

# COMPLAINT PROCESS STEPS

## ① GET THE COMPLAINT FORM

**Ask your school.** By law, a notice must be posted in each classroom describing your rights and where to find complaint forms.

- or -

**Download** a complaint form. Go to [www.decentschools.org](http://www.decentschools.org) and click on "Settlement in Action" and the "New Complaint Process."

## ② FILL OUT COMPLAINT FORM

Any person or organization may file a complaint, including students, teachers, parents, and community organizations. The complaint can be filed anonymously. But, if you want the principal or district to tell you how the problem was fixed, include your name and contact information and check the box to show you want a response. Add additional pages if necessary and **be as specific as possible** (e.g., describe the classroom and course where the problem is).

## ③ TURN IN COMPLAINT FORM

Send the complaint form either to your principal or district office. **Make 3 extra copies:** keep one for you, send one to your District Superintendent, and send one to your County Superintendent. To find the contact information for your County Superintendent, go to [www.ccsesa.org](http://www.ccsesa.org). You may submit the complaint in a language other than English and if requested, you may be entitled to a response in that language.

## ④ THE INVESTIGATION

The **principal must investigate** and provide a solution to a valid complaint **within 30 working days** (excludes weekends and holidays). If your principal forwards your complaint to the district, it must take action within 40 working days.

## ⑤ GET RESPONSE WITHIN 45 WORKING DAYS

If you put your name on the complaint, the principal/district **must respond to you** in writing **within 45 working days** to inform you how your complaint was resolved.

## ⑥ UNSATISFIED WITH RESPONSE?

You have the right to **speak at a school board meeting** to explain why the response was unsatisfactory and request that the board take action.

- or -

For facilities complaints, you may also **file an appeal** with the Superintendent of Public Instruction **within 15 days** of receiving the response. For textbook and teacher issues, notify your County Superintendent.

## Learn simple steps to enforce your rights

Under the historic *Williams v. California* settlement, every student in California is now guaranteed the right to:



A qualified, permanent teacher for every class



Textbooks & instructional materials to use in class and at home



Clean and safe schools & classrooms

## Public Advocates

**MAKING RIGHTS REAL**

**YOU CAN FILE A COMPLAINT UNDER THE UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURE (Cal. Educ. Code § 35186), TO PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS IF YOU LACK:**

### **CLEAN & SAFE SCHOOL FACILITIES**

- There are non-functioning or closed bathrooms or other unsanitary restroom conditions;
- The heating, ventilation, fire sprinkler, or air-conditioning systems in a school are broken;
- A school is infested with pests, insects, vermin, or rodents;
- A school has broken windows that pose a security risk;
- The exterior doors or gates of a school will not lock;
- There is a hazardous or uninhabitable condition at a school such as structural damage, asbestos, lead paint, etc.;
- There is a gas leak at a school;
- There is an electrical power failure at a school; or
- There is any school facility condition that poses a threat to the health or safety of students or staff.

*On the complaint, describe the problem or condition, where it is located, and how it poses a threat to health or safety.*

### **SUFFICIENT TEXTBOOKS/ INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

- A student doesn't have a book to use in class or must share a book;
- A student doesn't have a book to use at home;
- A student's book is missing pages;
- A student's book is severely damaged;
- A student's book is in poor or unusable physical condition;
- A student's book is out-of-date;
- A student doesn't have the proper lab equipment; or
- A student is given only photocopies of a portion of the textbook because of a textbook shortage.

*On the complaint, identify the problem, the course/grade level, name of textbook or instructional material, teacher's full name, and any other important details.*

### **QUALIFIED, PERMANENT TEACHERS**

- A class is not assigned a permanent teacher within the first 4 weeks of the class;
- A class is taught only by substitute teachers;
- A class is taught by a teacher who lacks the proper credentials to teach the subject matter; or
- A class in which more than 20% of the students are English learners has a teacher who lacks the proper authorization to teach English learners.

*On the complaint, identify the problem, course/grade level, and teacher's full name.*

## **Questions?**

**Need help with filing a complaint or an appeal?**

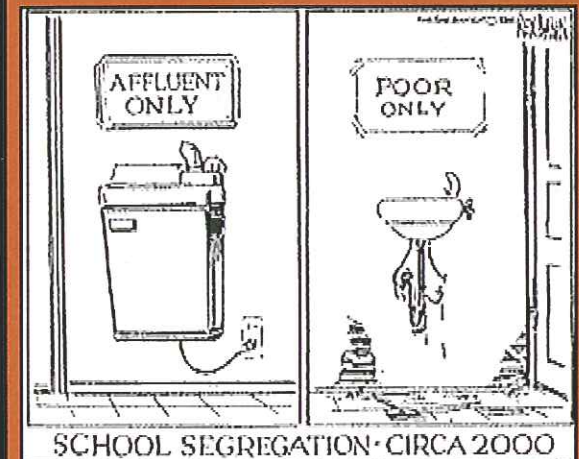
### **Contact:**

## **Public Advocates**

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