

Complaint Procedures for Federal Programs under the ESSA Act

COMPLAINTS

Complaint procedures are discussed at the beginning of the school year with school administrators at the leadership meeting. The procedures are shared with them and revised/revisited on a yearly basis. School administrators are charged with sharing the information with their faculty at faculty meetings. Complaint Procedures/forms are available for parents on the school district's website or upon request from the central office.

Complaint Procedures

Parents/school communication is described in student handbooks and on the website. Parents are expected to address complaints or grievances beginning at the school level with the teacher first and then the administration. Central office personnel should be contacted next should parents feel the issues have not been resolved. Conferences forms/notes/minutes are kept on file as documentation of the issues.

Complaint procedures under the ESSA are available from the Director of Federal Programs. The complaint procedures describe grounds for complaints, federal programs for which complaints can be filed, filing and investigation of a complaint, as well as rights to appeal. The address to which complaints should be filed is included in the procedure. Information regarding complaint procedures is distributed annually to school administrators to share with their staff.

Complaint Procedures under ESSA

A. Grounds for a Complaint

Any individual, organization or agency (complainant) may file a complaint with the Amite County Board of Education if that individual, organization or agency believes and alleges that a violation of Federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under ESSA has occurred. 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

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| a. Title I, Part A | g. McKinney-Vento Act |
| b. Title I, Part C | h. School Improvement 1003(g) SIG |
| c. Title I, Part D | i. School Improvement 1003(g)—AARA (SIG—AARA) |
| d. Title II, Part A | j. RT3 |
| e. Title III, Part A | k. Lowest Achieving Schools |
| f. Title VI, Part B | |

C. Complaints Originating at the Local Level

As part of its Assurances within ESSA program grant applications and pursuant to Section 9306 of ESSA, an LEA accepting federal funds must have local written procedures for the receipt and resolution of complaints alleging violations of law in the administration of covered programs. Therefore a complaint should not be filed with the Mississippi Department of Education until every effort has been made to resolve through local written complaint procedures. If the complainant has tried to file a complaint with the Amite County School District to no avail, the complainant must provide the Mississippi Department of Education written proof of their attempt to resolve the issue with the Amite County School District.

D. Filing a Complaint

A formal complaint must be filed 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 regulation);
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.

8. **The complaint must be addressed to:**

Ms. Mary L. Russ, Federal Programs Director
Amite County School District
533 Maggie Street
Liberty, MS 39645

E. Investigation of Complaint

Within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint, Amite County School District 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 additional information or an investigation is necessary, the school system 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. The 60-day timelines may be extended, if exceptional circumstances exist. The Letter of Findings will be sent directly to the complainant.

F. Right of Appeal

If the complaint cannot be resolved at the local level, the complainant has the right to request review of the decision by the Mississippi 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 to the Mississippi 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 school system's decision and include a complete statement of the reasons supporting the appeal.