

Reporting and Complaint Procedures

Title IX

In accordance with the provisions of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Pike County School System does not discriminate against students on the basis of sex in the educational programs and activities that it operates. No student shall, on the basis of gender, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, any educational program or activity operated by this School System.

The Board of Education believes that all students should be able to enjoy an educational environment free from all forms of gender discrimination, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment undermines the integrity of the educational environment. Therefore, Board Policy prohibits even acts of sexual harassment that may not rise to the level of a violation of federal law.

The Deputy Superintendent shall serve as the Compliance Coordinator for ensuring compliance with this policy and federal laws prohibiting gender discrimination and sexual harassment. The Compliance Coordinator may be contacted through the Central Office at 16 Jackson Street, Zebulon, Ga. 30295, Telephone (770) 567-8489.

Gender Equity in Sports

In compliance with the Equity in Sports Act, O.C.G.A. 20-2-315, no student in the Pike County School System shall, on the basis of gender, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, be treated differently from another student, or otherwise be discriminated against in any interscholastic or intramural athletics offered by the school system, nor shall the school system provide any such athletics separately on such basis, except as specifically authorized by the Act itself. The Equity in Sports Coordinator and Athletic Director may be reached at (770) 567-8770.

A grievance procedure will be developed by the Superintendent, consistent with the requirements of state law and designed to implement the purposes of this policy. The grievance procedure will provide for prompt and equitable resolution of written student complaints, including those brought by a parent or guardian on behalf of his or her minor child who is a student, alleging any action which would be a violation of the Act.

The school system shall comply with all the requirements of state board rules concerning gender equity in sports, including records retention and the filing of any and all reports. All donations of services or items, including booster club support to any athletic program, shall be accepted or rejected in accordance with the Board of Education's policy concerning donations to the school system.

Discrimination Complaint Procedure

Complaints made to the School System regarding alleged discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, or national origin in violation of Title VI, on the basis of sex in violation of Title IX, or on the basis of disability in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans With Disabilities Act will be processed in accordance with the following procedure:

1. Any student, employee, applicant for employment, parent, or other person with a complaint alleging a violation as described above shall promptly notify, in writing or orally, either the principal for his/her school or the appropriate coordinator designated by the Board of Education. If the complaint is oral, either the coordinator or school principal to whom the complaint is made shall

promptly prepare a memorandum or written statement of the complaint as made to him/her by the complainant and shall have the complainant read and sign the memorandum or statement if it accurately reflects the complaint made. If the complaint is made to a school principal, he/she shall be responsible for notifying the appropriate coordinator of the complaint.

2. If the alleged offending individual is the coordinator designated by the Board of Education, the complaint shall either be made by the complainant to the Superintendent or, if the complaint is initially made to the school principal, reported by the principal to the Superintendent.
3. The coordinator or his/her designee shall have fifteen workdays to gather all information relevant to the complaint made, review the information, determine the facts relating to the complaint, review the action requested by the complainant, and attempt to resolve the complaint with the complainant and any other persons involved. The coordinator or designee shall prepare a written response to the complaint detailing any action to be taken in response to the complaint and the time frame in which such action will be taken, and copies of this response shall be furnished to the complainant, the appropriate coordinator, and the Superintendent or his/her designee.
4. If the complaint is not resolved at the conclusion of this fifteen-day period, or if the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, the complainant shall have the right, within five workdays of receiving a copy of the written response, to have the complaint referred to the Superintendent of Schools. If the alleged offending individual is the Superintendent, the complainant may have the complaint referred to the Board of Education rather than the Superintendent.
5. The Superintendent shall have fifteen workdays to review the complaint and the response of the coordinator or designee and attempt to resolve the complaint. The Superintendent shall furnish to the complainant a written response setting forth either his/her approval of the action recommended by the coordinator or designee or the action to be taken by the system in response to the complaint in lieu of that recommended by the coordinator or designee and the time frame in which such action shall be taken.
6. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response of the Superintendent, then the complainant shall have the right, within fifteen workdays of the receipt of the written response of the Superintendent, to have the complaint referred to the Board of Education. In order to have the Board review the Superintendent's decision, the complainant must file with the Superintendent a written statement setting forth the reasons he/she disagrees with the response of the Superintendent and the action the complainant is requesting the system to take. The complainant shall also include in the written response a request that his/her complaint be referred to the Board of Education.
7. Within thirty workdays of receipt of the written request of the complainant, the Superintendent shall present the matter to the Board of Education at its regular meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose. The Board shall review the original complaint, the response of the coordinator or designee, the response of the Superintendent, and the response of the complainant. In addition, the Board may, but is not required to, hear directly from any individuals with knowledge of any relevant facts relating to the complaint.

8. The Board of Education will either uphold the recommendation of the Superintendent or require the system to take some other action in response to the complaint. A copy of the action of the Board will be furnished to the complainant, either as a part of the minutes of the Board of Education or as a separate written statement. The Board shall be the final reviewing authority within the system.
9. This policy is not intended to deprive any employee of any right they may have to file a grievance pursuant to any other policy of the local Board of Education, specifically the policy designed to implement Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 20-2-989.5, where appropriate. This policy is not intended to provide an alternative process for resolving evaluation and employment disputes where there already exists a due process procedure mandated by state law or State Department of Education regulations, specifically including, but not limited to, hearings to be conducted pursuant to the Fair Dismissal Act of Georgia. The complainant retains at all times the right to contact the Office of Civil Rights or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission with regard to any allegations that the system has violated the statutes described above.
10. The school system shall be responsible for distributing and disseminating information relevant to this policy and procedure to students, applicants for employment, and employees through appropriate procedures.
11. No reprisal shall occur as a result of reporting unlawful harassment under this policy, and any attempt to retaliate against a complainant shall be disciplined as is appropriate.
12. The confidentiality of any individual making a complaint or report in accordance with this policy, to the extent it is reasonably possible, shall be protected, although the discovery of the truth and the elimination of unlawful harassment shall be the overriding consideration.

Student Reporting of Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct

1. Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator, or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor, or administrator at his/her school.
2. Any teacher, counselor, or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator, or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.
3. Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report as soon as possible, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services as designated by the Department of Human Resources or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator, or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the Superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.