PUBLIC COMPLAINTS CONCERNING SCHOOL PERSONNEL

1. In order to promote fair and constructive communication, the following procedures shall govern the resolution of complaints. Every effort should be made to resolve a complaint at the earliest possible stage. Complaints concerning school personnel should be made directly by the complainant to the person against whom the complaint is lodged. Parents/guardians, students and members of the public are encouraged to attempt to orally resolve concerns directly with the staff member whose conduct is the source of the concern whenever appropriate before submitting a formal written complaint personally.

2. All written complaints regarding district personnel other than administrators shall be initially filed with the employee’s principal or immediate supervisor. If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the complainant may submit the complaint in writing to the employee’s principal or immediate supervisor. If the complaint regards a principal or central office administrator, the written complaint should be submitted initially to the Superintendent or designee. If the written complaint concerns the Superintendent or designee, it should be submitted to the Board. If the complaint is also against the district, the principal or designee shall provide a copy of the complaint to the district compliance officer so that appropriate procedures may be followed.

3. Written complaints should be submitted no later than 30 calendar days following the date of the action that gave rise to the complaint. When requested to do so, district administrative staff shall assist in the preparation of a written complaint. The administrative staff shall inform the complainant that such assistance is available. A written complaint must include the name of each employee involved and a brief but specific summary of the complaint and facts surrounding it. It should also include a specific description of any prior attempts to discuss the complaint with the employee involved. If the complaint cannot be resolved informally by the persons involved, the complainant may submit the complaint in writing to the school principal or immediate supervisor. When necessary, the district shall assist in the preparation of the written complaint so as to meet the requirement of this regulation. The administrative staff shall inform the complainant that such assistance is available if he/she is unable to prepare the written complaint without help. A written complaint must include the name of each employee involved and a brief but specific summary of the complaint and the facts surrounding it. It must also include a specific description of a prior attempt to discuss the complaint with the employee involved and the failure to resolve the matter.

4. The principal or other staff member with whom the complaint is filed immediate supervisor shall investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the person(s) involved. The principal/staff member shall complete the investigation and inform all affected parties of his/her resolution of the complaint no later than fourteen calendar days following receipt of the written complaint. If the complaint is resolved, the principal will so advise all concerned parties, including the Superintendent or designee.

5. If the complainant is not satisfied with the principal’s/staff member’s resolution of the complaint remains unresolved after review by the principal or the immediate
supervisor, the complaint may submit a written appeal. Principal shall refer the written complaint, together with a report and analysis of the situation, to the Superintendent or designee within ten calendar days of receiving the principal/staff member’s response. Complaints that have previously been submitted to the Superintendent or designee may be appealed to the Board as provided below. The Superintendent or designee shall meet with the complainant, conduct any further investigation the Superintendent or designee deems appropriate, and prove a written response to the complainant within fourteen calendar days following receipt of complainant’s appeal. Complainants should consider and accept the Superintendent or designee’s decision as final.

However, the complainant, the employee, or the Superintendent or designee may ask to address the School Board regarding the complaint.

6. If the complainant is not satisfied with the Superintendent/designee’s resolution of the complain, the complainant may submit a written appeal to the school board. Written appeals must be submitted within ten calendar days of the receipt of the Superintendent or designee’s response. The Board shall schedule the complaint for hearing at a regular or special board meeting and shall notify complainant of the date and time set for the complainant to address the Board.

7. The Superintendent or designee and/or the Board may extend the deadlines established by these regulations for good cause shown.

6.8. Complaints raised for the first time at school board meeting will be referred to the Superintendent or designee for investigation prior to the Board’s consideration of the complaint. Except when a complaint is directed against the Superintendent, no party to a complaint may address the Board, either in closed or open session, unless the Board has received the Superintendent or designee’s written report concerning the complaint.

7.9. Complaints before the Board concerning an employee that may tend to be prejudicial to the employee’s reputation or character shall be addressed in executive session of the Board, unless the employee requests a public session. Complaints that involve consideration of student confidential information shall be addressed in executive session. All parties to a complaint, including the school administration, may be requested to attend an executive session or public portion of a Board meeting in order to present evidence or to clarify and explain the issues raised by the complaint. If asked to attend a Board meeting or part of such meeting for the purpose of presenting all available evidence and allowing every opportunity for explaining and clarifying the issue. The decision of the Board following the hearing shall be final.

(cf. 9321 - Executive Sessions)

Note: The district should make sure that complaints heard in executive session are indeed complaints against an employee, not against district practice or procedures

SITKA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Implementation Date: MARCH 4, 1996