

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/
NONDISCRIMINATION

I. Policy Statement

The Patrick County School Board is an equal opportunity employer, committed to non-discrimination in recruitment, selection, hiring, pay, promotion, retention or other personnel action affecting employees or candidates for employment. Therefore, discrimination in employment against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, political affiliation, gender, age, marital status or disability is prohibited. Personnel decisions shall be based on merit and the ability to perform the essential functions of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation.

The Patrick County School Board shall provide facilities, programs and activities that are accessible, usable and available to qualified disabled persons. Further, the Patrick County School Board shall not discriminate against qualified disabled persons in the provision of health, welfare and other social services.

The statement, "Patrick County School Board is an equal opportunity employer," shall be placed on all employment application forms.

II. Notice of Policy/Prevention

This policy shall be: (1) posted in prominent areas of each school division building, (2) included in employee handbooks and (3) provided to any employee or candidate for employment upon request. Training to prevent prohibited discrimination should be included in employee in-service training.

III. Complaint Procedure

A. File Report

Any person who believes he has not received equal employment opportunities should report the alleged discrimination to one of the compliance officers designated in this policy. Any employee who has knowledge of conduct which may constitute prohibited discrimination shall report such conduct to one of the compliance officers designated in this policy.

The reporting party should use the form, GB-F, to make complaints of discrimination. However, oral reports and other written reports will also be accepted. The complaint must be filed with one of the compliance officers designated in this policy. Any complaint that involves the compliance officer shall be reported to the superintendent.

The complaint and the identity of the complainant and the person or persons allegedly responsible for the discrimination will be disclosed only to the extent necessary to fully investigate the complaint and only when such disclosure is required or permitted by law. A complainant who wishes to remain anonymous will be advised that anonymity may limit the school division's ability to fully respond to the complaint.

B. Investigation

Upon receipt of a report of alleged discrimination, the compliance officer shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation. The investigation may be conducted by school personnel or a third party designated by the school division. The investigation shall be completed as soon as practicable, which generally should be not later than 14 calendar days after receipt of the report by the compliance officer. Upon receiving the complaint, the compliance officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint by giving written notice that the complaint has been received to both the complainant and the Superintendent. If the compliance officer determines that more than 14 days will be required to investigate the complaint, the complainant and the Superintendent will be notified of the reason for the extended investigation and the date by which the investigation will be concluded.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the person(s) alleged to have violated the policy and any others who may have knowledge of the alleged discrimination or the circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of the inspection of any other documents or information deemed relevant by the investigator. The school division shall take necessary steps to protect the complainant and others pending the investigation.

Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a case by case determination based on all of the facts and circumstances revealed after a complete and thorough investigation.

The compliance officer shall issue a written report to the superintendent upon completion of the investigation. If the complaint alleges the superintendent has violated this policy, then the report shall be sent to the school board. The report shall include a determination of whether the allegations are substantiated, whether this policy was violated and recommendations for corrective action, if any.

All employees shall cooperate with any investigation of alleged discrimination conducted under this policy or by an appropriate state or federal agency.

C. Action by Superintendent

Within 5 calendar days of receiving the compliance officer's report, the superintendent or designee shall issue a written decision regarding (1) whether this policy was violated and (2) what action if any should be taken.

If the complaint alleges that the superintendent has violated this policy, the School Board's standing Equal Employment Opportunity/Nondiscrimination Committee shall make the decision and determine what action should be taken. If the School Board does not have such a standing committee, at its next scheduled meeting it shall appoint a committee consisting of three of its members to handle the matter. The committee shall issue a written decision within 14 calendar days of the time the School Board receives the compliance officer's report or the time a committee is appointed, if there is no standing committee.

The written decision shall state (1) whether this policy was violated and (2) what action, if any, should be taken. The written decision must be mailed to or personally delivered to the complainant within five calendar days of the issuance of the decision. If the superintendent or committee concludes that prohibited discrimination occurred, the Patrick County School Division shall take prompt, appropriate action to address and remedy the violation as well as prevent any recurrence. Such action may include discipline up to and including dismissal.

D. Appeal

If the superintendent or committee determines that no prohibited discrimination occurred, the person who was allegedly subjected to discrimination may appeal this finding to the School Board within 5 calendar days of receiving the decision. Notice of appeal must be filed with the superintendent, or with a member of the committee, which issued the written decision, who shall forward the record to the School Board. The School Board shall make a decision within 30 calendar days of receiving the record. The School Board may ask for oral or written argument from the aggrieved party and the superintendent, or the committee, whichever issued the written decision, and any other individual the School Board deems relevant.

Employees may choose to pursue their complaints arising under this policy through the relevant employee grievance procedure instead of the complaint procedure in this policy.

E. Compliance Officer and Alternate Compliance Officer

The Patrick County School Board has designated **C. Dean Gilbert, Assistant Superintendent, Patrick County School Board Office, P.O. Box 346, Stuart, Virginia, 24171 (276) 694-3163** as the Compliance Officer responsible for identifying, investigating, preventing and remedying prohibited discrimination. Complaints of discrimination may also be made to the Alternate Compliance Officer **Dr. Karen M. Wood, Patrick County School Board, P.O. Box 346, Stuart, Virginia, 24171 (276) 694-3163**. The Compliance Officer shall:

- receive reports or complaints of discrimination;
- oversee the investigation of any alleged discrimination;
- assess the training needs of the school division in connection with this policy;
- arrange necessary training to achieve compliance with this policy;
- insure that any discrimination investigation is conducted by an impartial investigator who is trained in the requirements of equal employment opportunity, including the authority to protect the alleged victim and others during the investigation.

All employees shall be notified annually of the names and contact information of the compliance officers.

IV. Retaliation

Retaliation against employees who report discrimination or participate in the related proceedings is prohibited. The school division shall take appropriate action against any employee who retaliates against another employee or candidate for employment who reports alleged discrimination or participates in related proceedings.

V. Right to Alternative Complaint Procedure

Nothing in this policy shall deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse to address concerns relating to prohibited discrimination including initiating civil action, filing a complaint with outside agencies or seeking redress under state or federal law.

VI. False Charges

Employees who make false charges of discrimination shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Adopted: July 9, 2001
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Legal Refs.: 20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq.
29 U.S.C. § 701.
42 U.S.C. §§ 6101 et seq., 2000e-2 et seq., and 12101 et seq.

Cross Refs: AC Nondiscrimination
BCE School Board Committees
GBA/JFHA Sexual Harassment/Harassment Based on Race, National Origin,
Disability and Religion