

Book	Policy Manual
Section	3000 Professional Staff
Title	NONDISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
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### 3122 - **NONDISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

The Board does not discriminate in the employment of professional staff on the basis of the Protected Classes of race, color, national origin, age, sex (including transgender status, change of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity), pregnancy, creed or religion, genetic information, handicap or disability, marital status, citizenship status, veteran status, military service (as defined in 111.32, Wis. Stats.), ancestry, arrest record, conviction record, use or non-use of lawful products off the District's premises during non-working hours, declining to attend an employer-sponsored meeting or to participate in any communication with the employer about religious matters or political matters, or any other characteristic protected by law in its employment practices.

#### **District Compliance Officers**

The Board designates the following individuals to serve as the District's "Compliance Officers" (hereinafter referred to as the "COs").

Kevin Kilstofte  
 District Administrator  
 (920) 788-7944  
 N4021 County Road E Freedom, WI 54130  
 kkilstofte@freedomschools.k12.wi.us

Jill Mussett  
 Director of Public Services  
 (920) 788-7944  
 N4021 County Road E Freedom, WI 54130  
 jmussett@freedomschools.k12.wi.us

The names, titles, and contact information of these individuals will be published annually:

- A. in the staff handbooks.
- B. on the School District's website.
- C. in the School District's calendar.

The COs are responsible for coordinating the District's efforts to comply with the applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, including the District's duty to address in a prompt and equitable manner any inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination, retaliation, or denial of equal access. The COs shall also verify that proper notice of nondiscrimination has been provided for Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (as amended), Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1975, and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) to students, their parents, staff members, and the general public.

#### **Reports and Complaints of Unlawful Discrimination and Retaliation**

Employees are expected to promptly report incidents of unlawful discrimination and/or retaliation to an administrator, supervisor, or other supervisory employees so that the Board may address the conduct. Any administrator, supervisor, or other supervisory employees who receive such a complaint shall file it with the CO at his/her first opportunity, but no later than two (2) business days.

Employees who believe they have been unlawfully discriminated/retaliated against are entitled to utilize the complaint process set forth below. Initiating a complaint will not adversely affect the complaining individual's employment. While there are no time limits for initiating complaints under this policy, individuals should make every effort to file a complaint as soon as possible after the conduct occurs while the facts are known and potential witnesses are available.

The COs will be available during regular school/work hours to discuss concerns related to unlawful discrimination/retaliation. COs shall accept complaints of unlawful discrimination/retaliation directly from any member of the School District community (District employees, students, parent(s), and members of the Board), a resident of the District, or a visitor to the District, or receive complaints that are initially filed with a school building administrator. Upon receipt of a complaint, either directly or through a school building administrator, a CO will begin an investigation, or the CO will designate a specific individual to conduct such a process. The CO will provide a copy of this policy to any person who files a complaint. All members of the School District community must report incidents of discrimination/retaliation that are reported to them to the CO within two (2) business days of learning of the incident/conduct.

Any Board employee who directly observes unlawful discrimination/retaliation is obligated, in accordance with this policy, to report such observations to one of the COs within two (2) business days. Additionally, any Board employee who observes an act of unlawful discrimination/retaliation is expected to intervene to stop the misconduct, unless circumstances make such an intervention dangerous, in which case the staff member should immediately notify other Board employees and/or local law enforcement officials, as necessary, to stop the misconduct. Thereafter, the CO must contact the employee within two (2) business days to advise him/her of the Board's intent to investigate the alleged wrongdoing.

### **Investigation and Complaint Procedure (See Form 3122 F2)**

Any employee who believes that s/he has been subjected to unlawful discrimination or retaliation may seek resolution of his/her complaint through the procedures described below. The complaint procedures involve an investigation of the individual's claims and a process for rendering a decision regarding whether the charges are substantiated.

Once the complaint process begins, the investigation will be completed in a timely manner (ordinarily, within fifteen (15) business days of the complaint being received).

The procedures set forth below are not intended to interfere with the rights of any individual to pursue a complaint of unlawful discrimination or retaliation with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, the Wisconsin Equal Rights Division, or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC").

### **Complaint Procedure**

An individual who believes s/he has been subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation (hereinafter referred to as the "Complainant"), may file a complaint, either orally or in writing, with a Principal, the CO, District Administrator, or other supervisory employees. Any complaint received regarding the District Administrator or a Board member shall be referred to the Board's legal counsel, who shall assume the role of the CO for such complaints. Additionally, if the complaint is regarding a CO, the complaint shall be reported to the District Administrator, who shall assume the role of CO for such complaints.

Due to the sensitivity surrounding complaints of unlawful discrimination and retaliation, timelines are flexible for initiating the complaint process; however, individuals should make every effort to file a complaint within thirty (30) calendar days after the conduct occurs while the facts are known and potential witnesses are available. If a Complainant informs a Principal, District Administrator, or other supervisory employees, either orally or in writing, about any complaint of discrimination or retaliation, that employee must report such information to the CO within two (2) business days.

Throughout the course of the process, the CO should keep the parties informed of the status of the investigation and the decision-making process.

All complaints must include the following information to the extent it is available: the identity of the individual believed to have engaged in, or be engaging in, the discriminatory/retaliatory conduct; a detailed description of the facts upon which the complaint is based; a list of potential witnesses; and the resolution sought by the Complainant.

If the Complainant is unwilling or unable to provide a written statement including the information set forth above, the CO shall ask for such details in an oral interview. Thereafter, the CO will prepare a written summary of the oral interview, and the Complainant will be asked to verify the accuracy of the reported charge by signing the document.

Upon receiving a complaint, the CO will consider whether any action should be taken in the investigatory phase to protect the Complainant from further discrimination or retaliation, including, but not limited to, a change of work assignment or schedule for the Complainant and/or the person who allegedly engaged in the misconduct. In making such a determination, the CO should consult the Complainant to assess his/her position to the proposed action. If the Complainant is unwilling to consent to the proposed change, the CO may still take whatever actions s/he deems appropriate in consultation with the District Administrator.

Within two (2) business days of receiving the complaint, the CO will initiate an investigation to determine whether the Complainant has been subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation.

Simultaneously, the CO will inform the individual alleged to have engaged in the discriminatory or retaliatory conduct (hereinafter referred to as the "Respondent"), that a complaint has been received. The Respondent will be informed about the nature of the allegations and provided with a copy of any relevant policies and/or administrative guidelines, including this Policy. The Respondent must also be informed of the opportunity to submit a written response to the complaint within five (5) business days.

Although certain cases may require additional time, the CO will attempt to complete an investigation into the allegations of discrimination/retaliation within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the formal complaint. The investigation will include:

- A. interviews with the Complainant;
- B. interviews with the Respondent;
- C. interviews with any other witnesses who may reasonably be expected to have any information relevant to the allegations, as determined by the CO;
- D. consideration of any documentation or other information presented by the Complainant, Respondent, or any other witness that is reasonably believed to be relevant to the allegations, as determined by the CO.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the CO shall prepare and deliver a written report to the District Administrator that summarizes the evidence gathered during the investigation and provides recommendations based on the evidence and the definition of unlawful discrimination/retaliation as provided in Board policy and State and Federal law as to whether the Complainant has been subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation. The CO's recommendations must be based upon the totality of the circumstances. In determining if discrimination or retaliation occurred, a preponderance of evidence standard will be used.

The CO may consult with the Board's legal counsel before finalizing the report to the District Administrator.

Absent extenuating circumstances, within five (5) business days of receiving the report of the CO, the District Administrator must either issue a final decision regarding whether the charges have been substantiated or request further investigation. A copy of the District Administrator's final decision will be delivered to both the Complainant and the Respondent.

If the District Administrator requests additional investigation, the District Administrator must specify the additional information that is to be gathered, and such additional investigation must be completed within five (5) business days. At the conclusion of the additional investigation, the District Administrator must issue a final written decision as described above.

If the District Administrator determines the Complainant was subjected to unlawful discrimination/retaliation, s/he must identify what corrective action will be taken to stop, remedy, and prevent the recurrence of the discrimination/retaliation. The corrective action should be reasonable, timely, effective, and tailored to the specific situation.

The decision of the District Administrator shall be final.

The Board reserves the right to investigate and resolve a complaint or report of unlawful discrimination/retaliation regardless of whether the employee alleging the misconduct pursues the complaint. The Board also reserves the right to have the complaint investigation conducted by an external person in accordance with this policy or in such other manner as deemed appropriate by the Board.

The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies. Use of this internal complaint procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies.

### **Privacy/Confidentiality**

The School District will employ all reasonable efforts to protect the rights of the Complainant, the Respondent(s), and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the Board's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to

conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under the terms of this policy shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law. Confidentiality, however, cannot be guaranteed. All Complainants will be advised that their identities may become known to the Respondent(s) through the investigation process.

During the course of an investigation, the CO will instruct each person who is interviewed about the importance of maintaining confidentiality. Any individual who is interviewed as part of an investigation is expected not to disclose to third parties any information that s/he learns and/or provides during the course of the investigation.

### **Sanctions and Monitoring**

The Board shall vigorously enforce its prohibitions against unlawful discrimination by taking appropriate action reasonably calculated to stop and prevent further misconduct. While observing the principles of due process, a violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including the discharge of an employee. All disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with applicable State law. When imposing discipline, the District Administrator shall consider the totality of the circumstances involved in the matter. In those cases where unlawful discrimination/retaliation is not substantiated, the Board may consider whether the alleged conduct nevertheless warrants discipline in accordance with other Board policies and/or the Employee Handbook.

Where the Board becomes aware that a prior remedial action has been taken against an employee, all subsequent sanctions imposed by the Board and/or District Administrator shall be reasonably calculated to end such conduct, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effect.

### **Retaliation**

Retaliation against a person who makes a report or files a complaint alleging unlawful discrimination/retaliation, or participates as a witness in an investigation is prohibited. Specifically, the Board will not retaliate against, coerce, intimidate, threaten or interfere with any individual because the person opposed any act or practice made unlawful by any Federal or State civil rights law, or because that individual made a charge, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under those laws, or because that individual exercised their rights, aided or encouraged any other person in the exercise of any right granted or protected by those laws.

### **Education and Training**

In support of this policy, the Board promotes preventative educational measures to create greater awareness of unlawful discriminatory practices. The District Administrator shall provide appropriate information to all members of the School District community related to the implementation of this policy and shall provide training for District staff where appropriate. All training, as well as all information provided regarding the Board's policy and discrimination in general, will be age and content appropriate.

### **Retention of Investigatory Records and Materials**

All individuals charged with conducting investigations under this policy shall retain all information, documents, electronically stored information ("ESI"), and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) created and received as part of an investigation, including, but not limited to:

- A. all written reports/allegations/complaints/statements;
- B. narratives of all verbal reports, allegations, complaints, and statements collected;
- C. a narrative of all actions taken by District personnel;
- D. any written documentation of actions taken by District personnel;
- E. narratives of, notes from, or audio, video, or digital recordings of witness statements;
- F. all documentary evidence;
- G. e-mails, texts, or social media posts pertaining to the investigation;
- H. contemporaneous notes in whatever form made (e.g., handwritten, keyed into a computer or tablet, etc.) pertaining to the investigation;
- I. written disciplinary sanctions issued to students or employees and a narrative of verbal disciplinary sanctions issued to students or employees for violations of the policies and procedures prohibiting discrimination or harassment;

- J. dated written determinations to the parties;
- K. dated written descriptions of verbal notifications to the parties;
- L. written documentation of any interim measures offered and/or provided to complainants, including no-contact orders issued to both parties, the dates issued, and the dates the parties acknowledged receipt; and
- M. documentation of all actions taken, both individual and systemic, to stop the discrimination or harassment, prevent its recurrence, eliminate any hostile environment, and remedy its discriminatory effects.

The information, documents, ESI, and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) retained may include public records and records exempt from disclosure under Federal and/or State law (e.g., student records).

The information, documents, ESI, and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) created or received as part of an investigation shall be retained in accordance with Policy 8310, Policy 8315, Policy 8320, and Policy 8330 for not less than three (3) years, but longer if required by the District's records retention schedule.

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Legal

- 111.31 et seq., Wis. Stats.
- 111.335(d)(2), Wis. Stats.
- 118.195, Wis. Stats.
- 118.20, Wis. Stats.
- Fourteenth Amendment, U.S. Constitution
- 20 U.S.C. Section 1681, Title IX of Education Amendment Act
- 20 U.S.C. Section 1701 et seq., Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974
- 20 U.S.C. Section 7905, Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act
- 42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq., Age Discrimination Act of 1975
- 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq., The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended
- 34 C.F.R. Part 110 (7/27/93)
- 42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq., Civil Rights Act of 1964
- 42 U.S.C. 2000ff et seq., The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act
- 29 U.S.C. 701 et seq., Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended
- 29 C.F.R. Part 1635

