

Laurens County School System Complaint Procedures

Any complaints issued as a result of federal programming, including Title I, Part A (Disadvantaged Children), Title I, Part C (Migrant Education Program), Title I, Part D (Neglected and Delinquent), Title II, Part A (Teacher and Leader Quality), Title III (English Learners and Immigrant Students), Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment), and Title X, Part C (McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless) must be filed according to the system complaint procedures policy.

Ethics and Fraud, Waste, Abuse, and Corruption

The Federal Programs Director reviews ethics and fraud, waste, abuse, and corruption policies as it relates to Title programs, including Title I, Part A (Disadvantaged Children), Title I, Part C (Migrant Education Program), Title I, Part D (Neglected and Delinquent), Title II, Part A (Teacher and Leader Quality), Title III (English Learners and Immigrant Students), Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment), and Title X, Part C (McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless) with all staff through the District Compliance Directory program during the Fall each year. Staff are required to sign off electronically that they have read and understand all policies as related to Title programs. This electronic signature will document this has been completed. Standard 5: Public Funds and Property - An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Misusing public or school-related funds;
- Failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
- Submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);
- Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
- Using school property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.

The Laurens County School System takes the responsibility of properly managing federal funds seriously. Any individual who suspects that funds have been misused with any Title program, including Title I, Part A (Disadvantaged Children), Title I, Part C (Migrant Education Program), Title I, Part D (Neglected and Delinquent), Title II, Part A (Teacher and Leader Quality), Title III (English Learners and Immigrant Students), Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment), and Title X, Part C (McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless) should report the waste, fraud, abuse, or corruption using the following guidelines:

Purpose: To ensure the reporting of suspicion of fraudulent activity, the Laurens County Schools provides employees, clients, and providers with confidential channels for such reporting.

Definitions: Fraud: A false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words, by conduct, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, that is used for the purpose of misappropriating property and/or monetary funds.

Statement of Administrative Regulations: The Laurens County Schools thoroughly and expeditiously investigates and reported cases of suspected fraud to determine if disciplinary, financial recovery and/or criminal action should be taken.

Confidentiality: All reports of suspected fraud must be handled under the strictest confidentiality. Only those directly involved in the investigation should be provided information regarding the allegation. Informants may remain anonymous but should be encouraged to cooperate with investigators and should provide as much detail and evidence of alleged fraudulent acts as possible.

(LCSS BOE Policy)

The School System (“System”) shall not tolerate fraud of any kind and has an established system for the reporting of suspicious activities.

“Fraud” is defined as a false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, that is used for the purpose of misappropriating property and/or monetary funds from federal, state, or local grants and funds.

Employees and parties maintaining a business relationship with the System who suspect fraud, whether it pertains to federal, state, or local programs, should report their concerns to the Superintendent or his/her designee. If fraud is suspected by the Superintendent, such allegations should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Education.

All reports of suspected fraud shall be handled under the strictest confidentiality allowed under the law. Informants may remain anonymous as allowed by law but are encouraged to cooperate with investigators and to provide as much detail and evidence of the alleged fraudulent act as possible.

Any and all reports of suspicious activity and/or suspected fraud will be investigated. Results of an investigation shall not be disclosed to or discussed with anyone other than those individuals with a legitimate need to know until the results become subject to public disclosure in accordance with state and/or federal law.

Grounds for a Complaint

Any individual, organization or agency (stakeholder) may file a complaint with Laurens County School if that individual, organization or agency believes and alleges that the Laurens County School system is violating a Federal Statute or regulation that applies to a program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered ongoing.

Filing a Complaint

Complaints and grievances shall be handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible and through the proper channels using the following procedures:

A complaint must be made in writing and signed by the complainant. The complaint must include the following:

- A statement that the Laurens County School District has violated a requirement of a Federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program;
- The date on which the violation occurred;
- The facts on which the statement is based, and the specific requirement allegedly violated;
- A list of the names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information;
- Whether a complaint has been filed with any other government agency, and if so, which agency;
- Copies of all applicable documents supporting the complainant's position; and
- The address of the complainant.

The complaint must be addressed to:

**Laurens County Schools
Federal Programs Director
467 Firetower Road
Dublin, GA 31021**

Procedures and Responsibilities:

Anyone suspecting fraudulent activity should report their concerns to the Laurens County School System Superintendent or Assistant Superintendents for Teaching and Learning or the Federal Programs Director at 478-272-4767.

Any employee with the Laurens County Schools (temporary staff, full-time staff and contractors) who receives a report of suspected fraudulent activity must report this information within the next business day.

Employees have the responsibility to report suspected fraud. All reports can be made in confidence.

The Laurens County Schools Board of Education shall conduct investigations of employees, providers, contractors, or vendors.

If necessary, the person reporting will be contacted for additional information.

Periodic communication through meetings should emphasize the responsibilities and channels to report suspected fraud.

Complaint Process:

Complaint Procedure is posted on the main page of the Laurens County Schools website, in each school office and the Board of Education Office. Each notice includes the following information:

- Programs for which Laurens County receives federal funds and for which complaints can be filed
- Grounds for complaints

Once a complaint has been received, the following procedure may be employed to investigate the complaint:

Investigation of the Complaint:

- Any complaints or grievances shall be addressed to the Federal Programs Director. The Coordinator or his or her designee will issue a Letter of Acknowledgement to the complainant that contains the following information:
- The date the complaint was received;
- How the complainant may provide additional information;
- A statement of the ways in which the Federal Programs Coordinator may investigate or address the complaint; and
- Any other pertinent information

The decision of the Federal Program Director may be appealed to the Superintendent in writing. The decision of the Superintendent may be appealed to the Laurens County Board of Education in writing. If needed, referral may be made to the Professional Standards Commission for final resolution. All decisions and appeals shall be submitted in writing.

Complaints will be tracked by the Federal Programs Director by maintaining documentation of written complaints and other supporting information. Reports will be maintained with letters of complaint and the final resolutions.