

Step #1

Take your concern to the person closest to the problem.

No matter what the problem is, take your concern there first. Whether in the classroom, on the bus, or on the practice field, the quickest and easiest solution is usually found with the staff member most directly involved.

It's best if you take time to talk with the school personnel regularly, before problems are encountered. Know who your children's teachers are and how they can be contacted. Tell them when things are going well and communicate any concerns you have quickly and openly.

If you call for an appointment to see your child's teachers, why not let them know in advance the general nature of your concern? This gives them the opportunity to ask other staff members for information that might relate to your problem or concern. If a personal visit isn't possible, why not call to state the problem, and during the conversation, offer to call back at a time you both can discuss the situation more in detail.

The concern you or your child faces may be a result of an oversight or a misunderstanding that can be easily corrected once brought to the attention of the staff member most directly involved.

Give them a chance to tackle the problem first.

Step #2

Present your concern to the next level.

The principal at each building is responsible for supervision of staff within that particular building. The director of transportation supervises all school bus drivers. Each one is an example of the next level of school personnel you should contact if the staff member closest to the problem hasn't been able to satisfactorily resolve the difficulty.

Their ability to help will be improved if you share the steps you have already taken with the staff member closest to the problem. Take time to openly share with them the reasons why you feel uncomfortable dealing directly with the person who is closest to the situation.

Supervisory personnel will rarely have access to the information they need to be of immediate assistance and working through them will often require additional time.

Step #3

Talk with the superintendent of schools.

Sometimes all the best intentions can't solve a problem.

When you believe you have taken the problem to the next level but still haven't achieved a satisfactory outcome, the superintendent of schools is the next place to go.

Part of a superintendent's job requires attendance at area-wide meetings outside the district. As a consequence, a meeting with the superintendent will probably require some advance planning.

Step #4

Contact your school board members after other means have been tried.

School board members are elected to represent the interest of all parents and district residents; therefore, you should always feel free to tell them your point of view.

School board members do not, however, have direct authority in day-to-day operations. All authority is the result of official actions by a majority of the board at meetings open to the public.

The board's primary responsibility is to make policies that guide the school district. Any change in policy requires two readings at two separate public meetings, a procedure that often takes two or more months.

(Step #4 continued on back.)

Step #4 (continued)

Some policy changes may require substantial public input and consultation with the school district's attorney. These requirements often increase the time required for the board to make a response.

So, when should a board member be contacted and what can they do?

Contact a board member.....

- **After other means to solve a problem have been tried.**
- **When a policy is being enforced but you believe it results in bad consequences.**
- **When you believe a policy isn't being enforced.**
- **When policies or procedures are not enforced fairly for all.**

A board member may take one or all of the following actions:

- Informally discuss the issue with the superintendent or other administrators to consider whether policies or rules would be changed.
- Request that the board review the specific policies that relate to the situation.
- Propose new policies for the board's consideration.

Unfairness, misunderstanding, hurt feelings, and conflicts are experiences common to us all. When children experience these problems at school, it causes difficulty not only for the children but also for parents and school staff. How to successfully solve problems at school is what this guide is all about.

SCHOOL DIRECTORY

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DO YOU HAVE A CONCERN?

Steps to take when you have a concern within the Grinnell- Newburg School District