

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

1. **Intent**

The Berlin Central School District Board of Education establishes that it is the intent of the Board to promote and facilitate effective communication among students, parents, residents of the District, the Board, and District staff. In addition, the Board recognizes that it has an interest in safeguarding both its employees and persons who register complaints or express concerns from unfair criticism.

2. **Public Participation Encouraged**

The Board, as the body responsible for establishing policies that govern the operations of the District and provide its educational programs, strongly encourages all members of the community to share their views on District policies and on the many educational issues confronting the District with the Board. Such communication can take place either at regular meetings of the Board, at special Board meetings, or through other contacts with individual members of the Board of Education.

3. **Routing of Public's Compliments, Concerns. or Complaints**

The Board believes that communications involving specific situations and individuals are best handled as close to the origin of communication as possible, whether these are in the form of compliments, concerns, or complaints. Staff shall be given every opportunity to consider issues and to resolve problems prior to the involvement of the Board. As a general rule, therefore, compliments, concerns, or complaints should be channeled as follows:

- A. Teacher or staff member
- B. Principal or designee
- C. Superintendent of Schools
- D. Board of Education

Nevertheless, the Board will act in those situations where satisfactory or timely resolution is not achieved through administrative remedy.

4. **Role of Individual Board Members**

Individual members of the Board of Education will listen to persons who request Board involvement and then refer those persons to the Superintendent. Any Board member who is so contacted shall refrain from expressing any judgment about the merits of a complaint until that complaint is submitted to the Superintendent who shall acquire about the matter and provide for appropriate disposition.

5. Role of the Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent may refer complaints she/he receives to other staff members whenever she/he deems it appropriate.

The Superintendent shall establish procedures to ensure that problems and issues are resolved on a timely basis, and that proper records are maintained for all compliments, concerns, and complaints that are received.

6. Treatment of Complaints About District Personnel

Discussions by either members of the public or members of the Board of Education relating to the competence or personal conduct of any District employee or employees shall be considered out of order at public meetings of the Board, and shall be ruled as such by the person presiding.

Nevertheless, the Board and the District administration will accept written expressions or statements of concern relating to employee behavior or job performance. If complaints about personnel have proceeded as described in Sec. 3, above, and reach the Board level, then an executive session of the Board may be convened to evaluate the substance of the complaint.

Attendance by anyone other than Board members at an executive session of the Board shall be at the sole discretion of the Board.

References

Public Officers Law Arts. 6-A, 7