS 5/4.

CROSS REF.: 1:10 (School District Legal Status), 1:20 (District Organization, Operations, and Cooperative Agreements), 2:10 (School District Governance), 2:80 (Board Member Oath and Conduct), 2:140 (Communications To and From the Board), 2:210 (Organizational School Board Meeting), 2:240 (Board Policy Development), 4:60 (Purchases and Contracts), 4:70 (Resource Conservation), 4:100 (Insurance Management), 4:110 (Transportation), 4:150 (Facility Management and Building Programs), 5:10 (Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment), 5:90 (Abused and Neglected Child Reporting), 6:10 (Educational Philosophy and Objectives), 6:15 (School Accountability), 6:20 (School Year Calendar and Day), 7:10 (Equal Educational Opportunities), 7:30 (Student Assignment and Intra-District Transfer), 7:190 (Student Discipline), 7:200 (Suspension Procedures), 7:210 (Expulsion Procedures), 8:10 (Connection with the Community), 8:30 (Visitors to and Conduct on School Property)

Adopted By Board Action 09/03/1985
Amended By Board Action 11/06/1990
Amended By Board Action 03/03/1998
Amended By Board Action 03/06/2001
Amended By Board Action 11/14/2007
Amended By Board Action 06/11/2015

School Board

Communications To and From the Board

The School Board welcomes communications from staff members, parents, students, and community members. Individuals may submit questions or communications for the School Board's consideration to the Superintendent, or may use the electronic link to the Board's email address(es) that is posted on the District's website. In accordance with the Open Meetings Act and the Oath of Office taken by Board members, individual Board members will not (a) reply to an email on behalf of the entire Board, or (b) engage in the discussion of District business with a majority of a Board-quorum.

The Superintendent or designee shall

1. Ensure that the home page for the District's website contains an active electronic link to the email address(es) for the School Board, and
2. Provide the Board, such as in the Board meeting packet, with all emails that are received and any feedback regarding them.

If contacted individually, Board members will refer the person to the appropriate level of authority, except in unusual situations. Board members' questions or communications to staff or about programs will be channeled through the Superintendent's office. Board members will not take individual action that might compromise the Board or District. There is no expectation of privacy for any communication sent to the Board or its members, whether sent by letter, email, or other means.

Board Member Use of Electronic Communications

For purposes of this section, *electronic communications* includes, without limitation, electronic mail, electronic chat, instant messaging, texting, and any form of social networking. Electronic communications among a majority or more of a Board-quorum shall not be used for the purpose of discussing District business. Electronic communications among Board members shall be limited to: (1) disseminating information, and (2) messages not involving deliberation, debate, or decision-making. The following list contains examples of permissible electronic communications:

- Agenda item suggestions
- Reminders regarding meeting times, dates, and places
- Board meeting agendas or information concerning agenda items
- Individual emails to community members, subject to the other limitations in this policy

LEGAL REF.: 5 ILCS 120/
50 ILCS 205/20.

CROSS REF.: 2:220 (School Board Meeting Procedure), 3:30 (Chain of Command), 8:110
(Public Suggestions and Concerns)

Adopted By Board Action 04/07/1998
Amended By Board Action 03/06/2001
Amended By Board Action 11/14/2007
Amended by Board Action 06/11/2015

School Board

Uniform Grievance Procedure

A student, parent/guardian, employee, or community member should notify any District Complaint Manager if he or she believes that the School Board, its employees, or agents have violated his or her rights guaranteed by the State or federal Constitution, State or federal statute, or Board policy, or have a complaint regarding any one of the following:

1. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act
2. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
4. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. §2000d *et seq.*
5. Equal Employment Opportunities Act (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act), 42 U.S.C. §2000e *et seq.*
6. Sexual harassment (Illinois Human Rights Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972)
7. Bullying, 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7
8. Misuse of funds received for services to improve educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged or deprived children
9. Curriculum, instructional materials, and/or programs
10. Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act, 820 ILCS 180
11. Illinois Equal Pay Act of 2003, 820 ILCS 112
12. Provision of services to homeless students
13. Illinois Whistleblower Act, 740 ILCS 174/
14. Misuse of genetic information (Illinois Genetic Information Privacy Act (GIPA), 410 ILCS 513/ and Titles I and II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA), 42 U.S.C. §2000ff *et seq.*
15. Employee Credit Privacy Act, 820 ILCS 70/.

The Complaint Manager will attempt to resolve complaints without resorting to this grievance procedure and, if a complaint is filed, to address the complaint promptly and equitably. The right of a person to prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint filed hereunder shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies. Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies and use of this grievance procedure does not extend any filing deadline related to the pursuit of other remedies. All deadlines under this procedure may be extended by the Complaint Manager as he or she deems appropriate. As used in this policy, "school business days" means days on which the District's main office is open.

Filing a Complaint

A person (hereinafter Complainant) who wishes to avail him or herself of this grievance procedure may do so by filing a complaint with any District Complaint Manager. The Complainant shall not be required to file a complaint with a particular Complaint Manager and may request a Complaint Manager of the same gender. The Complaint Manager may request the Complainant to provide a written statement regarding the nature of the complaint or require a meeting with a student's parent(s)/guardian(s). The Complaint Manager shall assist the Complainant as needed.

Investigation

The Complaint Manager will investigate the complaint or appoint a qualified person to undertake the investigation on his or her behalf. If the Complainant is a student under 18 years of age, the

Complaint Manager will notify his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) that they may attend any investigatory meetings in which their child is involved. The complaint and identity of the Complainant will not be disclosed except: (1) as required by law, this policy, or (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or (3) as authorized by the Complainant.

The identity of any student witnesses will not be disclosed except: (1) as required by law or any collective bargaining agreement, or (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or (3) as authorized by the parent/guardian of the student witness, or by the student if the student is 18 years of age or older.

Within 30 school business days of the date the complaint was filed, the Complaint Manager shall file a written report of his or her findings with the Superintendent. The Complaint Manager may request an extension of time. If a complaint of sexual harassment contains allegations involving the Superintendent, the written report shall be filed with the Board, which will make a decision in accordance with the following section of this policy. The Superintendent will keep the Board informed of all complaints.

Decision and Appeal

Within 5 school business days after receiving the Complaint Manager's report, the Superintendent shall mail his or her written decision to the Complainant by U.S. mail, first class, as well as to the Complaint Manager.

Within 10 school business days after receiving the Superintendent's decision, the Complainant may appeal the decision to the Board by making a written request to the Complaint Manager. The Complaint Manager shall promptly forward all materials relative to the complaint and appeal to the Board. Within 30 school business days, the Board shall affirm, reverse, or amend the Superintendent's decision or direct the Superintendent to gather additional information. Within 5 school business days of the Board's decision, the Superintendent shall inform the Complainant of the Board's action.

This grievance procedure shall not be construed to create an independent right to a hearing before the Superintendent or Board. The failure to strictly follow the timelines in this grievance procedure shall not prejudice any party.

Appointing Nondiscrimination Coordinator and Complaint Managers

The Superintendent shall appoint a Nondiscrimination Coordinator to manage the District's efforts to provide equal opportunity employment and educational opportunities and prohibit the harassment of employees, students, and others.

The Superintendent shall appoint at least one Complaint Manager to administer the complaint process in this policy. If possible, the Superintendent will appoint 2 Complaint Managers, one of each gender. The District's Nondiscrimination Coordinator may be appointed as one of the Complaint Managers.

The Superintendent shall insert into this policy and keep current the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the Nondiscrimination Coordinator and the Complaint Managers.

Nondiscrimination Coordinator:

Tim Gronski
Name
648 N. Chicago Street
Address
Geneseo, IL 61254
City, State, Zip
309-945-0450
Telephone

Complaint Managers:

Cassie Hanson
Name
648 N. Chicago Street
Address
Geneseo, IL 61254
City, State, Zip
309-945-0450
Telephone

Tim Gronski
Name
648 N. Chicago Street
Address
Geneseo, IL 61254
City, State, Zip
309-945-0450
Telephone

LEGAL REF.:

Age Discrimination in Employment Act, 29 U.S.C. §621 et seq.
Americans With Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq.
Equal Employment Opportunities Act (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act), 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq.
Equal Pay Act, 29 U.S.C. §206(d).
Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, 42 U.S.C. §2000ff et seq.
Immigration Reform and Control Act, 8 U.S.C. §1324a et seq.
McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §11431 et seq.
Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §791 et seq.
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. §2000d et seq.
Title IX of the Education Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq.
105 ILCS 5/2-3.8, 5/3-10, 5/10-20.7a, 5/10-22.5, 5/22-19, 5/24-4, 5/27.1, 5/27-23.7, and 45/1-15.
Illinois Genetic Information Privacy Act, 410 ILCS 513/.
Illinois Whistleblower Act, 740 ILCS 174/.
Illinois Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/.
Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act, 820 ILCS 180, 56 Ill.Admin.Code Part 280.
Equal Pay Act of 2003, 820 ILCS 112/.
Employee Credit Privacy Act, 820 ILCS 70/.
23 Ill.Admin.Code §§1.240 and 200-40.

CROSS REF.: 5:10 (Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment), 5:20 (Workplace Harassment Prohibited), 5:30 (Hiring Process and Criteria), 6:140 (Education of Homeless Children), 6:170 (Title I Programs), 6:260 (Complaints About Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Programs), 7:10 (Equal Educational Opportunities), 7:20 (Harassment of Students Prohibited), 7:180 (Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment), 8:70 (Accommodating Individuals with Disabilities), 8:110 (Public Suggestions and Concerns)

Adopted By Board Action 01/05/1993
Amended By Board Action 06/02/1998
Amended By Board Action 07/03/2001
Amended By Board Action 03/03/2003
Amended By Board Action 11/14/2007
Amended by Board Action 03/12/2009
Amended by Board Action 08/12/2010
Amended by Board Action 09/11/2014
Reviewed by Board Action 06/11/2015

Community Relations

Public Suggestions and Complaints

The School Board is interested in receiving valid suggestions and complaints from members of the community. Public suggestions and/or complaints shall be referred to the appropriate level staff member or District administrator who is most able to respond in a timely manner. Each complaint or suggestion shall be considered on its merit.

Although no person shall be denied the right to present a complaint about school personnel to the School Board, resolution of such complaints will first be referred to the school administration for study and solution.

If the issue is not resolved by involvement of the immediate supervisor, the complainant can refer the issue to the Superintendent for his/her review and decision.

This policy shall not be construed as an override to the negotiated contract between Board of Education and Geneseo Education Association.

An individual, who is not satisfied after following the channels of authority, may file a grievance under the Uniform Grievance Procedure. This policy shall not be construed to create an independent right to a hearing before the Board.

CROSS REF.: 2:140 (Communications To and From the Board), 2:230 (Public Participation at School Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board), 2:260 (Uniform Grievance Procedure), 3:30 (Chain of Command), 6:260 (Complaints About Curriculum, Instructional Materials and Programs), 8:10 (Connection with the Community)

Adopted by Board Action 09/03/1985

Amended by Board Action 03/05/1991

Amended by Board Action 11/04/2002

Amended by Board Action 03/11/2008

Community Relations

Public Suggestions and Concerns

The School Board is interested in receiving suggestions and concerns from members of the community. Any individual may make a suggestion or express a concern at any District or School office. All suggestions and/or concerns will be referred to the appropriate level staff member or District administrator who is most able to respond in a timely manner. Each concern or suggestion shall be considered on its merit.

An individual who is not satisfied after following the channels of authority, may file a grievance under the Board policy 2:260, *Uniform Grievance Procedure*. Neither this policy nor the *Uniform Grievance Procedure* creates an independent right to a hearing before the Board.

CROSS REF.: 2:140 (Communications To and From the Board), 2:230 (Public Participation at School Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board), 2:260 (Uniform Grievance Procedure), 3:30 (Chain of Command), 6:260 (Complaints About Curriculum, Instructional Materials and Programs), 8:10 (Connection with the Community)

Geneseo CUSD 228 Board of Education

Operating Agreements

Unity of Purpose

We affirm the unique role of public education, whereby each community collectively pools its resources for the common good through the education of its students. Therefore, we seek to uphold and improve public education for our community.

- We want to build trust and move the District forward.
- We want to become an effective team.
- We want to understand our individual jobs and collective responsibilities.
- We want to be a team with a common, focused direction.
- We want to create a District culture that supports positive change.
- We want to represent the needs and desires of our community.
- We want to perpetuate a positive District culture that survives in the face of Board member and staff turnover.

2:20 *Powers and Duties of the School Board; Indemnification*
2:80-E *Board member Code of Conduct*

Roles & Responsibilities

The Board will:

- Govern with a focus on the future, on results, and on continuous improvement;
- Create a safe environment for the productive exchange of ideas;
- Encourage collective decision making and diversity in viewpoints;
- Respect the distinction between Board and Superintendent/staff roles;
- Pursue rigorous and continual improvement in its ability to define community values and its vision of the future;
- Acknowledge that the Superintendent is accountable only to the full Board of Education;
- Speak with one voice. No Board member, or subset of the Board of Education, has the authority to act or speak on behalf of the Board without the consent of the Board.

Meetings of the Board

We will consistently abide by our formal meeting processes so that all persons are treated fairly and equally. In order to show respect for each other and the processes, no one gets surprised with potentially controversial information or issues **at any time**.

We understand that Board meetings are **not** open-forum meetings. We will keep this in mind as we conduct our meetings, allowing the public to provide input at the time allotted on the agenda to ensure the multiple voices of the community inform Board deliberations. We will review our policies relating to Board meeting management (e.g., time limits on input from members of the public), revising or re-affirming them as appropriate.

The only authority to direct action rests with the full Board sitting at the Board table during a duly called open meeting. A majority vote sets such direction. When a majority of the Board, sitting in a formal meeting, requests action, it should be made relative to the intended results, not the methods used to achieve those results.

Each Board member respects the right of the other members to vote "no" on an issue. On important matters, Board members are encouraged to explain the reasons for a "no" vote either during deliberation or before casting the vote.

2:200 *Types of School Board Meetings*
2:220 *School Board Meeting Procedure*

Board Meeting Agenda

The Board's agenda is an expression of what the board understands its work to be and how it intends to pursue that work. Typically, the agenda is a cooperative effort of the Board President and Superintendent. All Board members are invited to submit suggestions for agenda items. Periodically, the entire Board will consider important topics or agenda items for consideration in the following months.

During a duly called open meeting, Board members and District residents may suggest items for inclusion on the agenda. Such items may be added to the agenda upon approval of the Board. Since action items must be posted in the meeting notice, such items will typically be scheduled for a subsequent meeting.

Board Member Request for Information

When an individual Board member requests information, it will be provided to all Board members. An individual Board member will, insofar as possible, work to let the Superintendent and staff know ahead of time when a request for information will be made in public so the staff can be prepared to provide a thorough answer.

The Board speaks with one voice; this includes making requests for information that involves extensive time and energy. In instances where a Board member seeks information that would require the Superintendent and/or staff to create a new report or to complete extensive research, the full Board should be involved to authorize such additional work. This will help ensure relevance to the District mission, vision, goals or objectives, and helps clarify whether the request is Board work or staff work. All responses, reports, or artifacts would then be shared with the full Board. Questions that merely clarify a previous answer or to seek a report or information that had already been shared is not part of this clause.

2:130 *Board-Superintendent Relationship*

Engaging the Community

Because the Board sits in trust for the whole community, the Board will make continuing efforts to hear and engage the whole community. We will seek venues beyond the Board meeting where we can effectively engage community members and listen to their concerns. We will attempt to be in touch with all stakeholders and all segments of the community, not just those who seek us out. We will monitor our efforts in this area, asking the question, "Which community voices are not part of Board considerations, and how can we allow these voices to be heard?" Ask, "Who's got the other side?"

2:230 *Public Participation at School Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board*
8:10 *Connection with the Community*

The Board President

The Board is a group of seven equals; each member takes full responsibility for Board activity and behavior. The task of the Board president is the facilitation of the work of the Board and its ability to comply with its working agreements and mutual expectations. The Board president will also assume some responsibility for facilitating the relationship between the Superintendent and the Board. The Board will elect a member for this important position who is well suited to the responsibilities.

In accordance with the *School Code*, the Board president will be elected every two years at the Board organizational meeting following the April School Board election. The President pro-tempore will accept nominations for the position, including self-nominations. A second is not necessary for the nomination. Roll call voting will continue until one candidate receives a majority of the votes cast. A run-off of the top vote getters may be necessary to achieve the required majority.

2:110 *Qualification, Term and Duties of Board Officers*

New Board Member Orientation

The Board desires to be a team where all members contribute to effective Board leadership. The Board takes initiative in helping new members learn, understand, and practice effective governance. The Board president shall arrange a special meeting of the whole Board to review Board processes and procedures. The Superintendent shall meet with new Board members to answer questions and acquaint the member with the District. If desired by the new Board member, a veteran member will be identified as a mentor.

2:120 *Board Member Development*

Concerns from the Community and Staff

When someone complains to us, we will listen carefully, remembering we are only hearing one side of the story. We will avoid jumping to conclusions or placing blame prematurely. We will then direct that person to the employee in the District most appropriate and able to help them resolve their concern. We will make sure they understand the appropriate order of whom to contact, (teacher, then principal, then District staff), and are aware of any formal forms or policies that might assist them, (e.g., written complaint form). We recognize that sometimes people are uncomfortable going to the teacher, but we must direct them to the Building Administrator or Superintendent. Anonymous complaints become personal agenda issues that are time consuming and nearly impossible to resolve.

This will ensure everyone is treated fairly, equally, and expeditiously, and that the processes and procedures of the District are upheld. It will also clarify that no one Board member has individual authority to fix a problem. As a representative of the public, it is important that the Board member invite the person with the complaint to ultimately get back to him if the issue is not resolved.

2:140 *Communications To and From the Board*

2:260 *Uniform Grievance Procedure*

8:110 *Public Suggestions & Complaints*

Board and Superintendent Communication Protocol

Board members with questions or comments regarding a District matter should direct the question or comment to the Superintendent. If it is a simple matter of clarification or interpretation of an issue, the Board member may contact a Building Administrator, but should carbon copy the Superintendent or let the Superintendent know of the phone call or conversation between the member and the Building Administrator.

Board members may contact the Superintendent via e-mail at skuffel@geneseochools.org. The Superintendent will answer, and depending upon the type of question, will **reply to all** Board members with the answer.

Board members may call the Superintendent's cell phone at 309-489-6054, if urgent; or his direct office line at 309-945-0402, if not urgent.

The Superintendent will work to keep the Board abreast of information that he and the Board would deem pertinent and relevant.

The Superintendent will communicate through schoolmessenger, e-mail and other digital means, where possible. He will use regular, U. S. postal mail, when necessary. When phone call or in-person visits result in information to one Board member that is of a nature that should go to all Board members, the Superintendent will follow up with a summary or response appropriate for all Board members.

The Board Takes Responsibility for itself.

The Board will schedule an annual workshop/retreat to complete a Board Self-Evaluation and review governance team agreements and processes.

2:120 Board Member Development

Behavioral Expectations

- a. Start with the common belief that everyone has good intentions.
- b. Create a safe environment for the productive exchange of ideas.
- c. Sincerely listen and seek to understand the viewpoints of others.
- d. Understand that the relationship between the Superintendent and any individual Board members is collegial not hierarchical, based on mutual respect for their complimentary roles.
- e. Solve problems through a collaborative process where all participants support the decision and actively work toward its implementation.
- f. The Board and the Superintendent have the right to expect performance, candor and honesty from one another. We use the term "straight talk" to describe that respectful tone of discussion that leads to appropriate questions and moves us towards resolution.
- g. Matters of personnel shall not be discussed outside of Closed Session when a quorum of the Board of Education is present.
- h. Be mindful that matters discussed in Closed Session meetings must remain closed from all members of the public, unless the full Board of Education votes to release minutes of said Closed Session. Breaches of confidentiality erode trust.

I agree, as a member of the Geneseo CUSD 228 Board of Education, that I will do my best to implement and follow the operating agreement guidelines set forth above.

Name Douglas W. Ford

Signature [Signature]

Date 5/5/15

Name Heather G DeBrock

Signature Heather G DeBrock

Date 5/5/15

Name Christy M. Coleman

Signature Christy M. Coleman

Date 5/5/15

Name Diane S. Olson

Signature Diane S. Olson

Date 5-5-15

Name ALAN VAN DE WOEESTYNE

Signature Alan Van De Woeestyne

Date 5-5-15

Name Barry Snodgrass

Signature Barry Snodgrass

Date 5-5-15

Name JOHN S. PUENTES

Signature [Signature]

Date 5/5/15

The best school boards

School board practices vary widely from place to place. The degree of formality required in conducting meetings, for example, may depend on whether the board meets before a large audience, a small one, or no audience at all. There are some characteristics, however, that are common to good school boards everywhere.

Good school boards know the difference between governance (which is their job) and management (which is the administration's job) and place a high priority on respecting that difference.

Good school boards make every effort to operate openly by encouraging public attendance at their meetings and keeping constituents informed of the district's progress.

Good school boards enact major policies only after all sides of the matter have been studied and all persons or groups affected have been consulted. Many boards provide for public hearings before enacting new policies.

Good boards attempt to reach decisions that all members can support.

Good boards are efficient. This means that their procedures for conducting business are appropriate to their needs and that they do not waste time on trivia.

Good boards know they are in the business of education. They talk about education, study the needs of students and society, and base their decisions on those needs.

The best board members

The best school board member may be you. Board members come from all walks of life. The ability to function as one member of a seven-member governing board is not determined by sex, occupation, race, income or social standing. Effective school board members, however, are characterized by the following:

- 1) The ability to work as a member of a team, including an open mind and an ability to engage in give-and-take and to arrive at a group consensus.
- 2) The willingness to spend the time required to become informed and to do the homework needed to take part in effective school board meetings.
- 3) The desire to serve children and the community and a strong belief in the values of the public schools.
- 4) The respect for needs and feelings of other people and a well-developed sense of fair play.
- 5) The recognition that the school district is probably the largest business in town and that the board is responsi-

ble for seeing that the business is run by highly skilled professionals.

Effective board members often are those who have proved successful in their particular vocations or avocations and who have demonstrated a genuine concern for community improvement.

How to talk to your schools

Some people call a school board member with their concerns, suggestions and questions. Sometimes this works, particularly if a district-wide policy is involved. More often than not, however, the matter must be referred to the superintendent or other staff member for handling. Remember that the individual board member has no authority other than voting on official actions at meetings. Therefore, the individual board member is rarely the place to begin when you have a concern.

The best place to begin is with the person(s) directly involved. That would be the teacher where a student-related problem is involved, for example, or the principal where a school regulation or practice is what concerns you. Many larger school districts maintain community relations departments. A few employ an "ombudsman" whose job is to represent the best interests of individual citizens and students. In any event, these people will help you or direct you to other staff members who can.

When a situation cannot be resolved at the lowest possible level, then it should be taken to the next level in a kind of "chain of command." Once you have talked to the teacher and/or principal, you may still have to bring to the attention of the superintendent those matters that involve state laws or district-wide policies.

When the superintendent cannot resolve your problem, you should ask to be placed on the agenda for the next board meeting. If the concern is important enough to be brought before a public meeting of the full board, you'll find this approach gets a much better response than talking to an individual board member.

Most boards set aside time at meetings for public input. Some set time limits so that all can be accommodated. Find out in advance about any such ground rules. Then set down your views in writing and distribute copies to the board at the meeting. Your views are strengthened when they can be read as well as heard.

However, if you take your concern first to the person(s) directly involved and work your way up the chain of command, you will almost never need to appeal to the school board.