

School board approves draft complaint process for transportation

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By Tiffany Goodwein

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The compliant process for parents and students dealing with bus transportation squabbles has become a little clearer.

At its board meeting last night, School District 22 approved the draft terms of reference for the transportation appeals committee which outlines the steps parents need to take when filing a complaint.

Under the policy, parents would need to address their busing complaints to the transportation manager, and if the complaint goes unresolved the parent can then write to the secretary treasurer.

“The written complaint must outline the nature of the complaint and provide sufficient detail to help facilitate a resolve to the complaint. In cases where the complaint is related to levels of service provided in board policy and regulations, the complaint should outline how the transportation department has provided service inconsistent with board policy and regulation,” according to the terms of reference.

If the issue persists, the parent can then request to be heard by the committee, who will hear the complaint “in a fair and judicious manner.”

Both the secretary treasurer and the transportation manager will be invited to attend the hearings alongside the committee which will be comprised of two trustees and the superintendent.

"It's important to understand though that for a fair process, a parent brings their concern forward, the person that made that decision whether it's the transportation supervisor or the secretary treasurer, should be there at the same time presenting together. Anytime at any tribunal, you have both parties there to present," Superintendent Joe Rogers said. He added the process may take two months before complaints are brought to the board.

"To do it fairly and to hear all parties, it's not going to happen in a week or two. It's just not possible," he said.

Trustee Jen Commazetto fired back and argued that complaints, especially involving safety should be responded to quickly.

"I hate your answer," she said to Rogers.

Commazetto then alluded to her own struggles as a parent dealing with the transportation department two years ago.

"It took nine weeks and I didn't get a response. I find that reprehensible behavior, and I would insist on having some of deadline in here that if there is no response within two weeks that it can escalate automatically. We are talking about children's safety," she said.

Several trustees agreed, including Trustee Tom Williamson.

"If it was my kid standing on the road and it was a safety issue and I phoned the supervisor and let them know what is happening, I would really expect a call at least by the next day, responding to what I consider to be an emergency," he said.

The board ultimately agreed to amend the terms of reference to give a two-week deadline for the transportation manager and the secretary treasurer to respond to complaints.

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