

## **COMPLAINT PROCEDURES FOR FEDERALLY-FUNDED PROGRAMS OPERATING WITHIN BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

As required by Title IX, General Provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education ACT (ESEA), Baltimore County Public Schools utilize the following procedures for receiving and resolving complaints. The procedure stated herein, shall be followed by an individual wishing to file a complaint under any federally funded program operating within Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS).

### **Who may submit a complaint?**

Any public or nonpublic school parent or teacher, other interested person, or agency may file a complaint.

### **What must a complaint contain?**

All complaints must:

- Be written.
- Be signed by the person or agency representative filing the complaint.
- Specify the requirement of law or regulation being violated and the related issue, problem, and/or the concern.
- Contain information/evidence supporting the complaint.
- State the nature of the corrective action desired.

### **Filing a Complaint:**

Submit in writing your complaint to the respective BCPS coordinator/supervisor in charge of the program to which the complaint is being filed. Descriptive or supportive information concerning the complaint may accompany your letter. It is recommended that a copy of the complaint and any attachments are kept for your records.

When the written complaint is received, the coordinator/supervisor or designee for the respective program will review the complaint, and contact the parents/guardian within ten (10) business days to schedule a meeting for review of the specific concerns within the complaint. Complaint meetings are typically scheduled within twenty (20) business days following the receipt of the complaint. Within twenty (20) business days following the meeting, the coordinator/supervisor or designee for the respective program will provide a written response to the complainant.

**Filing an Appeal:**

Individuals not satisfied with the written decision of the program coordinator/supervisor, or who have not received a reply to their formal complaint within the specified time period, may appeal the complaint in writing to the executive director of the Department of Special Programs, PreK-12/Equity Assurance. The appeal must be filed in writing and received within fifteen (15) calendar days of the coordinator/supervisor's decision, or the date when a response was to have been made.

The executive director of the Department of Special Programs, PreK-12/Equity Assurance will respond to the appeal, using a timeline and procedures similar to the procedures followed by the coordinator/supervisor, including: (a) the option of arranging a hearing within ten (10) business days of receipt of the appeal; and (b) providing a written decision within ten (10) business days following the appeal hearing, if held. When the issue appealed is unusually complicated, an additional twenty (20) business days may be taken by the executive director of the Department of Special Programs, PreK-12/Equity Assurance in order to fully investigate the matter. Upon reaching a decision, the executive director of the Department of Special Programs, PreK-12/Equity Assurance will provide a written response to the complainant.

Individuals not satisfied with the written decision of the executive director of the Department of Special Programs, PreK-12/Equity Assurance, may further appeal the complaint to the Ombudsman in the Office of the Superintendent. Once the executive director of the Department of Special Programs, PreK-12/Equity Assurance has made a decision, the appeal must be filed in writing and received within fifteen (15) calendar days of that decision. The Ombudsman in the office of the superintendent will research and evaluate the appeal and issue a written decision on behalf of the superintendent within twenty (20) business days.

Individuals not satisfied with the written decision of the superintendent may further appeal the complaint to the Baltimore County Board of Education. The appeal must be filed in writing and received within thirty (30) calendar days of the superintendent's decision.

NOTE: Personnel actions are the exclusive responsibility of the superintendent of schools and *are not* subject to public complaint procedures.

**Filing a complaint with the federal government:**

Anyone who believes that an educational institution that received federal financial assistance has discriminated against someone on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age may file a complaint. The person or organization filing the complaint need not be a victim of the alleged discrimination, but may complain on behalf of another person or group. Complainants may file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) online at the following website: <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/complaintprocess.html>.