

Toronto District School Board

Operational Procedure PR505

Title: **PARENT CONCERN PROTOCOL**

Adopted: June 24, 2003

Revised: **November 19, 2008**

Authorization: Executive Council

1.0 TITLE: PARENT CONCERN PROTOCOL

2.0 OBJECTIVE

To outline the procedures for addressing educational concerns brought to staff and trustees by parents. Appropriate flexibility will be exercised in implementing these procedures to suit individual circumstances.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Concern A school-related problem or issue affecting a child/children, families or the community, which is perceived to require the attention of the school or the Board.

Parent Parent includes guardian or any caregiver with recognized responsibility for the care of the student; in this document the word *parents* includes families, and parent groups.

Principal Includes vice-principal throughout this document.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Executive Officer, Student and Community Equity

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 Classroom Concerns Brought to the Principal

If a parent brings a concern to the principal about a classroom or teacher-related matter, the principal will undertake one or more of the following actions depending on the nature of the concern and its circumstances:

- (a) Advise the parent to discuss the concern directly with the teacher and resolve it at that level;
- (b) Gather any relevant information to determine the facts and circumstances;
- (c) Discuss the concern with the teacher and offer advice to the teacher where advice is required to resolve the concern, and inform the parent of the outcome;

- (d) Meet jointly with the teacher and the parent to discuss the concern where the principal determines that such a meeting will resolve the concern;
- (e) Consult with the superintendent of education, other Board staff, or the Board's Legal Services where required, in order to assist in resolving the concern;
- (f) Refer the concern to the superintendent of education if the parent does not agree with the decision of the principal and wishes to appeal to a higher staff authority;
- (g) Where the principal refers the concern to the superintendent of education, the superintendent of education will consult with the principal and parent, make a final decision and communicate the decision to the principal and parent.

5.2 School Concerns Brought to the Principal

If a parent brings a concern about a school policy, procedure, activity, event, or situation to the principal, the principal will undertake one or more of the following actions depending on the nature of the concern and its circumstances:

- (a) Contact the parent to discuss and resolve the concern;
- (b) Gather any relevant information to determine the facts and circumstances;
- (c) Consult with the superintendent of education, other Board staff, or the Board's Legal Services where required, in order to assist in resolving the concern;
- (d) Refer the matter for school council discussion and advice where the concern relates to a matter appropriate for school council consideration;
- (e) Refer the concern to the superintendent of education if the parent does not concur with the decision of the principal and wishes to appeal to a higher staff authority;
- (f) Where the principal refers the concern to the superintendent of education, and/or the parent brings the concern directly to the superintendent of education, the superintendent of education will consult with the principal and parent, make a final decision and communicate the decision to the principal and parent;
- (g) Where the parent brings a concern about a policy or program matter which is beyond the scope or jurisdiction of the school to address, the principal advises the parent of the appropriate person(s) to whom such concern should be directed, and assists the parent with the referral where necessary.

5.3 School Concerns Brought to the Superintendent of Education

If a parent brings a classroom, teacher-related, or school concern directly to the superintendent of education for response, the superintendent of education will under-

take one or more of the following actions, depending on the nature of the concern and its circumstances:

- (a) Refer the parent to the principal where prior discussion with the principal has not taken place, and follow up with the principal on the outcome;
- (b) Gather any relevant information to determine the facts and circumstances;
- (c) Consult with the principal about the concern and advise the principal of options to consider, or make a recommendation to the principal for addressing the concern, and inform the parent of the outcome;
- (d) Make a final decision about the concern in consultation with the principal and inform the parent and principal about the outcome;
- (e) Where the superintendent of education determines that the concern about a particular school or community of schools, require informing and consulting with the Executive Superintendent, or other appropriate central staff, or trustee, the Superintendent of education initiates such communication with those persons;
- (f) Where a parent brings a concern to a central manager or supervisor, the manager or supervisor takes appropriate action if relevant to his/her area, or refers the concern to the appropriate principal, Superintendent of education or other central staff for follow up.

5.4 School Concerns Brought to the Director of Education or Chair of the Board

If a parent or parent group brings a concern about a particular school or group of schools directly to the Director of Education or the Chair of the Board, the Director of Education or Chair of the Board refers the matter to the appropriate superintendent(s) of education, central superintendent(s), or local trustee(s) for their attention.

5.5 Guidelines for Staff

In addressing parents' concerns staff will strive to:

- (a) Foster a climate of respect and trust which focuses on working towards mutually acceptable solutions;
- (b) Ensure that every parent with a concern has an adequate opportunity to express the concern fully;
- (c) Encourage the parent to address the concern at the level at which the concern is related, except where circumstances warrant otherwise;
- (d) Conduct a process for addressing a concern that is seen to be fair by the parent and by all other parties directly involved in addressing the concern;
- (e) Maintain a written record of the concern(s) where necessary;
- (f) Provide the parent with timely updates, as needed, about the progress made in resolving the concern;

- (g) Adhere to the relevant procedures governed by legislation or Board policy where the concern relates to such legislation or policy.

5.6 Guidelines for Trustees

- (a) Where the parent brings a concern directly to the trustee about a school matter (classroom or teacher-related, school policy, procedure, activity, event or situation), the trustee refers the matter to the principal, and the Superintendent of education for their attention;
- (b) Where the trustee makes a referral to the principal or Superintendent of education about a parent's concern, the trustee may discuss the concern with the principal or Superintendent of education in order to receive additional information or provide advice to resolve the concern;
- (c) Where the trustee, in consultation with the superintendent of education, determines that the concern relates to a matter beyond the scope or jurisdiction of the school, the trustee advises the parent accordingly and informs the Superintendent of education and/or any other relevant central staff, for follow up.

5.7 Guidelines for Parents

In bringing concerns to staff or trustees, parents will strive to:

- (a) Present their concerns to staff or trustees in a respectful manner which allows the opportunity for due consideration of the concern;
- (b) Allow for a reasonable timeline for addressing and resolving the concern;
- (c) Address the concern first to the staff person(s) responsible for the area to which the concern directly relates, unless circumstances warrant raising the concern with staff at a higher level;
- (d) Direct the concern to the school council where the concern relates to a school policy or program matter which can be more appropriately addressed by the council;
- (e) Direct the concern about a Board policy or program matter to the appropriate Superintendent of education, central staff, or trustee where the concern should be addressed at those levels;
- (f) Maintain an openness to receiving the information and advice that may be offered by staff or trustees as possible resolutions to the concern;
- (g) Ensure that confidentiality is maintained concerning personal or private matters addressed by all parties.