Pennsylvania
Department of Education

Bureau of Special Education
Complaint Information Packet and Form

March 2026

Dear (Parent/Guardian/Complainant):

Thank you for contacting the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) and providing us with the opportunity to assist you in this matter. Please review the enclosed materials carefully. If you have questions, please feel free to contact the ConsultLine at 1-800-879-2301 or BSE at (717) 783-6913.

The complaint process begins when BSE receives a signed, completed complaint. BSE must complete the investigation and issue the Complaint Investigation Report (CIR), within 60 days. If violations of state or federal requirements are found, the Local Educational Agency (LEA) meaning Intermediate Unit, School District, Charter School, etc. would be directed to correct the non-compliance.

Each complaint is assigned to a Special Education Advisor employed by BSE.

- The Advisor will contact you by phone to clarify the issues of the complaint.
- The Advisor will ask you to provide the name(s) of others who may have knowledge of the facts of the complaint and will interview a reasonable number of them prior to the report being issued. (Optional)
- An Acknowledgment Letter will be sent to you verifying the issues of the complaint.
- If the issues raised are not within the jurisdiction of BSE, you will receive a letter telling you this. You will be provided with contact information for other agencies that may be of assistance.
- The Advisor may conduct an on-site investigation at the LEA to review relevant records and interview staff.
- You may provide additional information either orally or in writing prior to the final CIR.
- The Advisor will then analyze the facts and develop the written CIR.
- The Advisor will forward the CIR to the Division Chief for review and revision.
- The CIR will be issued after the Division Chief has approved it.

Complaint Resolution or Withdraw:
The parties may resolve the complaint independently. If the parties resolve the issues, the LEA will submit a written confirmation including the complainant's signature. BSE will issue a Resolution Letter to the complainant and the LEA to close the complaint.

The complainant may also choose to withdraw the complaint. The Advisor will contact the complainant and ask for formal notification by letter and BSE will issue confirmation to the complainant via the Withdrawal Letter.

Timeline Extension for a Complaint:
The parties may enter into the mediation process at any time. If the parties are engaged in mediation, or other alternative means of dispute resolution (i.e., IEP facilitation) the time limit for complaint investigation can be extended beyond 60 days upon receipt of agreement from both parties.

Regulatory Basis:
Complaint Information – According to Federal Regulation (34 CFR §300.153), there are required components for filing a complaint. The following is that regulation.

§300.153 Filing a complaint.

(a) An organization or individual may file a signed written complaint under the procedures described in §§300.151 through 300.152.
(b) The complaint must include-
    (1) A statement that a public agency has violated a requirement of Part B of the Act or of this part;
    (2) The facts on which the statement is based;
    (3) The signature and contact information for the complainant; and
    (4) If alleging violations with respect to a specific child-
        (i) The name and address of the residence of the child;
        (ii) The name of the school the child is attending;
        (iii) In the case of a homeless child or youth (within the meaning of section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434 a (2)), available contact information for the child, and the name of the school the child is attending;
        (iv) A description of the nature of the problem of the child, including facts relating to the problem; and
        (v) A proposed resolution of the problem to the extent known and available to the party at the time the complaint is filed.
(c) The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one year prior to the date that the complaint is received in accordance with § 300.151.
(d) The party filing the complaint must forward a copy of the complaint to the LEA or public agency serving the child at the same time the party files the complaint with the SEA.

Third Party Filing – Confidentiality Requirements Notice:
If a person other than the parent or guardian files the complaint, the complainant will receive a letter from the Special Education Advisor stating that without parental permission to release confidential information, BSE is unable to respond directly to them regarding the complaint.

However, BSE will conduct an investigation, prepare a CIR of findings, and issue the findings directly to the parent and the LEA.

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 34, Part 300 requires:

1. The complainant must sign complaints before BSE can investigate the allegation.
2. The complainant is required by regulation to forward a copy of the complaint to the SEA and the LEA.
3. The complainant must propose a resolution to the problem if one is known and available to the party at the time the complaint is filed.
4. The public agency has the opportunity to respond by providing a proposal to resolve the complaint.
5. An opportunity is provided for a parent who has filed a complaint and the public agency to voluntarily engage in mediation.
6. The complainant will receive a copy of the Procedural Safeguards Notice from the LEA when a complainant files a complaint for the first time in a school year.

Complaint Form

Please feel free to make copies of this form, use additional paper, or call the ConsultLine at 1-800-879-2301 or the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) at 717-783-6913 for additional copies.

***My preferred method of contact by the Advisor assigned to this complaint would be:**

☐ **By phone (please provide number):**
Best time during normal business hours to call:

☐ **By email (please provide email address):**

☐ **In person at a public facility during normal business hours.** The location would probably be a school or Intermediate Unit building to permit duplication of documents.

***Are you filing this complaint on behalf of a specific child?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please provide your contact information, relationship to child, and signature.

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

Home:

Work:

Cell:

E-mail:

***Relationship to child or children:**
☐ Parent ☐ Attorney ☐ Advocate ☐ Other

*This information is not required by IDEA.

The name and address of the residence of the child, school, and school district.

Child's Name:

***Date of Birth:**

Address:

***Is the child currently in school?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, where is the child's current program:

School Building:

***School District:**

***Charter School:**

***Is the child publicly placed in the educational program by a Judge or Child Welfare Agency?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

***If so, where is the child's current program:**

Contact Person:

Telephone:

Complete *only* if the complaint is filed on behalf of a highly mobile student.

Contact Person:

Telephone:

***Did the violation occur within the past year? If so, on or about what date?**

***Date:**

***To clarify my allegations, I would like the Advisor to interview the following person(s):**

*Name	*Occupation/Title	*Phone Number/E-Mail Address

*This information is not required by IDEA.

Please provide a statement about the violation or issue, which you believe has occurred. Please include a description about the nature of the problem.

Please list the facts that support your statement.

To the best of your knowledge, please suggest a solution to this problem if one is known and available.

This complaint must be signed for BSE to investigate. You must also send a copy of this complaint to the Local Educational Agency (LEA). By signing below, you indicate to BSE that you have provided a copy of the complaint to the LEA.

_____

Signature **Date**

Please return the form to the SEA at:
PDE/BSE
Division of Compliance Monitoring and Planning - East
607 South Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17120

E-mail: ra-pdespecialed@pa.gov