

TIPS FOR DISTRICTS WHEN RESPONDING TO CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

The following are suggestions for responding to complaints and organizing your response. This will assist in our review of the issues and may reduce the need for our requests for additional information and documentation. Please:

- Investigate the issues thoroughly and respond to each allegation, including an admission or denial of each. If you deny an allegation, provide the reasons why. If you admit that an allegation is true, propose corrective action.
- Make sure to obtain information from all staff members who can assist with responding to the allegations. Remember that all written responses are provided to the complainant. Be factual, but neutral in your response.
- Provide any information that might help clarify an issue. If there is something that we should know before you respond, let us know as soon as possible so that we can determine whether we need to revise or add an issue for investigation.
- Read through all of our requests for information outlined in our initial letter to you and respond to each request. Provide additional documentation when necessary to address the issues and any other information regardless of our request, which would assist in our investigation.
- When organizing your response, order it by issue if possible, and:
 - Provide a chronology of the events.
 - Address each issue separately. If repetitive, provide a reference to relevant information. Do not provide duplicate copies of documents.
 - Do not send original documents, only send copies.
 - Use page numbers.
 - Do not use binders or folders.
 - Use paperclips, not staples, when bundling documents.
 - Separate the sections of your response. It is helpful for us when we copy the response if you use a separate sheet of paper identifying an exhibit or appendix, rather than notebook dividers or tabs.
 - Do not use sticky notes or flags to identify something on a page.
 - Group like-documents (ex: prior written notice, IEPs).
 - Do not send email chains that contain the same information in each document. When possible, please send us the last reply or forward of an email chain, if it includes all of the messages from the beginning to the end.
- Include a list of the relevant staff names and titles. For example: Jane Doe, student's general education English teacher.
- If you have any questions, please call the investigator assigned to the complaint.