

California Department of Education

**Williams Complaint Policies and Procedures**

May 2020

Santa Cruz County Office of Education

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Adopted by our Governing Board on March 18, 2021

**Williams Complaint Policies and Procedures**

This document contains rules and instructions about the filing, investigation and resolution of a Williams complaint regarding alleged deficiencies related to instructional materials, the condition of a facility that is not maintained in a clean or safe manner or in good repair, and teacher vacancy or misassignment.

The Santa Cruz County Office of Education adopted the Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) process in accordance with Chapter 5.1 (commencing with Section 4680) of the *California Code of Regulations*, Title 5, to resolve Williams complaints. This document presents information about how we process complaints concerning Williams Settlement issues. A UCP complaint is a written and signed statement by a complainant alleging a violation of state laws or regulations. A complainant is any individual, including a person's duly authorized representative or an interested third party, public agency, or organization who files a written complaint alleging violation of state laws or regulations, regarding alleged deficiencies related to instructional materials, the condition of a facility that is not maintained in a clean or safe manner or in good repair, and teacher vacancy or misassignment. If a complainant is unable to put the complaint in writing, due to a disability or illiteracy, we shall assist the complainant in the filing of the complaint.

**The Responsibility of the Santa Cruz County Office of Education**

The Santa Cruz County Office of Education is required to have local policies and procedures that enable Williams Complaints to be handled through our UCP process, to post a classroom notice informing parents, guardians, pupils, and teachers of their rights to file a Williams complaint in each classroom in each school, and to provide a complaint form for Williams complaints regarding alleged deficiencies related to instructional materials, conditions of facilities that are not maintained in a clean or safe manner or in good repair, and teacher vacancy or misassignment.

If a response is requested by the complainant, the response will go to the mailing address of the complainant indicated on the complaint.

If *Education Code* Section 48985 is applicable and 15 percent or more of the pupils in grades K – 12 enrolled in our district speak a language other than English, the Williams

Complaint Classroom Notice and the Williams Complaint Form shall be written in English and in the primary language of the complainant. The complaint response, if requested, and final report shall be written in English and the primary language in which the complaint was filed.

A Williams Complaint about problems beyond the authority of the school principal shall be forwarded in a timely manner, but will not exceed 10 working days, to the appropriate school district official for resolution.

The principal or the designee of the district superintendent, the Director of Human Resources, as applicable, shall make all reasonable efforts to investigate any problem within his or her authority.

The principal, or, where applicable, district superintendent or their designee shall remedy a valid complaint within a reasonable time period but not to exceed 30 working days from the date the complaint was received.

The principal, or where applicable, district superintendent or their designee, shall report to the complainant the resolution of the complaint within 45 working days of the initial filing, if complainant identifies themselves and requested a response.

The principal makes this report; the principal shall also report the same information in the same timeframe to the district superintendent or their designee.

The school district shall report summarized data on the nature and resolution of all complaints on a quarterly basis to the county superintendent of schools and the governing board of the school district.

The summaries shall be publicly reported on a quarterly basis at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing board of the school district.

The report shall include the number of complaints by general subject area with the number of resolved and unresolved complaints.

The complaints and responses shall be available as public records.

## **The Williams Complaint Classroom Notice**

We make sure that the Williams Complaint Classroom Notice is posted in each classroom in each school in the district and includes:

- The parents, guardians, pupils, and teachers,
- a statement proclaiming sufficient textbooks and instructional materials,
- (For there to be sufficient textbooks and instructional materials each pupil, including English Learners, must have a textbook or instructional materials, or both, to use in class and to take home)
- a statement that school facilities must be clean, safe, and maintained in good repair,
- a statement that there should be no teacher vacancies or misassignments, and

the location at which to obtain a form to file a complaint in case of a shortage.

(Posting a notice downloadable from the Web site of the CDE shall satisfy this requirement.)

## **The Williams Complaint Form**

We make sure that the Williams Complaint form is available for parents, guardians, pupils, and teachers to use.

Every school in our district shall have a complaint form available for such Williams complaints.

The Williams Complaint form shall include:

- A section to indicate if a response is requested,
- a section for contact information including mailing address if a response be requested.
- a statement that a pupil, including an English Learner, does not have standards - aligned textbooks or instructional materials or state adopted or district adopted textbooks or other required instructional materials to use in class.
- a statement that a pupil does not have access to textbooks or instructional materials to use at home or after school. This does not require two sets of textbooks or instructional materials for each pupil.
- a statement that textbooks or instructional materials are in poor or unusable condition, having missing pages, or are unreadable due to damage.
- a statement that a pupil was provided photocopied sheets from only a portion of a textbook or instructional materials to address a shortage of textbooks or instructional materials.
- a statement that a condition poses an urgent or emergency threat to the health or safety of pupils or staff, including: gas leaks, nonfunctioning heating, ventilation, fire sprinklers or air - conditioning systems, electrical power failure, major sewer line stoppage, major pest or vermin infestation, broken windows or exterior doors or gates that will not lock and that pose a security risk, abatement of hazardous materials previously undiscovered that pose an immediate threat to pupils or staff, structural damage creating a hazardous or uninhabitable condition, and any other emergency conditions the school district determines appropriate.
- a statement that a school restroom has not been maintained or cleaned regularly, is not fully operational, or has not been stocked at all times with toilet paper, soap, and towels or functional hand dryers.
- a statement that the school has not kept all restrooms open during school hours when pupils are not in classes, and has not kept a sufficient number of restrooms open during school hours when pupils are in classes. This does not apply when temporary closing of the restroom is necessary for pupil safety or to make repairs.
- a statement that a semester begins and a teacher vacancy exists. (A position to which a single designated certificate employee has not been assigned at the beginning of the year for an entire year or, if the position is for a one - semester course, a position of which a single designated certificated employee has not been assigned at the beginning of a semester for an entire semester).
- a statement that a teacher who lacks credentials or training to teach English Learners is assigned to teach a class with more than 20 percent English Learners pupils in the class.
- a statement that a teacher is assigned to teach a class for which the teacher lacks subject matter competency.
- a section to identify the location of the school in which the alleged violation took place,
- a section to identify the course or grade level, if applicable,
- a section where the complainant describes the specific nature of the complaint in detail,
- a statement that the complainant may include as much text as the complainant feels is necessary, and
- a statement identifying the place to file the complaint that includes the office and address of the principal or his/her designee of the school in which the alleged violation took place.

## **Filing a Williams Complaint with the Santa Cruz County Office of Education**

A Williams complaint shall be filed with the principal of the school or their designee, in which the complaint arises.

A Williams complaint may be filed anonymously.

The complainant need not use the Williams Complaint form to file a complaint.

## **How to Appeal a Williams Complaint**

A complainant who is not satisfied with the resolution of the principal or the district superintendent or their designee, involving deficiencies related to instructional materials, the condition of a facility that is not maintained in a clean or safe manner or in good repair, and teacher vacancy or misassignment, has the right to describe the complaint to the governing board of the school district at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing board.

A complainant who is then not satisfied with the resolution proffered by the principal, or the district superintendent or their designee, involving a condition of a facility that poses an emergency or urgent threat, as defined in paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of *EC* Section 17592.72, has the right to file an appeal to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction at the California Department of Education (CDE) within 15 days of receiving the report.

Conditions that pose an emergency or urgent threat (not cosmetic or nonessential) to the health and safety of pupils or staff while at school include the following:

- Gas leaks.
- Nonfunctioning heating, ventilation, fire sprinklers, or air-conditioning systems.
- Electrical power failure.
- Major sewer line stoppage.
- Major pest or vermin infestation.
- Broken windows or exterior doors or gates that will not lock and that pose a security risk.
- Abatement of hazardous materials previously undiscovered that pose an immediate threat to pupil or staff.
- Structural damage creating a hazardous or uninhabitable condition.

In regards to the resolution proffered by the principal, or the district superintendent or their designee, involving a condition of a facility that poses an emergency or urgent threat, the complainant shall comply with the appeal requirements of 5 *CCR* Section 4632.

A complainant may appeal the Decision of an emergency or urgent threat to the CDE by filing a written appeal within 15 days of receiving the Decision.

The complainant shall specify the basis for the appeal of the Decision and whether the facts are incorrect and/or the law is misapplied.

The appeal shall be accompanied by:

1. A copy of the original locally filed complaint; and
2. A copy of our Decision of this original locally filed complaint.

**State Laws Cited:**

California *Education Code* Sections 1240, 17592.72, 35186, 35292.5, 48985.

California *Code of Regulations*, Title 5 [5 CCR] Sections 4600–4687