

Brackett Independent School District
Parent/Student Complaint Form
Level One

Complete this form in accordance with District policy FNG (LEGAL/LOCAL). Your complaint will be dismissed if it is submitted with incomplete information. Submit your Level One complaint to your campus principal.

1. Student's Name _____

2. Parent's Name _____

3. Address & Telephone Number _____

4. Campus _____

5. The date of the event or action that gave rise to this complaint _____

6. A detailed factual description of all of the circumstance(s) that gave rise to this complaint. (Use additional pages if necessary)

7. Explain specifically how your child was harmed or injured by the facts that you provided in response to item 6 above.

8. Identify and attach any documents upon which you will rely during the complaint process and explain what those documents will prove. (If you do not have these documents at the time you file your complaint, you will be able to provide copies at the Level One conference. However, please identify to the best of your ability what those documents are and what you think they will prove.)

9. The district wants to have all complaints resolved informally or at the lowest possible level. Explain your efforts to informally resolve your complaint including whom you spoke with, when you met, and the response you received. If you did not attempt informal resolution, provide an explanation why not.

10. Identify the remedy you seek for this complaint. In other words, what do you want us to do in response to your complaint?

Parent's Signature

Date Submitted

Name, address, and telephone and fax number of representative, if any.

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**United States
Constitution**

A district shall take no action abridging the freedom of speech or the right of the people to petition the board for redress of grievances. *U.S. Const. Amend. I, XIV* [See FNA]

A board may confine its meetings to specified subject matter and may hold nonpublic sessions to transact business. But when a board sits in public meetings to conduct public business and hear the views of citizens, it may not discriminate between speakers on the basis of the content of their speech or the message it conveys. *Rosenberger v. Rector & Visitors of Univ. of Virginia*, 515 U.S. 819, 828 (1995); *City of Madison v. Wis. Emp. Rel. Comm'n*, 429 U.S. 167, 174 (1976); *Pickering v. Bd. of Educ.*, 391 U.S. 563, 568 (1968)

Texas Constitution

Citizens shall have the right, in a peaceable manner, to assemble together for their common good and to apply to those invested with the powers of government for redress of grievances or other purposes, by petition, address, or remonstrance. *Tex. Const. Art. I, Sec. 27*

There is no requirement that a board negotiate or even respond to complaints. However, a board must stop, look, and listen and must consider the petition, address, or remonstrance. *Prof'l Ass'n of College Educators v. El Paso County Cmty. [College] Dist.*, 678 S.W.2d 94 (Tex. App.—El Paso 1984, writ ref'd n.r.e.)

Federal Laws

Section 504

A district that receives federal financial assistance, directly or indirectly, and that employs 15 or more persons shall adopt grievance procedures that incorporate appropriate due process standards and that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. *34 C.F.R. 104.7(b)*

Americans with
Disabilities Act

A district that employs 50 or more persons shall adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited by the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 28, Part 35 (Americans with Disabilities Act regulations). *28 C.F.R. 35.107*

Title IX

A district that receives federal financial assistance, directly or indirectly, must adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of student complaints alleging any action prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. *34 C.F.R. 106.8(c)* [See FB and FFH]

Grievances

A board shall provide for procedures to consider complaints that a parent's right has been denied. *Education Code 26.001(d)(1)*

A board shall adopt a grievance procedure that complies with Education Code Chapter 26A under which the board shall address

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each grievance that it receives concerning a violation of a right guaranteed by Education Code Chapter 26 (Parental Rights), of a board policy, or of a provision of Education Code Title II.

Exceptions

The board is not required by the provision above or Education Code 11.1511(b)(13) (requiring adoption of a process to hear complaints) to address a grievance concerning a student's participation in an extracurricular activity that does not involve a violation of a right guaranteed by Education Code Chapter 26, of a board policy, or of a provision of Education Code Title II. This provision does not affect a claim brought by a parent under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Section 1400 et seq.) or a successor federal statute addressing special education services for a child with a disability.

Notice to Teacher or Employee

The grievance procedure must require that, for a complaint filed against a teacher or other employee, the school district provide notice of the complaint to the teacher or employee against whom the complaint was filed and sufficient opportunity for the teacher or employee against whom the complaint was filed to submit a written response to the complaint to be included in the record.

Education Code 26.011

Grievance Policy

The board shall adopt a grievance policy to address grievances received by the district. *Education Code 26A.001(a)*

Levels of Review

The policy must provide for the following levels of review, except as provided below:

1. Review by the principal of the district campus at which the grievance is filed or the principal's designee or, for a grievance that arises from subject matter unrelated to a campus, an administrator at the school district's central office;
2. If established by the policy, an appeal to an administrator at the school district's central office;
3. An appeal to the superintendent of the school district or the superintendent's designee; and
4. An appeal to the board of trustees of the school district.

A review or appeal on a grievance must be conducted by a person with the authority to address the grievance unless a preliminary hearing is necessary to develop a record or a recommendation for the board of trustees of the school district.

[For requirements for determining level of review related to recusal of a district employee or board member, see General Requirements, below.]

Education Code 26A.001(b), (c)

*General
Requirements*

The policy must:

1. Prohibit the board or a district employee from retaliating against a student or parent of a student who files a grievance in accordance with the policy;
2. Require a person involved in reviewing a grievance under the policy to recuse himself or herself from reviewing the grievance if the person is the subject of the grievance;
3. Provide for a higher level of review if the person who would otherwise review the grievance is required to recuse himself or herself;
4. Provide for the creation and retention of a record of each hearing on the grievance, including documents submitted by the person who filed the grievance or determined relevant by school district personnel and a written record of the decision, including an explanation of the basis for the decision and an indication of each document that supports the decision;
5. Allow the person who filed the grievance to supplement the record with additional documents or add additional claims;
6. Allow for a member of the board to file a grievance with the district, but prohibit the member from voting on matters related to that grievance;
7. Allow for a remand to a lower level of review to develop a record at any time, including at the board level of review;
8. Require the district to direct a grievance that is filed with the incorrect administrator to the appropriate administrator and consider the grievance filed on the date on which the grievance was initially filed;
9. Require the district to issue a decision on the merits of the concern raised in the grievance, notwithstanding procedural errors or the type of relief requested;
10. Unless otherwise required by law, allow for a hearing or meeting at which the grievance will be discussed to be open or closed at the request of the person who filed the grievance; and

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11. For a grievance before the board, require that the person who filed the grievance be provided at least five business days before the date on which the meeting to discuss the grievance will be held a description of any information the board of trustees intends to rely on that is not contained in the record; and
12. For a grievance before the board, require the meeting at which the grievance is discussed be recorded by video or audio recording or by transcript created by a certified court reporter.

Education Code 26A.001(e)

Deadlines

Parental
Grievances

For a grievance filed by a parent of a student enrolled in the school district, the policy must provide:

1. Sixty days to file a grievance from the date on which the parent knew or had reason to know of the facts giving rise to the grievance; or
2. If the parent or person engaged in informal attempts to resolve the grievance, the later of 90 days to file a grievance from the date determined above or 30 days to file a grievance from the date on which the district provided information to the parent or person regarding how to file the grievance.

Appeal

The policy must provide at least 20 days to file an appeal after the date on which a decision on the grievance was made.

Hearings

For a hearing that is not before the board of trustees of the school district, the policy must require:

1. The district to hold a hearing not later than the 10th day after the date on which the grievance or appeal was filed; and
2. A written decision to be made not later than the 20th day after the date on which the hearing was held that includes any relief or redress to be provided and information regarding filing an appeal, including the timeline to appeal under this provision and Education Code 7.057, if applicable.

For a hearing before the board, the policy must require the board to:

1. Hold a meeting to discuss the grievance not later than the 60th day after the date on which the previous decision on the grievance was made; and

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2. Make a decision on the grievance not later than the 30th day after the date on which the meeting is held.

Education Code 26A.002

Board Committee The board may delegate the authority to hear and decide a grievance to a committee of at least three members composed only of members of the board. For purposes of an appeal to the commissioner under Education Code 7.057, a decision by the committee is a decision of the board of trustees. The policy requirements above apply to the committee in the same manner as those requirements apply to the board. *Education Code 26A.001(e)*

Report on Grievances A district shall annually submit to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) a report on grievances filed in the district during the preceding year. The report must include for each grievance the resolution of the grievance and any corrective action taken. *Education Code 26A.001(g)*

Not later than December 1 of each year, TEA shall post on the agency's website a report on grievances filed in school districts during the preceding year. The report must aggregate the data statewide and state the number of grievances filed, the number of grievances resolved and the resolution of those grievances, and any corrective actions taken. *Education Code 26A.001(h)*

Filing Procedures and Forms The board shall develop, make publicly available in a prominent location on the district's website, and include in the district's student handbook the procedures for resolving grievances; standardized forms for filing a grievance, a notice of appeal, or a request for a hearing under this chapter; and the method by which a grievance may be filed electronically.

Electronic Filing A district shall ensure that a grievance may be submitted electronically at the location on the district's website at which the information described above is available.

TEA Notification A district shall submit and make accessible to TEA the location on the district's website at which the information described above is available.

Education Code 26A.003

Commissioner Enforcement If a grievance is appealed to the commissioner under Education Code 7.057, the commissioner of education may:

On Appeal

1. Investigate an alleged violation of state or federal law regarding the confidentiality of student information, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C.

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Section 1232g), relating to the grievance and collaborate with relevant federal agencies in such an investigation; and

2. Take any action necessary to compel the district, the district's board, or a district employee to comply with the state or federal law.

Education Code 26A.001(f)

Determination of Retaliation

If the commissioner determines that a school district educator has retaliated against a student or parent of or person standing in parental relation to a student in violation of the policy requirement, above, the commissioner of education may report the educator to the State Board for Educator Certification for investigation. *Education Code 26A.001(i)*

Superintendent Testimony

If the commissioner of education finds against a school district under Education Code 7.057 in at least five grievances to which that provision applies involving the district during a school year, the superintendent of the school district must appear before the State Board of Education to testify regarding the commissioner's findings and the frequency of grievances against the district. *Education Code 26A.004*

**Denial of Class
Credit or Final Grade**

If a student is denied credit or a final grade for a class by an attendance committee, the student may appeal the decision to the board. *Education Code 25.092(d)* [See FEC]

**Complaints Against
Professional
Employees**

A person may not file suit against a professional employee of a district unless the person has exhausted the district's remedies for resolving the complaint. *Education Code 22.0514*

"Professional employee of a district" includes:

1. A superintendent, principal, teacher, including a substitute teacher, supervisor, social worker, school counselor, nurse, and teacher's aide employed by a district;
2. A teacher employed by a company that contracts with a district to provide the teacher's services to the district;
3. A student in an education preparation program participating in a field experience or internship;
4. A DPS-certified school bus driver;
5. A member of the board; and
6. Any other person whose employment by a district requires certification and the exercise of discretion.

Education Code 22.051(a)

Finality of Grades

An examination or course grade issued by a classroom teacher is final and may not be changed unless the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or not consistent with a district's grading policy applicable to the grade, as determined by the board.

A board's determination is not subject to appeal. This provision does not prohibit an appeal related to a student's eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities under Education Code 33.081. [See FM]

Education Code 28.0214

Closed Meeting

A board may conduct a closed meeting on a parent or student complaint to the extent required or provided by law. *Gov't Code Ch. 551, Subch. D* [See BEC]

Record of Proceedings

An appeal of a board's decision to the commissioner of education shall be decided based on a review of the record developed at the district level. "Record" includes, at a minimum, an audible electronic recording or written transcript of all oral testimony or argument. *Education Code 7.057(c), (f)*

It is a district's responsibility to make and preserve the records of the proceedings before the board. If a district fails to create and preserve the record without good cause, all substantial evidence issues that require missing portions of the record for resolution shall be deemed against the district. The record shall include:

1. A tape recording or a transcript of the hearing at the local level. If a tape recording is used:
 - a. The tape recording must be complete, audible, and clear; and
 - b. Each speaker must be clearly identified.
2. All evidence admitted;
3. All offers of proof;
4. All written pleadings, motions, and intermediate rulings;
5. A description of matters officially noticed;
6. If applicable, the decision of the hearing examiner;
7. A tape recording or transcript of the oral argument before the board; and
8. The decision of the board.

19 TAC 157.1073(d)

Note: This local policy has been revised in accordance with the District's innovation plan. [See AF(LOCAL)]

Complaints

In this policy, the terms "complaint" and "grievance" shall have the same meaning.

Other Complaint Processes

Student or parent complaints shall be filed in accordance with this policy, except as required by the policies listed below. Some of these policies require appeals to be submitted in accordance with FNG after the relevant complaint process has been followed:

1. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, or disability shall be submitted in accordance with FFH.
2. Complaints concerning dating violence shall be submitted in accordance with FFH.
3. Complaints concerning retaliation related to discrimination and harassment shall be submitted in accordance with FFH.
4. Complaints concerning bullying or retaliation related to bullying shall be submitted in accordance with FFI.
5. Complaints concerning failure to award credit or a final grade on the basis of attendance shall be submitted in accordance with FEC.
6. Complaints concerning expulsion shall be submitted in accordance with FOD and the Student Code of Conduct.
7. Complaints concerning any final decisions of the gifted and talented selection committee regarding selection for or exit from the gifted program shall be submitted in accordance with EHBB.
8. Complaints within the scope of Section 504, including complaints concerning identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability, shall be submitted in accordance with FB and the procedural safeguards handbook.
9. Complaints within the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, including complaints concerning identification, evaluation, educational placement, or discipline of a student with a disability, shall be submitted in accordance with EHBAE, FOF, and the procedural safeguards handbook provided to parents of all students referred to special education.

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10. Complaints concerning instructional resources shall be submitted in accordance with the EF series.
11. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District shall be submitted in accordance with the CKE series.
12. Complaints concerning intradistrict transfers or campus assignment shall be submitted in accordance with FDB.
13. Complaints concerning admission, placement, or services provided for a homeless student shall be submitted in accordance with FDC.
14. Complaints concerning disputes regarding a student's eligibility for free or reduced-priced meal programs shall be submitted in accordance with COB.

Complaints regarding refusal of entry to or ejection from District property based on Education Code 37.105 shall be filed in accordance with this policy. However, the timelines shall be adjusted as necessary to permit the complainant to address the Board in person within 90 calendar days of filing the initial complaint, unless the complaint is resolved before the Board considers it. [See GKA(LEGAL)]

Notice to Students and Parents

The District shall inform students and parents of this policy through appropriate District publications.

Guiding Principles

Informal Process

The Board encourages students and parents to discuss their concerns with the appropriate teacher, principal, or other campus administrator who has the authority to address the concerns. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Informal resolution shall be encouraged but shall not extend any deadlines in this policy, except by mutual written consent.

Formal Process

A student or parent may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form.

Even after initiating the formal complaint process, students and parents are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. A student or parent whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.

The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or "mini-trial" at any level.

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Freedom from Retaliation	Neither the Board nor any District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against any student or parent for bringing a concern or complaint.
General Provisions	
Filing	Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, by electronic communication, including email and fax, or by U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Filings submitted by electronic communication shall be timely filed if they are received by the close of business on the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the electronic communication. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.
Scheduling Conferences	The District shall make reasonable attempts to schedule conferences at a mutually agreeable time. If a student or parent fails to appear at a scheduled conference, the District may hold the conference and issue a decision in the student's or parent's absence.
Response	At Levels One and Two, "response" shall mean a written communication to the student or parent from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered, sent by electronic communication to the student's or parent's email address of record, or sent by U.S. Mail to the student's or parent's mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.
Days	"Days" shall mean District business days, unless otherwise noted. In calculating timelines under this policy, the day a document is filed is "day zero." The following business day is "day one."
Representative	"Representative" shall mean any person who or organization that is designated by the student or parent to represent the student or parent in the complaint process. A student may be represented by an adult at any level of the complaint. The student or parent may designate a representative through written notice to the District at any level of this process. If the student or parent designates a representative with fewer than three days' notice to the District before a scheduled conference or hearing, the District may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the District's counsel. The District may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.
Consolidating Complaints	Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. A student or parent shall not file separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of

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events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.

Untimely Filings

All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent.

If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the student or parent, at any point during the complaint process. The student or parent may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within 10 days from the date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

Costs Incurred

Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

Complaint and Appeal Forms

Complaints and appeals under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the District.

Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the student or parent does not have copies of these documents, copies may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted by the student or parent unless the student or parent did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.

A complaint or appeal form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed but may be refiled with all the required information if the refiled is within the designated time for filing.

Level One

Complaint forms must be filed:

1. Within 15 days of the date the student or parent first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and
2. With the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem.

In most circumstances, students and parents shall file Level One complaints with the campus principal.

If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the Superintendent, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One.

If the complaint is not filed with the appropriate administrator, the receiving administrator must note the date and time the complaint

form was received and immediately forward the complaint form to the appropriate administrator.

The appropriate administrator shall investigate as necessary and schedule a conference with the student or parent within 10 days after receipt of the written complaint. The administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

Absent extenuating circumstances, the administrator shall provide the student or parent a written response within 10 days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the administrator may consider information provided at the Level One conference and any other relevant documents or information the administrator believes will help resolve the complaint.

Level Two

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may request a conference with the Superintendent to appeal the Level One decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within 10 days of the date of the written Level One response or, if no response was received, within 10 days of the Level One response deadline.

After receiving notice of the appeal, the Level One administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One complaint to the Level Two administrator. The student or parent may request a copy of the Level One record.

The Level One record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the student or parent at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level One administrator in reaching the Level One decision.

The Superintendent shall schedule a conference within 10 days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level One. At the conference, the student or parent may provide information concerning any documents or information relied upon by the administration for the Level One decision. The Superintendent may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The Superintendent shall provide the student or parent a written response within 10 days following the conference. The written response shall set forth the basis of the decision. In reaching a decision, the Superintendent may consider the Level One record, information provided at the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the Superintendent believes will help resolve the complaint.

Recordings of the Level One and Level Two conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the Level One and Level Two records.

Level Three

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may appeal the decision to the Board.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within 10 days of the date of the written Level Two response or, if no response was received, within 10 days of the Level Two response deadline.

The Superintendent shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the Board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda for presentation to the Board.

The Superintendent shall provide the Board the record of the Level Two appeal. The student or parent may request a copy of the Level Two record.

The Level Two record shall include:

1. The Level One record.
2. The notice of appeal from Level One to Level Two.
3. The written response issued at Level Two and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the administration in reaching the Level Two decision.

The appeal shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level Two, except that if at the Level Three hearing the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, the administration shall provide the student or parent notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the hearing.

The District shall determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law. [See BE]

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The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for the presentation, including an opportunity for the student or parent and administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board. The Board shall hear the complaint and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

In addition to any other record of the Board meeting required by law, the Board shall prepare a separate record of the Level Three presentation. The Level Three presentation, including the presentation by the student or parent or the student's representative, any presentation from the administration, and questions from the Board with responses, shall be recorded by audio recording, video/audio recording, or court reporter.

The Board shall then consider the complaint. It may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If the Board does not make a decision regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.