



TITLE IX PARENT/STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Houston County Board of Education desires that all students receive the benefit of an adequate education. With this view in mind, the Board prohibits unlawful discrimination against students on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in its programs and activities. If a student or a student's parents/guardians has a complaint/grievance alleging any action prohibited by Title IX i.e., discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual harassment carried out by employees, other students, or third parties, he/she should discuss the matter with the principal of the school which the student attends in an attempt to resolve the grievance. If the principal is the subject of the complaint/grievance, he/she should discuss the matter with the Title IX Coordinator. See below for contact information.

The principal may make an attempt to resolve the grievance informally if the complainant expresses a willingness to participate in this informal process.¹ At his/her discretion, the principal may confer with persons having knowledge of the incident that precipitated the grievance. (*1) The school and the School System will take all necessary steps to prevent any recurrence of sexual harassment and will do what is necessary to correct its discriminatory effects on those affected by it. If the complainant does not want to participate in the informal process or the informal process does not result in a satisfactory solution, the student or parent/guardian bringing the complaint may seek relief using the formal procedures outlined below. (*4) The student alleged to have carried out the harassment may also seek relief by following the procedures outlined below. These procedures apply to complaints of discrimination/harassment prohibited by Title IX. The steps below are recommended for the most efficient resolution at the lowest level for any form of discrimination.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment of a student can deny or limit, on the basis of sex, the student's ability to participate in or to receive benefits, services, or opportunities in the school's program. Sexual violence is defined as infliction of physical force by a student, employee or third party, with the intent to cause injury or harm to the student.

Step I

The complaint shall be presented (*3) orally or in writing to the school principal, or the Title IX Coordinator if the principal is the subject of the complaint/grievance, within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. (*2) If the harassment is so severe that the complainant is unable to make a complaint within the ten (10) calendar day time frame, the number of days within which to make the complaint may be waived to provide the student/parent making the complaint sufficient time to notify the principal or Title IX Coordinator of the complaint. Any witness or evidence should be provided at the time of the complaint. All parties involved shall have the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence. The principal or designee will conduct an investigation. The parties involved will be informed of the outcome and the principal will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days of the filing of the complaint.

¹ Parties have the right to end the informal process and begin a formal process at any time.

Retaliation against an individual who reports alleged harassment or who assists in the investigation of harassment is prohibited. The District will take appropriate action against individuals who are in violation of this part of the policy.

Step II

If the Step I investigation was conducted by the Title IX Coordinator, skip Step II and proceed to Step III.

A complainant or alleged harasser dissatisfied with the decision of the school principal may appeal to the Houston County School System's Title IX Coordinator by submitting a written statement of complaint to the Title IX Coordinator. The complaint should be mailed to:

Assistant Superintendent for School Operations, Title IX Coordinator
Houston County Board of Education
Post Office Box 1850
Perry, Georgia 31069-1850
Phone: (478) 988-6200
Fax: (478) 218-7517

This statement must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the parties, complainant and alleged harasser, receives the decision from the school principal. The appeal shall include all reports and comments from Step I and a letter of appeal. The System Title IX Coordinator will initiate an investigation of the grievance and schedule a meeting with the complainant or alleged harasser to attempt resolution of the concerns. The Houston County School System's Title IX Coordinator will render a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the meeting. The case is closed if the complainant is satisfied with the decision or does not wish to take further steps.

Step III

A complainant or alleged harasser dissatisfied with the decision of the Houston County School System's Title IX Coordinator may appeal to the Houston County Board of Education by filing a written request for a hearing to the Office of the Superintendent. The complaint should be mailed to:

Office of the Superintendent
Houston County Board of Education
Post Office Box 1850
Perry, Georgia 31069-1850
Phone: (478) 988-6200

The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the complainant receives the decision from the Houston County School System's Title IX Coordinator. The request for a hearing shall state specifically the nature of the grievance, the relief sought, and the reasons why the Board should grant a hearing. If a hearing is granted, the Board of Education will hear the grievance at the next scheduled BOE meeting and render a final decision within 10 days of the hearing. If a hearing is not granted, the parties will be notified that the decision of the Title IX Coordinator is affirmed.