

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

Chain of Accountability Guidelines

“Getting Answers/Resolving Matters at the MOST LOCAL Level”

This document provides guidance for those parents or members of the community who are seeking answers to questions and/or seeking resolution to a problem or concern related to the Scarborough Public Schools (SPS). This document has been created by the Leadership Council (leadership team) of the SPS and offers a logical, sequential, progression of contacts with the goal of providing answers and/or resolving matters most effectively and at the most local (direct, appropriate, and efficient) level.

A. Student Level:

Nature of question/concern best resolved at this level:

- ❖ Homework routines
- ❖ Getting and keeping organized
- ❖ Encouraging students to advocate for themselves
- ❖ Managing and resolving minor social issues and relationship with peers

Examples of items best managed at this level:

- ❖ Student’s day-to-day management of school work
- ❖ Interactions with friends or groups of friends
- ❖ Parental assistance for a student to practice or learn how to advocate to get a need met

Helpful strategies for use by parent or community members when managing an issue at this level:

- ❖ Regular “check-ins” with your student
- ❖ Offer to problem solve with your student
- ❖ Establish some reliable routines for getting schoolwork/homework done
- ❖ Read emails, notices sent home from school
- ❖ Visit the school and district websites for news and information

B. Teacher Level:

Nature of question/concern best resolved at this level:

- ❖ Curriculum at day to day level
- ❖ Management of classroom (discipline) and day to day logistics of management (application of school rules)
- ❖ Social or emotional issues impacting school performance

Examples of items best managed at this level:

- ❖ Use of electronics in classroom/school
- ❖ Expectations for homework/homework content
- ❖ Student performance at all levels: learning, behavior, social/emotional

Helpful strategies for use by parent or community members when managing an issue at this level:

- ❖ Access and review all available information provided by teacher and school
- ❖ Contact the closest source to the question; i.e., teacher, support staff, counselor, etc.
- ❖ Ask the teacher for guidance or assistance in accessing the appropriate professional

C. Principal Level:

Nature of question/concern best resolved at this level:

- ❖ Building management
- ❖ Serious student conduct issue
- ❖ Parent/teacher conflict
- ❖ Matters related to instructional leadership/oversite
- ❖ Supervision/evaluation of teachers

Examples of items best managed at this level:

- ❖ Building management; i.e., emergency procedures, crisis intervention, scheduling, safety and security of building
- ❖ Parent/teacher/student conflict
- ❖ Instructional leadership and questions related to teaching and learning at the school (versus classroom) level

Helpful strategies for use by parent or community members when managing an issue at this level:

- ❖ View the Principal's role as that of a facilitator/problem solver/instructional leader

D. Central Office Level:

Nature of question/concern best resolved at this level:

- ❖ Appeal of decision made at school/building level
- ❖ Budget issues beyond original allocations
- ❖ Legal matters
- ❖ Personnel - related matters

Examples of items best managed at this level:

- ❖ Gates appeal
- ❖ Matters related to Workers Compensation
- ❖ Potential harassment or Human Rights violation
- ❖ IEP related concerns not resolved at the school/building level

Helpful strategies for use by parent or community members when managing an issue at this level:

- ❖ Make efforts to resolve the matter at the classroom and building level
- ❖ Understanding that there may be other factors that impact the situation that may/may not be shared due to confidentiality/legal constraints
- ❖ Work knowing that that the Central Office staff manage many issues with a student-centered focus and will respond as quickly as is possible

E. Superintendent Level:

Nature of question/concern best resolved at this level:

- ❖ Serious matters such as expulsion, safety issues, drug issues that are not being resolved
- ❖ Staff misconduct requiring legal action
- ❖ Strategic planning for direction of school department
- ❖ Leadership development and evaluation
- ❖ Organizational budget and resource management

Examples of items best managed at this level:

- ❖ Serious safety matters - for example, weapons on school grounds
- ❖ Staff misconduct - for example, staff engaged in behavior that might endanger students
- ❖ Matters unresolved after going through the chain of accountability

Helpful strategies for use by parent or community members when managing an issue at this level:

- ❖ Seek guidance from the Superintendent's office
- ❖ Attempt, as best possible, to provide the Superintendent's office with relevant written materials at the time of your request for a meeting

F. School Board Level:

Nature of question/concern best resolved at this level:

- ❖ Serious legal or liability matters
- ❖ Public advocacy for resources to meet the needs of students
- ❖ Policy - related matters
- ❖ Budget development
- ❖ Strategic leadership of the school district
- ❖ Student expulsion

Examples of items best managed at this level:

- ❖ Policy adoption
- ❖ Labor contract negotiations
- ❖ Approving the Superintendent's recommended personnel hires/releases

Helpful strategies for use by parent or community members when managing an issue at this level:

- ❖ Attempt to resolve your matter or get your question answered at the classroom, school, or Central Office level
- ❖ Seek guidance from the Superintendent's office
- ❖ Understand that the School Board is empowered to make decisions only when a quorum of the Board is formally convened
- ❖ Recognize that individual Board members have no authority to act or speak on behalf of the Board and are unable to resolve matters that should be managed at the Teacher/Principal/Central office or Superintendent levels

Adopted: October 20, 2011