

Formal Process continued

The next step in the formal process is a review by the School Accountability Officer. Upon receipt of the referral, the School Accountability Officer will:

- ❖ Contact the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- ❖ Confer with the parent(s)/guardian(s), principal, and other appropriate staff members regarding the concern
- ❖ Document any decisions or agreements made and forward copies to the principal and parent(s)/guardian(s) within five school days, or sooner, of receipt of documentation from the principal.

If the parent/guardian is not satisfied with the decision of the School Accountability Officer, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may request that the matter be reviewed by the Executive Director of Supplemental School Programs. A parent/guardian desiring this review must submit a written request to either of the above offices. The written request should outline the current concern or issue and identify any specific outcome or relief desired by the parent(s)/guardian(s).

If the parent/guardian is not satisfied with the decision of the Executive Director, or the Deputy Superintendent, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may request that the matter be reviewed by the Superintendent of Schools.

The processes outlined in this brochure are to serve as a guide and are not to be used for resolving complaints that are specifically governed by other existing laws or local regulations or appeals filed under Section 4-205 of the Education Articles of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

<u>Complaint Process</u>	
<p>Elementary (go to)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ School ➤ School Accountability Officer 301-475-5511, x32135 ➤ Executive Director of Supplemental School Programs 301-475-5511, x32136 ➤ Deputy Superintendent 301-475-5511, x32178 	<p>Secondary (go to)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ School ➤ School Accountability Officer 301-475-5511, x32135 ➤ Director of Student Services 301-475-5511, x32198 ➤ Deputy Superintendent 301-475-5511, x32178
<p>If the parent/guardian is still not satisfied with the decision (go to)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Superintendent of Schools 301-475-5511, x32178 	

Title I

Parent's Guide to

Resolving School Concerns and Complaints



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What to do when you have a concern

All St. Mary's County Public School System (SMCPS) employees are committed to parental, family, and community involvement in the educational process. We believe that our staff should encourage and engage parents/guardians, families, and community members as partners in educating our children. Together we can ensure success in school.

It is recognized that there will be times when a parent/guardian may need to ask school system employees to address a concern.

This brochure outlines the role of each individual and the steps to follow when addressing school-based concerns. We will continually strive to resolve all inquiries or problems as quickly as possible so that we can reach a mutual understanding that serves in the best interest of every SMCPS student.

When a concern or issue develops, we encourage parents/guardians to direct their concerns to the school staff member most closely involved in the issue. Communication and understanding of all perspectives are important in developing a fair and mutually beneficial solution to any concern. Every effort should be made to work with the school-based staff and administration to resolve problems and concerns. This informal process is designed to quickly address concerns. If this informal process fails to provide a resolution, a parent/guardian may choose to file a formal complaint and seek review at a higher administrative level. Both processes should always protect the confidentiality and preserve the dignity of everyone involved.

INFORMAL PROCESS

The first step to resolving concerns and issues is to address them with the school staff member who is most closely and directly involved.

Through a process of cooperative agreement, the affected individuals can usually reach a mutually effective resolution.

If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, the parent(s)/guardian(s) should be referred to the school's administrative team (the principal or assistant principal).

The second step in resolving the concern is to contact a member of the school's administrative team. The school-based administrator will take into consideration the needs of all parties, as well as all applicable SMCPS policies and procedures. The administrator will confirm that the parent/guardian has attempted to resolve the issue or concern with the classroom teacher or other school-based staff member, as appropriate.

If the concern has not been resolved through the informal process, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a meeting with the school principal to initiate the formal process.

FORMAL PROCESS

The first step in the formal process is to request a meeting with the school administrator or principal. During this meeting, the facts and circumstances surrounding the concern should be outlined in writing. The principal or his/her designee will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) within three school days, or sooner, to arrange a mutually agreed upon meeting date and time. The principal or designee will furnish the parent(s)/guardian(s) with a copy of this brochure and explain the formal process.

After the meeting, the principal will document any agreements that are made between parties and summarize the outcome of the meeting in writing, identifying each area of agreement, and detail any future steps to address any unresolved issues.

The principal or his/her designee will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) within five school days, or sooner, to follow up with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and identify any further action that needs to be taken. The principal will also contact the Executive Director of Supplemental School Programs, who has oversight of the Title I program.

If the concern still remains unresolved or the concern directly involves the principal, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be referred to the School Accountability Officer. The principal will forward any and all supporting documents regarding the concern to the School Accountability Officer. Parents/guardians may and will be encouraged to submit applicable documentation to the School Accountability Officer.

The School Accountability Officer will confer with the Executive Director of Supplemental School Programs overseeing Title I as needed.