

To: Board Members, Administration, Staff, Parents and Community Members

Re: Communicating your concerns and questions

In an effort to improve communication, if you have a need to contact someone in the schools to discuss an issue of importance or if you have a question, please be guided by the following protocol and “chain of command”.

Board Policies No. 1100 (District Organization) and No. 0146.1 (Board Member Authority) provide a process followed by many public school districts and is the recommended protocol by the New Jersey School Boards Association. It defines a “chain of command” to allow for the most efficient method for communicating with school officials on most matters involving the schools. It allows for initial resolution of issues at a first-hand level and invites the timeliest answers to the majority of questions individuals might have with respect to the schools.

Under the protocol, if a parent has a concern with his/her child, the first contact should be the child’s teacher if it is for an academic reason. If the matter involves a student health issue, the first contact should be with the school nurse. A question involving extra-curricular activities or a field trip should first be presented to the teacher(s) in charge of the activity. If questions remain after the first step the concern should be taken to the next level, which would generally be the Building Principal. He or she will then schedule a meeting or conference as soon as possible. The third link in the chain of resolution would be the Superintendent who is typically the final arbiter of the activities within the District. Only on rare occasions would an unresolved issue be referred to the Board of Education for their intervention. Neither the Board of Education nor individual Board members should ever be forwarded information nor concerns until all prior levels of the chain of command have been exhausted.

According to New Jersey Administrative Code, only in the instance where the question or concern has been discussed at all lower levels of the chain of command and the Superintendent cannot answer a question or offer a resolution would the issue be taken to the Board of Education. If anyone brings a concern into the chain of command out of sequence the concern must and should be sent back to the proper level for discussion. School officials, including Board members and staff, are required to follow the protocol. I ask that everyone please assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Superintendent of Schools.