

LEA - SCCPSS FY16 Procedures for Complaints/tracking and reports of resolution

Complaint/Dispute Resolution

Savannah-Chatham County Public School System

Complaint Procedures under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)

Section 9304 – General Applicability of State Educational Agency Assurances

Section 9503 – Complaint Process for Participation of Private School Children

A. Grounds for a Complaint

Any individual, organization or agency (complainant) may file a complaint with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) if that individual, organization or agency believes and alleges that a local educational agency (LEA), the state educational agency (SEA), or an agency or consortium of agencies is violating a Federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under the Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one 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

1. Title I, Part A
2. Title I, Part A: Academic Achievement Awards
3. Title I, Part A: Reward Districts Awards
4. Title I, School Improvement 1003(a)
5. Title I: Part D Neglected & Delinquent
6. Title I, Part C: Migrant
7. Title II, Part A: Teacher Quality
8. Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for LEP and Immigrant Students
9. Title X Part C: McKinney-Vento Ed. for Homeless Children and Youth
10. Title VI, Part B: Rural Education Achievement Program
11. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
12. School Improvement 1003(g) SIG

C. Complaints Originating at the Local Level

As part of its Assurances within ESEA program grant applications and pursuant to Section 9306 within the Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), Savannah-Chatham County Public School System, in accepting Federal funds, agrees to adopt local written procedures for the receipt and resolution of complaints alleging violations of law in the administration of covered programs. Therefore, for complaints originating at the local level, a complaint should not be filed with the GaDOE until every effort has been made to resolve the issue through local written complaint procedures. If the complainant has tried to file a complaint at the local level to no avail, the complainant must provide the GaDOE with written proof of their attempt to resolve the issue at the local level.

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D. Filing a Complaint

A complaint must be made in writing or submitted via online web complaint form to the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System Title I Senior Director 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.
7. The address of the complainant.

E. Complaint Response – Title I Senior Director

The Title I Senior Director will provide a written response to the dispute within 10 business days.

- The response will include the decision of the Title I Senior Director, a rationale/evidence/statute supporting the decision, and a notice of the right to appeal to the Superintendent

F. Complaint Response – Superintendent

If the complainant does not agree with the decision of the Title I Senior Director, an appeal may be filed with the Superintendent of Savannah-Chatham County Schools. The Superintendent will provide a written response to the appeal within 10 business days.

- The response will include the decision of the Superintendent and a notice of the right to appeal to the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System Board of Education

G. State Level

A complaint should not be filed with the GaDOE until every effort has been made to resolve the issue through local written complaint procedures. If the complainant has tried to file a complaint at the local level to no avail, the complainant must provide the GaDOE with written proof of their attempt to resolve the issue at the local level.

A complaint must be made in writing or submitted via online web complaint form

http://www.gadoe.org/tss_title.aspx and signed by the complainant. The complaint must include the following:

1. A statement that the LEA, SEA, agency or consortium of agencies 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.
7. The address of the complainant.

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Once the appeal is received by the Federal Programs Division, it will be copied and forwarded to the appropriate Federal Program Manager.

H. Investigation of Complaint At State Level

Within ten days of receipt of the complaint, the Associate Superintendent or his or her designee will issue a Letter of Acknowledgement to the complainant that contains the following information:

1. The date the GaDOE received the complaint.
2. How the complainant may provide additional information.
3. A statement of the ways in which the GaDOE may investigate or address the complaint.
4. Any other pertinent information.

If the complaint involves an LEA, the GaDOE will also send a copy of the Letter of Acknowledgement to the local superintendent, along with a copy of the complaint. The GaDOE will contact the LEA to clarify the issues and review the complaint process. If the complaint cannot be resolved through this contact, the GaDOE will invite the LEA to submit a written response to the GaDOE, and to provide a copy of the response to the complainant.

Appropriate GaDOE staff will review the information and determine whether:

1. Additional information is needed.
2. An on-site investigation must be conducted.
3. Other measures must be taken to resolve the issues raised in the complaint.
4. A Letter of Findings can be issued.

If additional information or an investigation is necessary, the GaDOE will have 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.

Either the 30 day or the 60 day timelines outlined above may be extended, if exceptional circumstances exist.

The Letter of Findings will be sent directly to the complainant, as well as the other parties involved.

I. Right of Appeal To U.S. Secretary of Education

If an individual, organization or agency is aggrieved by the final decision of the GaDOE, that individual, organization or agency has the right to request review of the decision by the U.S. Secretary of Education. The review is at the Secretary's discretion.

For complaints filed pursuant to Title IX, Part E, Subpart 1, Section 9503 (20 U.S.C. §7883, complaint process for participation of private school children), a complainant may appeal the GaDOE's decision to the U.S. Secretary of Education no later than 30 days from the date on which the complainant receives the Letter of Findings. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the GaDOE's decision and include a complete statement of the reasons supporting the appeal.