

# Novato USD

## Board Policy

### Community Relations

BP 1312.3

#### Uniform Complaint Procedures

The Governing Board recognizes that the district has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs. The district shall investigate and seek to resolve any complaints alleging failure to comply with such laws and/or alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying in accordance with the uniform complaint procedures.

The district shall use the uniform complaint procedures to resolve any complaint alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying in district programs and activities based on actual or perceived characteristics of race or ethnicity, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or genetic information, or any other characteristic identified in Education Code 200 or 220, Penal Code 422.55, or Government Code 11135, or based on association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

(cf. 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities)  
(cf. 4030 - Nondiscrimination in Employment)  
(cf. 4031 - Complaints Concerning Discrimination in Employment)  
(cf. 5131.2 - Bullying)  
(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)  
(cf. 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment)

Uniform complaint procedures shall also be used to address any complaint alleging the district's failure to comply with the prohibition against requiring students to pay fees, deposits, or other charges for participation in educational activities, the requirements for the development and adoption of a school safety plan, and state and/or federal laws in adult education programs, consolidated categorical aid programs, migrant education, career technical and technical education and training programs, child care and development programs, child nutrition programs, and special education programs.

(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)  
(cf. 1312.1 - Complaints Concerning District Employees)  
(cf. 1312.2 - Complaints Concerning Instructional Materials)  
(cf. 3260 - Fees and Charges)  
(cf. 3320 - Claims and Actions Against the District)  
(cf. 3553 - Free and Reduced Price Meals)  
(cf. 3555 - Nutrition Program Compliance)

(cf. 5141.4 - Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting)  
(cf. 5148 - Child Care and Development)  
(cf. 6159 - Individualized Education Program)  
(cf. 6171 - Title I Programs)  
(cf. 6174 - Education for English Language Learners)  
(cf. 6175 - Migrant Education Program)  
(cf. 6178 - Career Technical Education)  
(cf. 6178.1 - Work-Based Learning)  
(cf. 6178.2 - Regional Occupational Center/Program)  
(cf. 6200 - Adult Education)

The Board prohibits any form of retaliation against any complainant in the complaint process. Participation in the complaint process shall not in any way affect the status, grades, or work assignments of the complainant.

The Board encourages the early, informal resolution of complaints at the site level whenever possible.

The Board recognizes that a neutral mediator can often facilitate an early compromise that is agreeable to all parties in a dispute. Whenever all parties to a complaint agree to try and resolve their problem through mediation, the Superintendent or designee shall initiate a mediation. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that mediation results are consistent with state and federal laws and regulations.

In investigating complaints, the confidentiality of the parties involved and the integrity of the process shall be protected. As appropriate for any complaint alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, the Superintendent or designee may keep the identity of a complainant confidential to the extent that the investigation of the complaint is not obstructed.

(cf. 4119.23/4219.23/4319.23 - Unauthorized Release of Confidential/Privileged Information)  
(cf. 5125 - Student Records)  
(cf. 9011 - Disclosure of Confidential/Privileged Information)

The district's Williams uniform complaint procedures, AR 1312.4, shall be used to investigate and resolve any complaint related to the following:

1. Sufficiency of textbooks or instructional materials
2. Emergency or urgent facilities conditions that pose a threat to the health or safety of students or staff
3. Teacher vacancies and misassignments
4. Deficiency in the district's provision of instruction and/or services to any student who, by the completion of grade 12, has not passed one or both parts of the high school exit examination

(cf. 1312.4 - Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures)

Complaints Concerning Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) Non-Compliance

A complaint that a county superintendent of schools, or charter school has not complied with the requirements of Article 4.5, Local Control Accountability Plans (Education Code 52060 through 52071), may be filed with a county superintendent of schools, or charter school pursuant to the Uniform Complaint Procedures set forth in Chapter 5.1 (commencing with Section 4600) of Division 1 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations and BP 1312.3 and AR 1312.3.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

200-262.4 Prohibition of discrimination  
8200-8498 Child care and development programs  
8500-8538 Adult basic education  
18100-18203 School libraries  
32289 School safety plan, uniform complaint procedures  
35186 Williams uniform complaint procedures  
37254 Intensive instruction and services for students who have not passed exit exam  
41500-41513 Categorical education block grants  
48985 Notices in language other than English  
49010-49013 Student fees  
49060-49079 Student records  
49490-49590 Child nutrition programs  
52060-52071 – Local Control Accountability Plans  
52160-52178 Bilingual education programs  
52300-52490 Career technical education  
52500-52616.24 Adult schools  
52800-52870 School-based program coordination  
54000-54028 Economic impact aid programs  
54100-54145 Miller-Unruh Basic Reading Act  
54400-54425 Compensatory education programs  
54440-54445 Migrant education  
54460-54529 Compensatory education programs  
56000-56867 Special education programs  
59000-59300 Special schools and centers  
64000-64001 Consolidated application process

GOVERNMENT CODE

11135 Nondiscrimination in programs or activities funded by state  
12900-12996 Fair Employment and Housing Act

PENAL CODE

422.55 Hate crime; definition  
422.6 Interference with constitutional right or privilege

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

3080 Application of section  
4600-4687 Uniform complaint procedures  
4900-4965 Nondiscrimination in elementary and secondary education programs

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20

6301-6577 Title I basic programs  
6601-6777 Title II preparing and recruiting high quality teachers and principals  
6801-6871 Title III language instruction for limited English proficient and immigrant students  
7101-7184 Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act  
7201-7283g Title V promoting informed parental choice and innovative programs  
7301-7372 Title V rural and low-income school programs

Management Resources:

WEB SITES

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

California Department of Education: <http://www.cde.ca.gov>

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr>

Policy            NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
adopted:        September 30, 2008    Novato, California  
revised:        August 6, 2013  
revised:        June 17, 2014

# **Novato USD**

## **Administrative Regulation**

### **Community Relations**

AR 1312.3

#### **Uniform Complaint Procedures**

Except as the Governing Board may otherwise specifically provide in other Board policies, the uniform complaint procedures shall be used only to investigate and resolve complaints alleging violations of federal or state laws or regulations governing specific educational programs, the prohibition against requiring students to pay fees, deposits, or other charges for participating in educational activities, and unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, as specified in accompanying Board policy.

(cf. 1312.1 - Complaints Concerning District Employees)

(cf. 1312.2 - Complaints Concerning Instructional Materials)

(cf. 1312.4 - Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures)

(cf. 4031 - Complaints Concerning Discrimination in Employment)

The district's uniform complaint procedures policy and administrative regulation shall be posted in all district schools and offices, including staff lounges and student government meeting rooms. If 15 percent or more of students enrolled in a particular district school speak a single primary language other than English, the district's policy, regulation, forms, and notices concerning uniform complaint procedures shall be translated into that language. (Education Code 234.1, 48985)

(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)

#### **Compliance Officers**

The Board of Education designates the following compliance officer to receive and investigate complaints and to ensure district compliance with the law:

Superintendent  
1015 Seventh Street  
Novato, CA 94945  
(415) 897-4222

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that designated employees are knowledgeable about the laws and programs for which they are responsible. Such employees may have access to legal counsel as determined by the Superintendent or designee.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually provide written notification of the district's uniform complaint procedures to pupils, employees, parents/guardians, the district advisory committee, school advisory committees, appropriate private school officials or representatives,

and other interested parties.

## Notifications

The notice shall:

1. Identify the person(s), position(s), or unit(s) responsible for receiving complaints
2. Advise the complainant of any civil law remedies that may be available to him/her under state or federal discrimination laws, if applicable
3. Advise the complainant of the appeal process, including, if applicable, the complainant's right to take a complaint directly to the California Department of Education (CDE) or to pursue remedies before civil courts or other public agencies
4. Include statements that:
  - a. The district has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs.
  - b. The complaint review shall be completed within 60 calendar days from the date of receipt of the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to an extension of the timeline.
  - c. A complaint alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying must be filed not later than six months from the date it occurred, or six months from the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying.
  - d. The complainant has a right to appeal the district's decision to the CDE by filing a written appeal within 15 calendar days of receiving the district's decision.
  - e. The appeal to the CDE must include a copy of the complaint filed with the district and a copy of the district's decision.
  - f. Copies of the district's uniform complaint procedures are available free of charge.

## Procedures

All complaints shall be investigated and resolved within 60 calendar days of the district's receipt of the complaint. (5 CCR 4631)

Compliance officers shall maintain a record of each complaint and subsequent related actions, including all information required for compliance with 5 CCR 4631 and 4633.

All parties involved in allegations shall be notified when a complaint is filed, when a complaint meeting or hearing is scheduled, and when a decision or ruling is made.

### Step 1: Filing of Complaint

Any individual, public agency or organization may file a written complaint of alleged noncompliance with federal or state laws or regulations governing educational programs. (5 CCR 4630)

A complaint concerning unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying may be filed only by a person who alleges that he/she personally suffered unlawful discrimination,

harassment, intimidation, or bullying or by a person who believes that an individual or any specific class of individuals has been subjected to it. The complaint shall be initiated no later than six months from the date when the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying occurred, or six months from the date when the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying. However, upon written request by the complainant, the Superintendent or designee may extend the filing period for up to 90 calendar days. (5 CCR 4630)

A complaint alleging noncompliance with the law regarding the prohibition against requiring students to pay student fees, deposits, and charges may be filed anonymously if the complaint provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support an allegation of noncompliance. (Education Code 49013)

The complaint shall be presented to the Superintendent, who will then give it to the appropriate compliance officer. The Superintendent will maintain a log of complaints received, providing each with a code number and a date stamp. If a complainant is unable to put a complaint in writing due to conditions such as disability or illiteracy, district staff shall assist him/her in the filing of the complaint. (5 CCR 4600)

#### Step 2: Mediation

Within ten school days of receiving the complaint, the compliance officer may informally discuss with the complainant the possibility of using mediation. If the complainant agrees to mediation, the compliance officer shall make all arrangements for this process.

Before initiating the mediation of a discrimination complaint, the compliance officer shall ensure that all parties agree to make the mediator a party to related confidential information.

If the mediation process does not resolve the problem within the parameters of law, the compliance officer shall proceed with his/her investigation of the complaint.

The use of mediation shall not extend the district's timelines for investigating and resolving the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to such an extension of time. (5 CCR 4631)

#### Step 3: Investigation of Complaint

Within 20 calendar days of receiving the complaint, the compliance officer shall provide the complainant and/or his/her representative an opportunity to present the complaint and any evidence, or information leading to evidence, to support the allegations in the complaint. The compliance officer also shall collect all documents and interview all witnesses with information pertinent to the complaint.

A complainant's refusal to provide the district's investigator with documents or other evidence related to the allegations in the complaint, or his/her failure or refusal to cooperate in the investigation or his/her engagement in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in the dismissal of the complaint because of lack of evidence to support the allegation

(5 CCR 4631).

In accordance with law, the district shall provide the investigator with access to records and other information related to the allegation in the complaint and shall not in any way obstruct the investigation. Failure or refusal of the district to cooperate in the investigation may result in a finding based on evidence collected that a violation has occurred and in the imposition of a remedy in favor of the complainant. (5 CCR 4631)

#### Step 4: Response

Within 30 days of receiving the complaint, the compliance officer shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of the district's investigation and decision, as described in Step 5 below. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the compliance officer's decision, the complainant may request a hearing before the Board. Such a request must be filed in writing within 5 days.

The Board may consider the matter at its next regular Board meeting or at a special Board meeting convened in order to meet the 60-day time limit within which the complaint must be answered. The Board may decide not to hear the complaint, in which case the compliance officer's decision is final.

If the Board hears the complaint, the compliance officer shall send the Board's decision to the complainant within 60 days of the district's initially receiving the complaint or within the time period that has been specified in a written agreement with the complainant. (5 CCR 4631)

#### Step 5: Final Written Decision

The report of the district's decision shall be in writing and sent to the complainant.

The district's decision shall be written in English and, when required by Education Code 48985, in the complainant's primary language.

For all complaints, the decision shall include: (5 CCR 4631)

1. The findings of fact based on the evidence gathered
2. The conclusion(s) of law
3. Disposition of the complaint
4. Rationale for such disposition
5. Corrective actions, if any are warranted
6. Notice of the complainant's right to appeal the district's decision within 15 calendar days to the CDE and procedures to be followed for initiating such an appeal



In addition, any decision concerning a discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying complaint based on state law shall include a notice that the complainant must wait until 60 calendar days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the CDE before pursuing civil law remedies. (Education Code 262.3)

If investigation of a complaint results in discipline to a student or an employee, the decision shall simply state that effective action was taken and that the student or employee was informed of district expectations. The report shall not give any further information as to the nature of the disciplinary action.

#### Complaints Concerning the Local Control Accountability Plans

1. A complaint may be filed anonymously if the complaint provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support an allegation of noncompliance with the requirements of Education Code 52060 through 52071.
2. A complainant not satisfied with the decision of the county superintendent of schools, or charter school may appeal the decision to the Superintendent of Public Instruction and shall receive a written appeal decision within 60 days of the Superintendent's receipt of appeal.
3. If a county superintendent of schools, or charter school finds merit in a complaint, or the Superintendent finds merit in an appeal, the county superintendent of schools, or charter school shall provide a remedy to all affected pupils, parents, and guardians.

#### Appeals to the California Department of Education

If dissatisfied with the district's decision, the complainant may appeal in writing to the California Department of (5 CCR 4652) The complainant shall file his/her appeal within 15 calendar days of receiving the district's decision and the appeal shall specify the basis for the appeal of the decision and whether the facts are incorrect and/or the law has been misapplied. The appeal shall be accompanied by a copy of the locally filed complaint and a copy of the district's decision. (5 CCR 4632)

Upon notification by the CDE that the complainant has appealed the district's decision, the Superintendent or designee shall forward the following documents to the CDE: (5 CCR 4633)

1. A copy of the original complaint
2. A copy of the decision
3. A summary of the nature and extent of the investigation conducted by the district, if not covered by the decision
4. A copy of the investigation file including, but not limited to, all notes, interviews, and documents submitted by the parties and gathered by the investigator
5. A report of any action taken to resolve the complaint
6. A copy of the district's uniform complaint procedures
7. Other relevant information requested by the CDE

The California Department of Education may directly intervene in the complaint without waiting for action by the district when one of the conditions listed in 5 CCR 4650 exists. In addition, the California Department of Education may also intervene in those cases where the district has not taken action within 60 calendar days of the date the complaint was filed with the district.

#### Civil Law Remedies

A complainant may pursue available civil law remedies outside of the district's complaint procedures. Complainants may seek assistance from mediation centers or public/private interest attorneys. Civil law remedies that may be imposed by a court include, but are not limited to, injunctions and restraining orders.

For complaints alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying based on state law, a complainant shall wait until 60 calendar days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the CDE before pursuing civil law remedies, provided the district has appropriately and in a timely manner apprised the complainant of his/her right to file a complaint in accordance with 5 CCR 4622. The moratorium does not apply to injunctive relief and to discrimination complaints based on federal law. (Education Code 262.3)

Regulation	NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
approved:	September 30, 2008                      Novato, California
revised:	August 6, 2013
revised:	June 17, 2014

## Novato Unified School District Complaint Form

It is the intent of the Board of Trustees to provide a process for the community to address complaint(s) to appropriate district personnel and to receive a prompt and well-reasoned response without fear of retaliation. It is also the intent of the Board of Trustees to protect personnel from unfair and unfounded accusations and to resolve any complaints swiftly.

The school board policies related to complaints about discrimination, programs, materials all require that efforts be made first to resolve complaints directly with the person involved.

Complainant/Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home/Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ School Name \_\_\_\_\_

Person, School or Department your Complaint Involves \_\_\_\_\_

### Type of Complaint

- |  |                                       |                                    |                                  |
|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination    | <input type="checkbox"/> Materials    | <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Harassment | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Fees | <input type="checkbox"/> Other     |                                  |

Details of the complaint (additional pages as needed):

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Individuals with information about the circumstances of the complaint:

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Details of the attempt to informally resolve the complaint:

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Specific remedy sought:

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A copy of the Complaint form will be given to the employee, to allow the employee to respond to the complaint.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California, that I have made true, correct and complete answers and statements on this complaint form and/or any attachment to this complaint form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Received by

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date