

<b>Procedure Title</b>	<b>Communications – Addressing Parent / Community Concerns</b>		
<b>Date of Issue</b>	June 16, 1998	<b>Related Policy</b>	BP 1604-D
<b>Revision Dates</b>	July 16, 2007; September 24, 2008; May 17, 2011; May 14, 2014; October 27, 2021	<b>Related Forms</b>	AF 1604
<b>Review Date</b>		<b>Originator</b>	Administrative Council
<b>References</b>			
Ontario Regulation 612/00; Bill 177 “ Student Achievement and School Board Governance” Act; Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA); Employment Standards Act; Education Act; Applicable Bluewater District School Board Collective Agreements; Human Rights Code; BP 7520-D “Human Rights”; BP 1606-D “Consultation”			

**1.0 RATIONALE**

- 1.1 Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) endeavours to participate in proactive communication and consultation, as defined in BP 1604-D “Communications”, AP 1603-D “Communications – Trustee/Administration Guidelines”, and BP/AP 1606-D “Consultation”.
- 1.2 It is important for the community and the board to establish trusting relationships. This relationship is based upon effective, ongoing communication. Bluewater District School Board recognizes that issues and/or concerns may arise and believes, in such cases, that the procedure outlined below will facilitate the communication process.
- 1.3 Please note that this is the recommended procedure when dealing with issues. Certain circumstances may require a different approach, including the earlier assistance by the area superintendent and/or trustee.

**2.0 PROCEDURE**

**2.1 SCHOOL-SPECIFIC ISSUE (refer to Appendix A: Process for Resolution of Issues)**

**Step One**

- i. The parent or community member discusses the issue with the teacher/staff member.
- ii. Issue resolved. If issue is not resolved at this point, the issue proceeds to the next step.

**Step Two**

- i. The parent or community member discusses the issue with the principal/supervisor.
- ii. If parent or community member has not spoken to the teacher/staff member, the principal/supervisor will ask that this be done first.
- iii. Issue resolved. If issue is not resolved at this point, the issue proceeds to the next step.

**Step Three**

- i. The parent or community member discusses the issue with the appropriate area superintendent.
- ii. If parent or community member has not spoken to the teacher/staff member and/or principal/supervisor, the area superintendent will ask that this be done first.
- iii. Issue resolved. If issue is not resolved, the issue proceeds to the next step.

**Step Four**

- i. The parent or community member discusses the issue with the director of education.

- ii. If parent or community member has not spoken to the appropriate area superintendent, the director of education will ask that this be done first.
- iii. Issue resolved. If issue is not resolved, the issue proceeds to the next step.

**Step Five**

- i. The parent or community member discusses the issue with their local trustee, who will ensure that the process as outlined above has been followed.
- ii. The parent or community member may present as a delegation to Bluewater District School Board.
- iii. Issue resolved.

**2.2 GENERAL BOARD ISSUE (refer to Appendix A: Process for Resolution of Issues)**

**Step One**

- i. The parent or community member contacts the Bluewater District School Board Education Centre and discusses the issue with the appropriate superintendent.
- ii. Issue resolved. If issue is not resolved, the issue proceeds to the next step.

**Step Two**

- i. The parent or community member discusses the issue with the director of education.
- ii. If parent or community member has not spoken to the appropriate superintendent, the director of education will ask that this be done.
- iii. Issue resolved. If issue is not resolved, the issue proceeds to the next step.

**Step Three**

- i. The parent or community member discusses the issue with their local trustee.
- ii. If parent or community member has not spoken to the appropriate superintendent and/or the director of education, the trustee will direct them to do so.
- iii. The parent or community member may request to present as a delegation to Bluewater District School Board. If appropriate, the Board of Trustees will assist with a resolution where possible.
- iv. Issue resolved.

**2.3 GENERAL EXPECTATIONS**

- i. Necessary meetings will only be scheduled at mutually agreeable times for all parties involved. The parent or community member may choose to have an advocate accompany them to meetings. The advocate will be required to sign form AF 1412 "Support Person/Advocate Oath of Confidentiality".
- ii. Depending upon which step the issue is at, the appropriate individual (principal/area superintendent/director of education/trustee) will:
  - a. contact the parent or community member to discuss and resolve the concerns.
  - b. involve the teacher/staff member involved in the discussions.
  - c. ensure that notes/minutes are taken at all meetings and that these minutes can be provided, if requested.
  - d. gather any relevant information to determine the facts and circumstances.
  - e. ensure that every parent or community member with a concern has an adequate opportunity to express concern fully.
  - f. ensure that the parent or community member is provided with timely updates, as needed, about the progress made in resolving the concern.
  - g. ensure that confidentiality is maintained concerning personal or private matters addressed by all parties.
  - h. as required, consult with the area superintendent to determine if other board staff, the board's lawyer, or community agencies are required to assist in resolving the concern.
- iii. All efforts will be taken to ensure all contact and communication occurs within a mutually agreeable timeframe, if possible, and is documented for appropriate follow-up.

- iv. The teacher, principal, superintendent, director of education, or local trustee will complete the communication by informing all those involved of the outcome, or what is being done to resolve the issue, as soon as possible.
- v. A complaint against a staff member will be dealt with in a confidential, just, and timely manner that respects the dignity and rights of all parties involved.
- vi. Efforts to address the complaint will be consistent with applicable provisions of collective agreements, legislation, and policies and procedures, where appropriate.
- vii. As with any written information generated within the board, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) governs the creation, retention, disclosure, alterations, and destruction of any written material.

**2.4 TRUSTEE INVOLVEMENT**

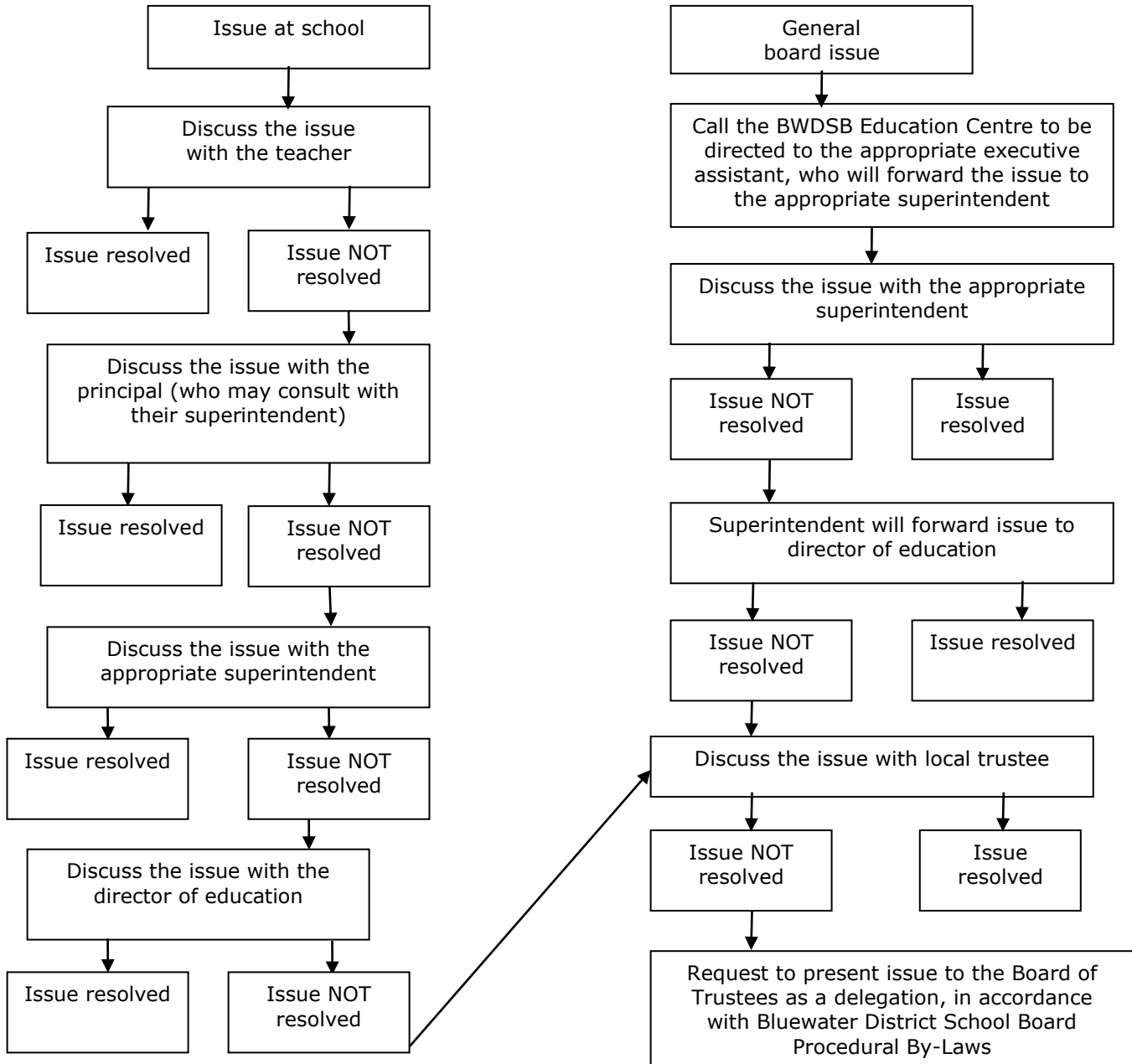
- i. Trustees will support the communication process between the parent or community member and school or appropriate superintendent.
- ii. The parent or community member's area trustee can be contacted at any time during the process; the trustee will normally request that the process outlined above, and as noted in Appendix A, be followed.

**2.5 SCHOOL COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT**

- i. School councils (SCs) are established to act as advisory bodies. Principals and the board may solicit the views of school councils on matters as prescribed by regulation.
- ii. School councils are not forums to discuss individual parent-teacher-student issues.
- iii. If these matters are brought to any SC member or any SC meeting, the concern is to be referred immediately to the principal for discussion at another time.
- iv. Principals will ensure that these communication guidelines are published annually in the school newsletter, daily planners (where applicable), and also posted on their school website(s). Principals will provide staff with a copy. Principals will also provide a copy of this procedure to their SC.
- v. Bluewater District School Board will ensure that the communication guidelines are updated as necessary on the board website.

**APPENDIX A: Process for Resolution of Issues**

This is the recommended process for parent(s)/guardian(s)/community member(s) to follow when dealing with issues, whether specific to a school or a general board issue. It is understood that certain circumstances may require a different approach.



Trustee/School Council (SC) Member Role

If a trustee or SC member becomes aware of an issue, they will normally direct the individual/group to follow this process. The trustee may assist the individual/group in making first contact with the appropriate person and will inform the appropriate principal or superintendent of this contact.