

Lawrence Public Schools Accessibility Policy and Grievance Procedures

Accessibility Policy

Lawrence Public Schools is committed to providing equal and integrated access for all its students and community, in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, including the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 504) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 508). The following grievance process is intended to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints regarding the website involving discrimination or access on the basis of disability.

Grievance Policy relating to Section 508

Lawrence Public Schools is committed to protecting and ensuring the right of students with disabilities. The website follows section 508, and its guidelines for telecommunications equipment and customer premises equipment covered by Section 255 of the Communications Act of 1934. The proposed revisions and updates to the section 508-based standards and section 255-based guidelines are intended to ensure that information and communication technology covered by the respective statutes is accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

Lawrence Public Schools investigates and processes program complaints concerning Section 508. Individuals with disabilities may file an administrative complaint with the Lawrence Public Schools requesting that existing electronic and information technology (E&IT), such as a Lawrence Public Schools branded website or non-accessible document that does not conform to the Section 508 standards, be reviewed and brought into compliance with the provisions of Section 508.

Lawrence Public Schools Grievance Procedures for Section 508

Individuals or groups who believe they have been subjected to unlawful discrimination on the basis of disability, or have been denied access to services or accommodations required by law under Section 508, are encouraged to use these grievance procedures.

The grievance must be in the form of a detailed written complaint and it must include the following:

1. A full description of the allegations of the complaint and any relevant facts, including relevant dates
2. A summary of the steps the complainant has already taken in attempt to resolve the problem, including the names of persons involved and if alternative means of providing the services were utilized
3. A statement of the requested resolution and the complainant's rationale for the requested accommodations for each perceived violation

4. Any supporting documentation and screen shots of the issue
5. The name and contact information (address, email address and phone number) of the person initiating the complaint

After completing the written Section 508 complaint the grievance should be sent to:

Denise Snyder
Deputy Superintendent
Lawrence Public Schools
233 Haverhill Street
Lawrence, MA 01840
Fax: (978) 722-8550
Denise.Snyder@lawrence.k12.ma.us

A grievant must notify Lawrence Public Schools of his or her informal Section 508 Grievance within ten (10) days of the occurrence.

A copy of the grievance may, as appropriate, be sent to the Lawrence Public Schools Media, IS&T, and to those to whom are involved for review and discussion to seek the best alternative and solution for the grievance.

If the Deputy Superintendent believes the Complaint, in part or in full, is valid, to the extent permitted under applicable law, the Deputy Superintendent will direct a resolution of the Complaint and notify the Complainant of that resolution.

Grievance Policy relating to Section 504

Section 504 requires agencies to provide individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in their programs and benefit from their services, including the provision of information to employees and members of the public. Agencies must provide appropriate auxiliary aids where necessary to ensure an equal opportunity. Types of auxiliary aids may include brailled or large print versions of materials, electronic diskettes, audiotapes, qualified interpreters or readers, telecommunications devices for deaf persons (TDDs), captioning of video, and other methods of making information available and accessible to persons with disabilities. In considering what type of auxiliary aid to provide, agencies must give primary consideration to the request of the individual with a disability and shall honor that request, unless it can demonstrate that another effective means of communication exists.

Section 504 states that no individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity. Any person who believes he or she has been improperly denied the benefit of, or access to a program, service, or activity may submit a grievance.

Lawrence Public Schools Grievance Procedures for Section 504

Individuals or groups who believe they have been subjected to unlawful discrimination on the basis of disability, or have been denied access to services or accommodations required by law under Section 504, are encouraged to use these grievance procedures.

The grievance must be in the form of a detailed written complaint and it must include the following below:

1. A full description of the violation of the regulations and any relevant facts, including dates
2. The name and contact information (address, email address and phone number) of the person initiating the complaint

Complaints related to Section 504 should be addressed to:

Mary Lou Bergeron
Assistant Superintendent
Lawrence Public Schools
233 Haverhill Street
Lawrence, MA 01840
Fax: (978) 722-8550
Mary.Bergeron@lawrence.k12.ma.us

A grievant must notify Lawrence Public Schools of his or her informal Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Grievance within ten (10) days of the occurrence.

A copy of the grievance may, where appropriate, be sent to the Lawrence Public Schools Facilities, Special Learning Services, and/or others departments involved for review and discussion to seek the best alternative and solution for the grievance.

Confidentiality

Lawrence Public Schools will strive to maintain the confidentiality of information shared throughout the grievance process. However, disclosures may be required for the purpose of fact-finding or efforts to resolve the grievance. In the limited instances where disclosures must be made, disclosures will be limited to those persons necessary to proceed in the fact-finding process or to otherwise address the grievance. All persons involved in the grievance will be advised of the importance of confidentiality in the process and asked to maintain the confidentiality of the information discussed during the fact-finding process and the identity of the grievant.

A grievant should understand that where a grievance is specifically directed against one or more specific electronic and information technology (E&IT), the grievance

itself or portions of the grievance will be disclosed to those department(s) and individual(s) for purposes of response.

A grievant should also understand that where a grievance is specifically directed against one or more specific individual(s), the grievance itself or portions of the grievance will be disclosed to those individual(s) for purposes of response.

Accessibility Remedies

The Lawrence Public Schools will impose remedies intended to correct the discriminatory effects on the grievant to prevent the recurrence of any prohibited acts.

Possible remedies under this grievance procedure include corrective steps, actions to reverse the effects of discrimination, and measures to provide a reasonable solution for the grievance.

Formal Federal Agency Grievance Procedures

Individuals or groups are encouraged to utilize Lawrence Public Schools process towards resolving disability-related grievances. However, individuals or groups with grievances or complaints against the Lawrence Public Schools based on the violations of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADAAA) also have the right to file a complaint with a designated federal agency.

Office of Civil Rights (OCR)
U.S. Department of Education
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3921
Telephone: (617) 289-0111
TDD: 800-877-8339
OCR.Boston@ed.gov

Records

The Lawrence Public Schools will retain the files and records related to Complaints and will ensure the confidentiality of such files and records in accordance with applicable legal requirements.