

BOARD HEARINGS/ APPEAL PROCEDURES**Rules of Practice Governing Hearings and Contested Cases Before the Board of Trustees of
Goshen County School District No.1 and Procedures to Consider Recommended
Findings from an Independent Hearing Officer****ARTICLE I
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Section 1. Authority. These rules are adopted as authorized by the Wyoming Administrative Procedures Act, W.S. 16-3-101 through 16-3-115, and under the provisions of W.S. 21-3-110 as amended.

Section 2. Effective Upon Compliance. These rules shall be effective upon compliance with all prerequisites set forth in the Wyoming Administrative Procedures Act, §16-3-102 to 16-3-106 or any statute amending, recodifying or superseding the same.

Section 3. Previous Rules Superseded. From and after the effective date of these rules, any previously filed rules of practice of Goshen County School District No.1 relating to Contested Hearings, shall be superseded and shall be of no further force or effect.

Section 4. Promulgation, Amendment or Repeal of Rules. Any amendments to these rules shall become effective as provided by W.S. 16-3-101 through 16-3-115.

**ARTICLE II
DEFINITIONS AND APPLICABILITY
HEARINGS AND CONTESTED CASES**

Section 1. Definitions. As used in these rules:

- a) "Board" means the Board of Trustees of Goshen County School District No. 1.
- b) "Chairman" means the chairman of the Board.
- c) "Day" means a calendar day
- d) "Hearing" includes all contested cases.
- e) "Party" means each person or agency named or admitted as a party, or properly seeking and entitled as of right to be admitted as a party.
- f) "Person" means any individual, partnership, corporation, association, municipality, governmental subdivision or public or private organization of any character other than an agency.
- g) "Superintendent" means the chief administrative officer of the school district.

- h) "Clerk" means the Clerk of the Board.
- i) "Teacher" means any person employed under contract by the board as a certified professional employee.
- j) "Pupil" or "student" means any person duly enrolled for instruction in the public elementary or secondary schools of this district.
- k) "Independent hearing officer" means that person selected or appointed as provided for in W.S. §21-7-110(c).
- l) "Parent" includes parents, legal guardians, and legal custodians of students who are under eighteen (18) years old and who have not been emancipated.

Section 2. Applicability of Rules.

- a) These rules shall apply to all hearings required by law to be held with respect to termination, dismissal and suspension of teachers under the Wyoming Teacher's Employment Law as amended, and, any applicable federal and state court decisions, and to all formal hearings required by law to be held with respect to the suspension or expulsion of any student from the public schools and to any other matters wherein a contested case, as defined by law, is presented or any other matter wherein a hearing is required by law.
- b) Informal or investigative hearings may be held by the Board without compliance with these rules.
- c) Hearings not in compliance with these rules may be held by the Board upon express written agreement by all parties.
- d) All hearings required to be held before an independent hearing officer as provided by W.S. 21-7-110(c) shall be governed by the procedures specified under W.S. 9-2-2202(b), including the Rules for Contested Case Practice and Procedure Before the Office of Administrative Hearings ("OAH Rules").

ARTICLE III **HEARINGS BEFORE THE BOARD**

Section 1. Generally. Any person whose legally-recognized rights have been or will be affected by any decision, order, ruling, or other action taken by the Board or to be taken by the Board has a right to a hearing before the Board unless such hearing is required by law to be before an independent hearing officer.

Section 2. Petition. Any person desiring to come before the Board for a hearing must file with the Board, in its office at Goshen County School District No.1, Torrington, Wyoming, a petition setting forth:

- a) A concise statement of the facts on which the petitioner relies.
- b) A statement in ordinary language, setting forth the action or decision desired by the petitioner.

- c) The name, address and telephone number of the petitioner and of the attorney for the petitioner, if any.
- d) The signature of the petitioner and attorney for the petitioner, if any.
- e) The legal authority, if any, or known at the time of the filing of the petition, upon which the petitioner relies.

Section 3. Board As Petitioner. In any matter in which the School District is required to hold a hearing before the Board in which it has the burden of proof, the School District shall be deemed the petitioner for purposes of these rules. Any notices or writings required by law for said hearing shall be deemed to be the petition for the School District. Any objection by the other party to the petition of the School District shall be served in writing at least ten (10) working days before any scheduled hearing.

Section 4. Notice of Hearing. For any hearing which is to be held before the Board, the Clerk shall cause written notice of any hearing held under these rules to be served upon each party as much time in advance of the date set for hearing as is reasonably practicable. Such notice shall include a statement of:

- a) The time, place and nature of the hearing.
- b) The legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.
- c) The particular sections of the statutes, rules, or court decisions involved.
- d) A short and plain statement of the matters asserted. If the Clerk is unable to state the matters in detail at the time the notice is served, the initial notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved, and thereafter upon application a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished.

Section 5. Hearing Examiner.

- a) Whenever it shall appear, from statements of any party or other sources, including applicable Federal or State case law, that a dispute exists wherein a hearing is authorized or required to be held before the Board, the Board, at its option, may delay further proceedings until all factual disputes are heard and recommendations made by a hearing examiner as provided in this section.
- b) The hearing examiner shall be the presiding officer at the hearing and shall conduct all proceedings in an impartial manner.
- c) The hearing examiner shall be a qualified member of the bar of Wyoming.
- d) The hearing examiner shall make recommended findings of fact and conclusions of law to the Board in writing.
- e) The hearing examiner shall be hired by the Board and shall be entitled to a reasonable fee for his services and reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in connection therewith but shall not be considered an employee of the District, but rather, an independent contractor.
- f) The hearing examiner shall accord the parties the same hearing procedural rights as are available to them in a hearing before the Board as herein set forth
- g) The impartial hearing examiner shall not be an employee of the Board or a person with a personal or professional interest in the case at hearing, nor be biased or prejudiced against any party to the hearing.

Section 6. Adoption of Findings of Fact and Conclusions.

- a) The recommended Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law made by the hearing examiner under Section 5.d of this Article III of these rules or rendered by the independent hearing officer

pursuant to W.S. §21-7-110 shall be mailed or delivered to all parties and members of the Board.

- b) Any party objecting to the recommended Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law shall present any objections at the next meeting of the Board occurring at least five (5) days after mailing of the recommended Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law to all parties or within fourteen (14) days after mailing, whichever occurs first.
- c) The recommended Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law shall be adopted by the Board unless a majority of the members of the Board object to the recommended Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law. No member of the Board may object to the recommendations unless he shall have been present at the hearing or has read the transcript of the proceedings or heard or examined the official record of the hearing.
- d) If the Board terminates, suspends or dismisses a teacher's employment over a recommendation by the independent hearing officer of retention, the written order of the Board shall include a conclusion together with reasons supported by the record. The decision of the Board to either adopt or reject the recommended Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law shall be issued in writing within twenty (20) days of receipt of the recommended Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law.

Section 7. Duties of Presiding Officer. The presiding officer at any hearing before the Board shall be the Chairman of the Board, or any member of the Board authorized to act in the absence of the Chairman, or the hearing examiner as provided in Section 5.b of this Article III of these rules, or the independent hearing officer as provided in W.S. §21-7-110. The presiding officer shall have authority and power to:

- a) Administer oaths and affirmations;
- b) Issue subpoenas;
- c) Rule upon offers of proof and receive relevant evidence;
- d) Take or cause depositions to be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Wyoming Administrative Procedures Act and rules of the Board;
- e) Regulate the course of the hearing;
- f) Hold conferences for the settlement or simplification of the issues;
- g) Dispose of procedural requests or similar matters;
- h) Cause Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law to be finalized and filed with the Clerk and delivered to all parties;
- i) May recess the hearing or grant continuances for good cause;
- j) May require written briefs from any party clarifying its legal or factual position;
- k) May declare that any matter is being taken under advisement and that a decision will be announced at a later time, not to exceed twenty (20) days after receipt of findings and a recommendation from for hearings before the independent hearing officer, or sixty (60) days for all other hearings;
- l) Punish contempt by permanent removal from the hearing location by any person so offending;
- m) See that a recording of the hearing is made by either an electronic recording device or certified shorthand or machine reporter or other person authorized to administer oaths;
- n) Take any other action authorized by law, consistent with these rules, or required to fulfill any of his duties.

Section 8. Order of Procedure at Hearing. As nearly as may be, hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the following order of procedure:

- a) The petitioner may briefly state his case and the evidence by which he expects to sustain it
- b) The adverse party may then briefly state his defense and the evidence he expects to offer in support of it.
- c) The petitioner shall first produce his evidence, the adverse party will then produce his evidence.
- d) he parties will then be confined to rebutting evidence unless the presiding officer permits them to offer evidence in their original case.
- e) The presiding officer may, in his discretion, allow evidence to be offered out of the order as herein prescribed.
- f) Closing statements will be made in the following sequence:
 - (1) Petitioner
 - (2) Adverse Party
 - (3) Petitioner in Rebuttal

Section 9. Witnesses at Hearings to be Sworn. All persons testifying at any hearing shall stand and be administered the following oath by the presiding officer: "Do you swear (or affirm) to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in the matter now before the Board, so help you God?", unless the hearing officer waives said oath on a showing that the person understands the meaning of telling the truth and that he/she may be charged and convicted of the crime of falsifying his/her testimony.

Section 10. Disposition of Case by Stipulation. Any case may be finally disposed of by stipulation, agreed settlement, consent order or default of the parties, approved by the Board. An appropriate order accordingly shall be entered in the case record.

Section 11. Applicable Rules of Civil Procedure to Apply. The rules of practice and procedure contained in the Rules of Civil Procedure of the State of Wyoming, insofar as the same may be applicable, and not inconsistent with the laws of the State of Wyoming, or these rules shall apply at all hearings under these rules. Service of the petition and notice of hearing may be by certified or registered mail to the last known address of the teacher or student involved or by personal service by any adult, provided that service upon a teacher or student by an employee of the school district shall be witnessed unless an acknowledgment of service is signed by the teacher or student. All other notices and service of papers shall be made in accordance with Rule 5 WRCP.

Section 12. Attorneys. The filing of a petition or other similar representation by an attorney constitutes his appearance for the party for whom the representation is made. The Board, hearing examiner, or independent hearing officer must be notified in writing of any withdrawal from the case. Any person appearing at a hearing in a representative capacity, shall be precluded from examining or cross-examining any witness, unless such person shall be an attorney licensed to practice in the State of Wyoming, or a non-resident attorney, associated with a Wyoming attorney. These rules shall not be construed to prohibit any person from representing himself in any hearing under these rules.

Section 13. School Attorney Present. In all matters before the Board, or under these rules, Chairman shall request the school attorney to be present, to assist and advise the Board and to represent the District. If there is a conflict in the Board attorney acting as advisor for the Board, the Board shall authorize the employment of Special Counsel to act either as attorney for the Board or attorney for the District

Section 14. Taking of Testimony - Reporter. Where oral testimony of witnesses is taken in a hearing under these rules, the testimony shall be reported either by an electronic recording device or by a certified shorthand machine reporter or other person authorized to administer oaths whose compensation for taking such testimony shall be at the expense of the District. A transcription of the proceedings or any part thereof shall be at the cost and expense of any party requesting the same.

Section 15. Decision and Order. The Board shall make a written decision and order in all cases, which order and decision shall be filed by the Clerk in the file of the matter. The vote of the Board shall be shown in its decision. When the decision involves a teacher, a copy shall be provided to the teacher and a copy placed in the school records pertaining to the teacher.

Section 16. Appeals. Any decision of the Board is subject to appeal to the District Court and the Supreme Court of Wyoming as provided by law.

Section 17. Application of Wyoming Administrative Procedure Act. Whether or not herein set forth, the provisions of the Wyoming Administrative Procedure Act, §16-3-101 to 16-3-115, as amended and the Wyoming Education Code (21-3-101 et. seq.), shall govern all procedures before this Board except in all statutory proceedings before this Board should a conflict arise between the statutes and these rules, the statutes shall govern and control.

Section 18. Severability. If any provision of these rules of practice or the application thereof to any matter is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect the other provisions or applications of these rules which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and for this purpose the provisions of these rules are severable.

ARTICLE IV

RULES GOVERNING DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL LUNCHES

Section 1. Applicability of Rules. The rules contained in this Article shall apply to the determination of eligibility of pupils for free and reduced-price lunches.

Section 2. Definitions. As used in this Article, the following additional definitions apply:

- a) "Family" shall mean a group of related or non-related individuals who are not residents of an institution or boarding house, but who are living as one economic unit.
- b) "School Food Authority" means the person selected and hired by the board to oversee and administer the school lunch program of the District and determine eligibility requirements in the school lunch program for recipients of free and reduced price lunches.

Section 3. Standards. In determining standards of eligibility for free and reduced-price lunches, the school food authorities shall consider in adopting or amending specific guidelines:

- a) The level of family income, including welfare grants; and
- b) The number of individuals in the family; and
- c) The number of children in the family attending schools or service institutions.

Section 4. Eligibility. Any pupil who is a member of a family which has an annual income not above the applicable family size income level set forth in the income poverty guidelines prescribed by the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States, shall receive free or reduced-price lunches.

Section 5. Non-Eligible Children. Any family which does not meet the eligibility criteria established by the school food authority may apply to the school food authority for free or reduced-price lunches for its pupils stating the reasons why, even though the family does not meet the eligibility criteria as established by these rules and the guidelines prescribed by the Secretary of Agriculture, such family believes that its pupils are unable to pay the full price of the lunch. If the school food authority determines, on the basis of such an application, that the pupils of such family cannot afford to pay the full price of a lunch, a free or reduced-price lunch may be made available to such children.

Section 6. Priority. The school food authority shall give first priority to providing free lunches to the neediest children in the schools within the district.

Section 7. Publicity. The school food authority shall publicly announce the standards and criteria for determining the eligibility for free and reduced-price lunches by taking the following actions:

- a) Sending a letter or notice at or about the beginning of each school year to the parents of children in attendance, stating the eligibility standards and criteria for determining eligibility, how to apply for free and reduced-price lunches, and how a family may appeal the decision of the school authority; and
- b) Sending a public release containing the same information as is required by subsection (a) of this section to the news media of general circulation within the district; and (b) making available through the office of the superintendent copies of the public release, which copies shall be available to all interested parents and pupils.

Section 8. Applications. The school food authority shall supply forms upon which families may apply for free or reduced-price lunches. Such forms shall require only information as is needed to determine eligibility.

Section 9. Transfers. Transfers between or among schools within the District shall not affect eligibility for free or reduced-price lunches, nor require further application.

Section 10. Change in Status. In the event there is a change in the income or other eligibility criteria by which the pupils of any family were found to be eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, the family of which such pupils are members, must notify the school food authority immediately and the school food authority shall then re-determine the eligibility of the pupils for free or reduced-price lunches and notify the family of such determination.

Section 11. Appeals. Any family, the pupils of which have been refused free or reduced-price lunches, may, upon the forms available in the office of the superintendent, make application for a hearing before the board by filing a completed application form with the clerk.

Section 12. Time of Setting and Hearing.

- a) Within ten (10) days after receipt of the application for hearing, the clerk shall set a time and place for hearing upon the application.
- b) The time set for hearing shall be not less than ten (10) nor more than thirty (30) days after the date upon which the clerk shall set the time and place of hearing.

Section 13. Exceptions to Rules of Practice Governing Hearings. The rules of practice governing hearings as contained in Article III of these rules, shall be applicable to hearings provided under the provisions of this Article IV, except as follows:

- a) Service of any notice required to be made herein may be made upon any member of the family who is of legal age.

- b) The proceedings need not be reported verbatim stenographically or by any other means except upon the request of either party, in which event, the party making such request shall bear the expense of the verbatim reporting. In the event the proceedings are not reported verbatim, accurate minutes of the hearing shall be kept by a person appointed by the board and such minutes shall be placed, with all exhibits offered into evidence, in the docket file.

ARTICLE V

PROCEDURES FOR PARENTAL RIGHTS COMPLAINTS

Parents are encouraged to first address any concerns regarding compliance with District Policy 1200 (Parental Rights) with the building principal. If a parent believes school district staff violated following District Policy 1200 (Parental Rights) with respect to their own student, the parent may file a written complaint with the Superintendent within fourteen (14) calendar days of the alleged violation.

The complaint must include:

- a) The name and contact information of the parent/guardian, and the name of the student;
- b) The date and a detailed description of the violation; and
- c) All other relevant documentation

The Superintendent shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within seven (7) business days from the date of receipt. The Superintendent will review the complaint and any associated documentation and may request additional information or evidence from the parent and applicable district staff. The Superintendent will make a decision on the complaint and will notify the parent and the school or school district staff of the decision in writing within thirty (30) calendar days after the written notice of receipt.

If the parent is aggrieved by the Superintendent's decision, they may submit a written request for a hearing to the Board. Any request for a hearing must be received within ten (10) business days of receipt of the Superintendent's decision.

The Board of Trustees shall review the complaint based on the materials, documents, records and evidence presented to the Superintendent. The Board shall schedule a hearing which shall take place within fifteen (15) days of receiving the written request for a hearing, unless the parties agree to an extension of the hearing beyond fifteen (15) days. The Board shall give written notice of the date, time and location of the hearing to the Superintendent and the parents requesting the hearing.

The Chair of the Board may meet with the parents and Superintendent prior to the hearing to address questions, including those related to the hearing procedure and information presented at the hearing. The Board may but is not required to retain legal counsel to assist and advise the board with the conduct of the hearing. The Board may allow legal counsel to serve as the presiding officer at the hearing.

At the hearing, the parent appealing the Superintendent's decision shall have the burden of proving that the Superintendent erred in his or her determination on the parent or guardian's complaint. The Board shall give both the parent and Superintendent the opportunity to present arguments based on the information presented to the Superintendent. Only information materials, records and documents that were presented to the Superintendent may be presented to the Board. No new evidence shall be presented to the Board. The Board may exclude evidence which is irrelevant or immaterial to the complaint.

The Board shall make a recording of the hearing, which may include an audio or video recording, or a court reporter. The Board shall issue a written decision within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the request for hearing. The decision shall be sent to the parent via the United States Postal Service.

If a parent is aggrieved or adversely affected in fact by a final decision of the Board, the parent may seek judicial review of the decision within thirty (30) calendar days of the postmarked decision, in accordance with Wyoming Statute §16-3-114.

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