

Guidelines for Effective Parent-School Communication to Resolve Issues

We believe that so many “concerns” get elevated to “issues” and then to full-blown “problems” often due to the lack of knowledge/information. Communication is a shared experience and we intend to make that experience easier. Parents should be concerned about their child's educational experience, and our district staff wants to know about your concerns and answer your questions. However, with over 3,200 students in our district, you can understand why it is necessary to follow some general guidelines to help streamline communications. The most important guidelines are that appointments must be made to meet with a staff member, and that parents should follow the chain of command in addressing concerns.

Students should speak directly to staff members about their concerns and try to resolve the miscommunication/issue by interacting in person (face to face; not by e-mail) to help the students learn how to advocate for themselves.

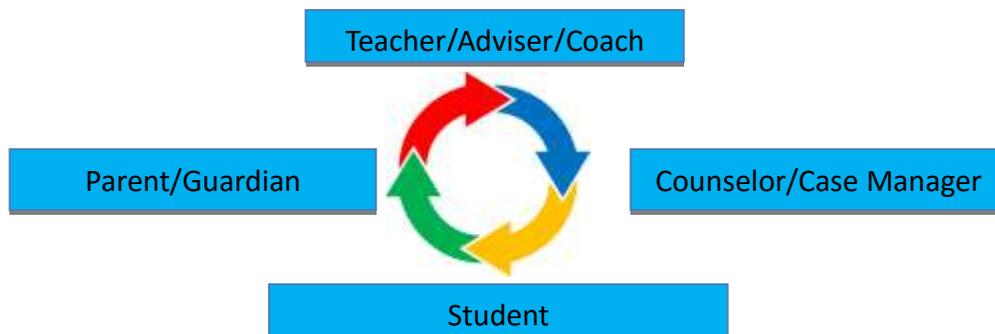
If the issue is not resolved, parents should always initiate contact with the individual staff member involved. If the concern is not resolved, parents should next contact the staff member's department supervisor. Subsequently, the matter may be referred to a building administrator, who is typically the final arbiter of the activities within his or her building. Even more rarely would the chief school administrator, the Superintendent, or the Assistant Superintendent, be required to resolve an issue.

By law, and according to the New Jersey School Boards Association, only in the instance where a Superintendent cannot offer a resolution, would the issue be taken to the Board of Education. In any organization, bypassing levels in the chain often creates additional problems and extends the timeline for resolution. If a parent or resident brings a concern to anyone in the chain of command, out of sequence, the concern must and should be sent back to the proper level for adjudication.

How to Contact Staff Members

Our staff members are very concerned about your child's educational experience and want to give all of our students their complete attention during the school day. For this reason, it is necessary to make an appointment to meet with any staff member. For confidentiality reasons, we respectfully request that staff members not be asked to engage in discussion about individual student situations while other students, staff, and/or parents/guardians are present, or while parents/guardians are at our school/ on our campus for another purpose such as volunteering, attending a class party or event, or during Back-to-School Night. Contact information (e-mail addresses and voicemail) is located on the high school webpage under the link “About Us” select staff directory. It is important that you include the best times to reach you when you leave your message.

As a general practice, we believe it is often beneficial to have the student participate for at least part of meetings to help the students be active learners, advocate for themselves, and hear messages/outcomes first-hand.



Chain of Command - The first person you should contact about your concerns is the staff member closest to the situation, usually the classroom teacher. Most concerns can be solved at this level. The concept is rational on many levels. It seeks initial resolution at the lowest level. This typically is where the parties involved have first-hand facts and invites the timeliest resolution.

For example, if a parent has a concern with their child, the first contact should be the child’s teacher if it’s an academic concern, or the child’s coach or advisor if it is a sports or extra-curricular concern. If either party remains unsatisfied with a proposed solution, the concern should be taken to the next level, which might be a department supervisor, athletic director, or building administrator responsible for that area. Both parties would present the facts and seek a solution or at least consensus.

Chain of Command

You should move through the following steps in order when resolving a concern:

Classroom teacher, coach, or adviser



Guidance Department



Child Study Team (special education issues only)/ ESS (counseling/program issues only)



Department Supervisors

Maureen Lynch	Language Arts 6-12	201-762-2323
Danielle Poleway	Mathematics 6-12	201-762-2322
Dennis Jarvis	Science 6-12; Integrated Design/Technology 9-12	201-762-2321
Miriam Lezanski	World Languages 6-12, ESL K-12, Performing/Visual Arts 9-12	201-762-2320
Roger Pelletier	Athletic Director 6-12 , Physical Education Supervisor 9-12	201-762-2331
Nikki Van Ess	Social Studies 6-12, Business 9-12	201-762-2324
Joseph Cozine	Special Education 6-12	201-762-2325
Ruth Davis	Instructional Technology	201-762-2334
Ted Lusby	Head Custodian	201-762-2340
Jack Petrunyak	Pomptonian Food Services Director	201-762-2338



Director of Guidance, Dominick Gliatta- 201-762-2312 (scheduling, guidance, ESS, 504 and I&RS Plans)



Security Officer, Robert Mac Farran - 201-762-2307 (disciplinary and parking issues)



SRO Officer Michael Jack - 201-762-2343 (school security and safety)



Assistant Principal, Linda Bohny - 201-762-2304 (academic and attendance issues)



Principal, John P. Pascale -201-762-2302



District directors and coordinators (curriculum, special education, transportation)

Joan Schettino	Transportation	201-762-2407
Michael DeTuro, Ed.D.	Curriculum and Instruction	201-762-2418
Lisa Rizzo, Ed.S.	Special Services	201-762-2283
Carlos Rosa	Technology	201-762-2409
Greg Romero	Buildings and Grounds	201-762-2402



Assistant Superintendent, Dennis M. Fare



Superintendent, C. Lauren Schoen, Ed.D.

Only after you have followed these steps to the highest level should you contact the Board of Education with a concern.