



# LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENCE GUIDE

**TITLE:** Special Education School and Family Support Services

**NUMBER:** REF-6620.0

**ISSUER:** Sharyn Howell, Associate Superintendent  
Division of Special Education

**DATE:** November 30, 2015

**ROUTING**  
 All Schools  
 Local District Superintendents  
 Instructional Directors  
 Special Education Service  
 Center Administrators  
 School Administrators  
 Special Education Teachers

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Reference Guide is to inform schools and offices of the Special Education School and Family Support Services (SFSS) Unit, which is in place to assist and support Los Angeles Unified School District (District) staff and families with inquiries, concerns, and complaints regarding compliance with special education.

**MAJOR CHANGES:** This Reference Guide replaces REF-1341.13, dated July 8, 2014 - “Complaint Response Unit /Parent Resource Network (CRU) for Parents of Students with Disabilities.” From this point forward, the SFSS Unit will be overseeing the Division of Special Education Call Center and the Complaint Response Unit’s (CRU) procedures and protocols to address parent inquires, concerns and complaints.

**BACKGROUND:** The District is required, per the *Modified Consent Decree* (MCD), to ensure it has no systemic issues that would prevent the District from being in substantial compliance with special education laws and regulations. As part of this requirement, the District has a process in place for receiving and resolving alleged complaints of violations with special education laws and regulations.

The SFSS manages the work of the District’s Special Education Call Center and CRU to ensure that inquiries, concerns, and alleged complaints are investigated and responded to in a timely manner.

The SFSS Responsibilities include:

1. Increasing parent understanding and awareness of special education legal requirements to inform decisions and enhance their participation in their child’s education;
2. Responding to inquiries, resolving concerns, and/or assisting in resolving complaints that allege a violation of federal or state special education laws and regulations;



# LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENCE GUIDE

---

**BACKGROUND  
(Continued):**

- 3. Offering information about parent engagement opportunities; and
- 4. Facilitating collaboration between District staff and parents.

The SFSS staff supports the LAUSD community and partners by receiving and resolving inquiries, concerns and complaints from stakeholders, as they relate to special education, via various means:

Written communication	Division of Special Education - SFSS 333 S Beaudry Ave., 18 <sup>th</sup> Floor Los Angeles, CA 90017
Email	spedsfss@lausd.net
Telephone (Monday-Friday 7:00 am -5:00 pm)	1-213-241-6701 or 1-800-933-8133
Fax	1-213-241-5168
TTY	1-213-241-2511

Note that for the purposes of the work of the SFSS the following definitions apply:

Inquiry:

An “inquiry” is a call or a written communication through which a parent, school, teacher, or other community member requests basic information about services or rights related to Special Education. These calls are to be resolved within two (2) business days (48 hours).

Concern:

A “concern” is a call or a written communication through which a parent, school, teacher, or other community member expresses a matter of interest or importance to them, but not a violation of special education law, that requires support from the SFSS to resolve. In collaboration with other District personnel, these calls are to be resolved within ten (10) business days.

Complaint:

A “complaint,” as defined in the MCD, means an allegation of a perceived violation of (1) the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and implementing regulations; (2) the California Education Code related to special education and implementing regulations; or (3) the District’s Special Education



## LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENCE GUIDE

---

**BACKGROUND (Continued):** Policies and Procedures Manual. In collaboration with other district personnel, these calls are to be resolved within five (5) to fifteen (15) business days.

Lawful Response:

A “lawful response” as defined in the MCD means that a parent is provided with a written response to a submitted complaint that satisfies the District’s legal obligations and may be one of the following:

- A remedy and, where appropriate, the date by which the remedy shall be implemented,
- Information that an appropriate referral has been made,
- Suggested action the complainant may wish to take, or
- A determination that the complaint has been investigated and determined to be unfounded.

To fulfill “Outcome No.11: Complaint Response Time” of the MCD (2003), the SFSS has established internal timelines above to provide a lawful response letter for “complaints” to complainant within required timelines. Lawful response letters will be uploaded to the student’s Welligent record.

As required by Outcome No. 11, the SFSS will also support the District in reporting to the Independent Monitor on the status of each complaint not resolved within 30 working days, at five (5) working day intervals, until the complaint is resolved.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** It is the expectation that all schools and offices fully cooperate and respond expeditiously to all communications from SFSS in order to comply with federal and state laws and regulations as well as the District’s Special Education Policy and Procedures Manual.

In the beginning of each school year an envelope will be mailed to schools containing a copy of this reference guide and the following literature:

- Two SFSS posters (one in English and one in Spanish)
- 100 SFSS brochures (50 in English and 50 in Spanish)
- 100 Complaint Response Unit (CRU) brochures (50 in English and 50 in Spanish)

Each school must prominently display these posters and brochures providing parents information regarding where to call if they have an inquiry, concern or complaint concerning special education.

All schools must annually notify parents of the availability of the SFSS, which includes the oversight of the Division of Special Education Call Center and



## LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENCE GUIDE

---

- INSTRUCTIONS (Continued):** CRU office. To assist schools with this requirement, sample parent notification letters in English, Armenian, Chinese, Farsi, Filipino, Korean, and Spanish have been attached with this reference guide. These sample letters can also be downloaded from the Division of Special Education's website: <http://achieve.lausd.net/sped>.
- RELATED RESOURCES:** [Modified Consent Decree, April 21, 2003](#)  
[Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)  
[California Education Code, Chapter 2, Section 200-201](#)  
[Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual](#)  
[Study of the District's Compliance and Effectiveness with Section 9, Complaint Response Unit, April 8, 2013](#)
- ASSISTANCE:** For assistance or further information, please contact Ruben Diaz, Assistant Director, Special Education School and Family Support Services at (213) 241-6701 or via email at [spedsfss@lausd.net](mailto:spedsfss@lausd.net).
- ATTACHMENTS:** Attachment A: Notification Letter – English  
Attachment B: Notification Letter – Armenian  
Attachment C: Notification Letter – Chinese  
Attachment D: Notification Letter – Farsi  
Attachment E: Notification Letter – Filipino  
Attachment F: Notification Letter – Korean  
Attachment G: Notification Letter – Spanish