

# DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

## COMPLAINT RESPONSE UNIT

### Parent Resource Network

#### **PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS**

##### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Complaint Response Unit/Parent Resource Network is to give the District an opportunity to resolve parent complaints without the need for parents to resort to external complaint and due process mechanisms.

##### **Mission Statement**

The CRU/PRN is committed to providing families of students with disabilities the information, assistance and resources they need to become meaningful participants in the education of their children. CRU/PRN will facilitate collaboration between district staff and parents to enable the District to provide a lawful response in a timely manner.

##### **Staffing**

The staffing for the Complaint Response Unit/Parent Resource Network is composed of the following individuals:

Glory Lopez.....Director  
Dennis Rosenbaum ..... Specialist  
Sandra Renteria. .... Parent Network Coordinator  
Alicia Barcena. ....Parent Community Facilitator  
Teresa Campos..... Parent Community Facilitator

##### **Dissemination of Information**

The Complaint Response Unit/Parent Resource Network shall provide appropriate materials/information to parents and District staff of the availability of the Complaint Response Unit/ Parent Resource Network. This information is available to District staff and parents through the following materials:

- Reference Guide 1341.1, Complaint Response Unit/Parent Resource Network for Parents of Students with Disabilities, distributed annually by being posted electronically on the Administrative Notebook and direct mailings to schools;
- Complaint Response Unit/Parent Resource Network's brochure, distributed annually by direct mailings to schools (with directions to order additional copies), and through presentations to parents and community members;
- Complaint Response Unit/Parent Resource Network's poster, distributed annually by direct mailings to schools;
- Letter to parents, distributed by schools to parents in accordance with the directions contained in Reference Guide 1341.1 requirements;

- LAUSD Division of Special Education Website;
- Telephone Directory listing.

### **Complaint Definition**

"Complaint" means the allegation of a perceived violation of (1) the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and implementing regulations; (2) the California State Education Code related to special education and implementing regulation; or (3) the District's Special Education Compliance Guide.

### **Receiving Complaints**

The Complaint Response Unit /Parent Resource Network will receive inquiries and complaints from parents in the form of written communication, the use of the telephone or any other means of communication. All inquiries and complaints will be logged into the Complaint Response Unit /Parent Resource Network using the Welligent system.

Parent Community Facilitators will receive calls, refer them to the appropriate department, provide information and resources, and clarify and document parent inquiries and complaints with detailed, complete and accurate reporting of parent concerns and facilitator responses. There will be coverage of the telephones by assigned CRU/PRN staff member at all times except during monthly staff meetings when the phones shall be covered by personnel secured by the unit Specialist.

Telephone calls are processed in the following manner:

Incoming calls are categorized as either an inquiry call or a complaint call. An inquiry call is one in which a parent requests basic information about services or rights, but does not involve any allegation of the violation of the special education laws or the District's Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual, July 2005. CRU/PRN Facilitators are trained to respond directly to such matters.

A complaint call involves any allegation of the violation of the special education laws or the District's Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual, July 2005. The complaint may involve a local school, local district office or District-wide office. The CRU/PRN utilizes the Welligent system in which incoming complaints are logged in the data base and may be referred to an appropriate department head and/or one of four Special Education Support Units depending upon the student(s) geographical school of attendance.

Telephone calls are defined as follows:

LOW Priority is a telephone call in which response time is not a critical factor (e.g., parent wants to make an appointment to review the components of the I.E.P. before son/daughter's annual review; parent would like to review Due Process Procedures; parent would like to examine the instructional options available for their son/daughter).

Medium Priority is a telephone call in which response time is a factor, but immediate action is deemed as unnecessary (e.g., parent has concerns about son/daughter's recent I.E.P and has requested an appointment within a week to review legal options; parent has requested an educational assessment and has not been provided an assessment plan; parent has requested a meeting with school personnel to review son/daughter's recent I.E.P. and can not obtain an appointment from the school).

Urgent Priority is a telephone call which requires immediate action (e.g., student with special education needs has been expelled without an I.E.P. or a manifestation hearing; student has been told to remain at home until the school gets back to the parents; student's I.E.P. has not been implemented due to staff not being trained to provide required services).

### **Investigating Complaints**

The staff of the Complaint Response Unit/Parent Resource Network will gather pertinent information regarding the parent's complaint and will contact the appropriate department and/or Special Education Support Unit based on the student's school of attendance. The Support Unit or appropriate department will make a preliminary investigation and respond to the CRU/PRN within a reasonable time prior to further action by the CRU/PRN staff. Urgent Priority calls that require immediate action may also include immediate contact with Administrative Coordinator or Director for additional follow-up.

The Complaint Response Unit/Parent Resource Network shall act as a facilitator between the parents and the District, if required. CRU/PRN staff will keep the support unit administrators informed of status of open cases and notify CRU/PRN Unit Administrative Coordinator and Director of any cases that reach 20 days without resolution. The school site may be contacted directly by the CRU/PRN specialist after first consulting with the Unit Director or Administrative Coordinator to determine if site contact is warranted.

### **Complaint Categories**

Each complaint received by the CRU/PRN will be categorized from a list of categories (attached), including operational definitions, that aligns with the categories used for due process and state complaints.

### **Written Lawful Response to Parents**

The Complaint Response Unit/Parent Response Network's staff will provide the parents with a written response that satisfies the District's legal obligations which may include one of the following; (1) a remedy and, where appropriate, the date by which the remedy shall be implemented (e.g., assignment of TSA and starting date; return to school of student suspended for more than 5 days; setting an I.E.P. date for student for whom the District staff has changed schools and programs without an I.E.P.); (2) information that an appropriate referral has been made (e.g., Regional Center - parent exploring different options for after school care; California Children Services - parent seeking options for medical equipment; California Children's Protective Services - parent needs information to file a child abuse case.); (3) suggested action the complainant may wish to take (e.g.,)

information on State Complaint Procedures, Due Process Hearing, Mediation); or (4) a determination that the complaint has been investigated and determined to be unfounded.

The District will provide lawful responses to parents filing complaints in accordance with the following performance standards:

1. 25% of complaints will be responded to within 5 working days.
2. 50% of complaints will be responded to within 10 working days.
3. 75% of complaints will be responded to within 20 working days.
4. 90% of complaints will be responded to within 30 working days.

### **Follow-Up for Resolution of Complaints**

The staff of the Complaint Response Unit/Parent Response Network shall follow-up with the appropriate District office where referrals have been made to determine the status of the complaint and if resolution has been achieved. The staff will review their cases each day and follow-up with the appropriate office until the complaint is resolved. Under the guidance of the Administrative Coordinator, CRU/PRN will monitor case closures and lawful responses, identify patterns, and report this information as requested to the Director or Associate Superintendent.

A written parent satisfaction survey will be developed to receive parent input regarding facilitation of communication and the receipt of a lawful response to parent complaints. A similar process of sending satisfaction surveys for return and analysis will also be established to survey Special Education Support Unit staff. The CRU/PRN Unit will analyze patterns, trends and highlight categories for discussion and recommendations to improve the efficiency of the unit.

### **Retention of Data**

All incoming parent complaints are documented using the Compliant Response Unit/Parent Resource Network Welligent System and are assigned case identification numbers. Reports will be generated pursuant to the requirements of the Modified Consent Decree:

- Paragraph 54 of the MCD—"The District will be required to report to the Independent Monitor on the status of each complaint not resolved within 30 working days, at 5 working day intervals, until the complaint is resolved."

In addition the following reports are available to the Associate Superintendent, Division of Special Education:

- Case Response All District - summary of cases resolved District-wide;
- Case Response Local District - summary of cases resolved by Local District;

- Case Unresolved All District - summary of cases not resolved District-wide;
- Case Unresolved Local District - summary of cases not resolved by Local District;  
and
- Case Unresolved Worksheet - individual case documentation of unresolved cases.