

SECTION 600 – Students

POLICY 618: APPEALS AND HEARINGS REGARDING STUDENT MATTERS

BACKGROUND

The Board of Trustees understands that there are situations where individuals may wish to appeal decisions made by site or system administration.

POLICY

The Board of Trustees will hear appeals that relate to individual student matters identified specifically in the School Act as those that may be appealed to the Minister of Education.

Under the relevant section(s) of the School Act, the only matters on which the Minister of Education will consider appeals:

1. Special education placement;
2. Language of instruction;
3. Home education programs;
4. Student expulsion;
5. Amount and payment of fees or costs;
6. Amount of fees payable by a Board to another Board;
7. Board responsibility for a specific student; or
8. Access to, or the accuracy or completeness of the student record.

GUIDELINES

1. Appeals regarding any student matter (excluding expulsion) identified in this policy are to follow the Administrative Appeal Process prior to being formally appealed to the Board.
2. Decisions made by the Board under this policy may be appealed to the Minister of Education.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL PROCESS

In the event that a decision of a teacher is appealed, the appeal will be heard by the school principal or designate.

1. Upon receipt of a written appeal from a parent/guardian or independent student (student over the age of 16) the principal will convene a formal meeting that includes all of the parties to the decision. The purpose of the meeting is to examine and clarify all of the aspects of the decision, and attempt, through dialogue, to reach a conclusion that is satisfactory to the parties involved.

- 1.1. The site-level appeal meeting is to occur not more than five business days from the receipt of the written appeal.
- 1.2. A written summary of the meeting, along with the agreement(s) reached or, where agreement could not be reached, the decision of the principal or designate is to be provided to the appellant no later than five business days following the above mentioned meeting.
2. If the issue is not resolved, either party may refer the issue, in writing, to the designated Division level administrator, who will attempt to reach a resolution through a mediation process.
 - 2.1. The Division level appeal meeting is to occur not more than ten business days from the receipt of the written appeal.
 - 2.2. A written summary of the meeting, along with the agreement(s) reached or, where agreement could not be reached, the decision of the Division level administrator is to be provided to the appellant no later than five business days following the above mentioned meeting.
3. If the issue remains unresolved, it will then be referred to the Superintendent, who will conduct a formal meeting and determine the most appropriate response.
 - 3.1. The Superintendent appeal meeting is to occur not more than ten business days from the receipt of the written appeal.
 - 3.2. A written summary of the meeting, along with the agreement(s) reached or, where agreement could not be reached, the decision of the Superintendent is to be provided to the appellant no later than five business days following the above mentioned meeting.
4. The Superintendent's decision is final, except in cases that deal with student matters that are identified specifically in the School Act as those that may be appealed to the Minister of Education.
5. At each stage of the Administrative Appeal Process the respondent must notify the appellant of the right to appeal.
6. Written appeals must include:
 - 6.1. The reason for the appeal; and
 - 6.2. The desired outcome of the process.

ALL MATTERS OTHER THAN EXPULSION OF A STUDENT

The Board of Trustees will hear appeals on administrative decisions on all matters other than expulsion of students, which are submitted in accordance with relevant section(s) of the School Act and that significantly affect the education of a student.

1. Prior to a decision being appealed to the Board, it must be appealed in accordance with the Administrative Appeal Process.



2. Parents/guardians of students, and independent students, have the right to appeal to the Board, a decision of the Superintendent that significantly affects the education of a student. The Superintendent must advise parents and students of this right of appeal.
3. The appeal to the Board must be made within five (5) days from the date that the individual was informed of the Superintendent's decision. The appeal must be filed in writing and must contain the name of the party filing the appeal, the date, the matter at hand, the reason for the appeal and, where appropriate, the desired outcome.
4. Parents or students, as above, when appealing a decision to the Board, have the right to be assisted by a resource person(s) of their choosing. The responsibility for engaging and paying for such assistance rests with the parents or students.
5. The hearing of the appeal must be scheduled so as to ensure that the person making the appeal and the Superintendent or designate, whose decision is being appealed, have sufficient notice and time to prepare for the presentation.
6. The appeal will be heard in-camera, with specified individuals in attendance.
7. The appeal hearing will be conducted in accordance with the following guidelines:
 - 7.1. The Board Chair will outline the purpose of the hearing, which is to provide:
 - 7.1.1. An opportunity for the parties to make representation in support of their respective position to the Board. This information may include expert medical, psychological and educational data and may be presented by witnesses. The information presented may include both written and verbal communications;
 - 7.1.2. The Board with the means to receive information and to review the facts of the dispute;
 - 7.1.3. A process through which the Board can reach a fair and impartial decision.
 - 7.2. Notes of the proceedings will be recorded for the purpose of the Board's records.
 - 7.3. The Superintendent and/or staff will explain the decision and give reasons for the decision.
 - 7.4. The appellant will present the appeal and the reasons for the appeal and will have an opportunity to respond to information provided by the Superintendent and/or staff.
 - 7.5. The Superintendent and/or staff will have the opportunity to respond to information presented by the appellant.
 - 7.6. The members of the Board will have the opportunity to ask questions or clarification from both parties.
 - 7.7. No cross-examination of the parties shall be allowed though questions may be directed to the other party through the Board Chair with the permission of the Board Chair.
 - 7.8. The Board will meet, without the respective parties to the appeal in attendance, to arrive at a decision regarding the appeal. The Board may have legal counsel in attendance.



- 7.9. If the Board requires additional information or clarification in order to make its decision, both parties to the appeal will be requested to return to the hearing for the required additional information.
- 7.10. The Board decision and the reasons for that decision will be communicated to the appellant once a decision has been reached and confirmed in writing following the hearing. Included in the communication to the appellant shall be information that the appellant has the right to seek a review by the Minister of Education if the appellant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Board, if the matter under appeal is a matter described in section 124 of the School Act.

EXPULSION OF A STUDENT

The Board will establish a standing committee for the purposes of hearing recommendations for student expulsion.

It is expected that all students will comply with the relevant section(s) of the School Act, Board policy, Administrative Procedures and school rules.

The Board Committee will hear representations with respect to a recommendation for a student expulsion in accordance with the relevant sections of the School Act.

If a student is not to be reinstated within five (5) school days of the date of suspension, the principal shall immediately report in writing all the circumstances of the suspension and provide a recommendation to the Board through the Office of the Superintendent.

The Board Committee will convene in an in-camera session upon the call of the Superintendent, but in no event shall the meeting occur later than ten (10) school days from the first day of suspension.

Parents of students, or students sixteen (16) years of age or over, have the right to be assisted by a resource person(s) of their choosing. The responsibility for engaging and paying for such assistance rests with the parents or students.

The Board Committee may have legal counsel in attendance.

Notes of the proceedings will be recorded for the purpose of the Board's records.

The expulsion hearing will be conducted in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. The Chair of the Board Committee will outline the purpose of the hearing, which is to:
 - 1.1. Provide an opportunity to hear representations relative to the recommendation from the principal;
 - 1.2. Provide an opportunity for the student and/or the student's parents to make representations;
 - 1.3. Reinstate or expel the student.



2. The Chair of the Board Committee will outline the procedure to be followed, which will be as follows:
 - 2.1. The principal will present the report documenting the details of the case and the recommendation to expel the student;
 - 2.2. The student and the student's parents will be given an opportunity to respond to the information presented and to add any additional relevant information;
 - 2.3. The members of the Board Committee will have the opportunity to ask questions of clarification from both the principal and the student and the student's parents;
 - 2.4. The Board Committee will meet, without either the administration or the student and the student's parents present, to discuss the case and the recommendation. The recording secretary may remain in attendance. Legal counsel may also remain in attendance;
 - 2.5. Should the Board Committee require additional information, both parties will be requested to return in order to provide the requested information;
 - 2.6. The Board Committee will then make a decision to either reinstate or expel the student; and
 - 2.7. The Board Committee's decision shall be communicated in writing to the student and the student's parents within five (5) days of the hearing, with copies being provided to the principal and the Superintendent. The Superintendent's office will attempt to inform the parent(s) and the student of the decision by telephone or personal communication as soon as possible after a decision has been reached.
3. If the Board Committee's decision is to expel the student, the following information must be included in the letter to the student and the student's parents:
 - 3.1. The length of the expulsion which must be greater than ten (10) school days;
 - 3.2. The educational program to be provided to the student and the name of the individual to be contacted in order to make the necessary arrangements; and
 - 3.3. The right of the student and the student's parents to request a review of the decision by the Minister of Education.

REFERENCES

Alberta Education – School Act

Approved: April 4, 2006

Revised: October 23, 2018

