

VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

SUPERINTENDENT POLICY NO. 4144

ADOPTED: 04/01/97

CLASSIFICATION: Personnel

REVISED: 05/23/02

SUBJECT: Complaints Concerning District Employees

The Ventura County Office of Education has an established procedure for complaints concerning personnel made by parents or guardians of pupils enrolled in county operated school programs or the public. The procedure provides for an orderly review of concerns beginning at the most immediate level and ending at the County Superintendent of Schools.

The County Superintendent recognizes the need for providing the public and employees with a complaint process. The County Superintendent expects that employees and supervisors will make every effort to resolve complaints and disagreements informally before resorting to formal complaint procedures. The County Superintendent or designee shall establish complaint procedures which allow the public and employees to appeal to the County Superintendent.

The following guidelines shall prescribe the manner in which complaints are handled:

1. A "complaint" shall be defined as an alleged misapplication of VCOE policies, regulations, rules or procedures. Procedures for the resolution of employee complaints provide a route of appeal through administrative channels and to the Superintendent, if necessary. If the complaint is related to discrimination, VCOE's procedure for complaints concerning discrimination should be used.
2. If a complaint involves sexual harassment, the initial complaint should be made directly to the offending employee's immediate supervisor. An employee is not required to resolve sexual harassment complaints with the offending person.
3. So as not to interfere with school schedules, meetings related to a complaint shall be held before or after the complainant's regular working hours.
4. All matters related to a complaint shall be kept confidential. Only those individuals directly involved in resolving the complaint shall be informed of the complaint.
5. All documents, communications and records dealing with the complaint shall be placed in a complaint file. No such material shall be placed in an employee's personnel file.
6. No reprisals shall be taken against any participant in a complaint procedure by reason of such participation.

7. Time limits specified in these procedures may be reduced or extended in any specific instance by written mutual agreement of the parties involved. If specified or adjusted time limits expire, the complaint may proceed to the next step.
8. Any complaint not taken to the next step within prescribed time limits shall be considered settled on the basis of the answer given at the preceding step.