

# Complaint Information Sheet



A complaint is a formal request to the Ohio Department of Education to investigate potential violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or the Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities, which have occurred no more than one year ago. An Education Program Specialist (EPS) from the Office for Exceptional Children (OEC) conducts a neutral investigation in order to come to a formal resolution of the issues.

## Who may file a complaint?

- A parent, guardian or any individual or organization may file a complaint.

## What does the complaint need to include?

- The student's name, address and school district or other agency you believe violated the IDEA or the Operating Standards.
- The original signature and contact information of the complainant.
- Statements that the school district or public agency violated special education laws, and facts upon which such statements are based.
- Proposed resolutions.
- The complainant may use this [complaint form](#) or write a letter to file the complaint.

## Where is a complaint filed?

Mail the complaint to:  
The Ohio Department of Education  
Office for Exceptional Children  
Attn: Assistant Director of Dispute Resolution  
25 South Front Street  
4th Floor, MS 409  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

## What does ODE do with my complaint?

- An Education Program Specialist (EPS) reviews the complaint and will identify issues for investigation. A letter of allegation is sent to the complainant and district or other agency with the alleged issues and will request documentation specific to the issues.
- An EPS conducts a neutral investigation by reviewing the documentation provided by both parties. When needed, the EPS may request additional information, conduct interviews, or conduct a site visit where the alleged violations occurred.

- Using the facts provided by the complainant and the district, the EPS will determine if a violation took place and write a letter of findings that is sent to the complainant and the district or public agency.

## How long is the complaint investigation?

- The Department must issue a letter of findings no later than 60 days after receiving the complaint. The time line may be extended due to exceptional circumstances, or, if both parties agree to extend the timeline to resolve the complaint through an alternative dispute resolution option, such as mediation or facilitation.

## What happens after the investigation?

- If no violations are found, the complaint is closed.
- If it was determined there was a violation, the EPS will issue student specific and/or district or public agency corrective action within the letter of findings.
- The district or public agency must complete the corrective action by the identified date.

## Can complaints be resolved through facilitation or mediation?

- In many instances, mediation and facilitation may result with an early resolution of the complaint.
- Parties are offered mediation and/or facilitation upon receipt of the complaint and are encouraged to use these processes.
- Click [here](#) for information on mediation and facilitation.

## What happens if I file a complaint and I have requested a due process hearing?

- The Department cannot investigate issues that are currently the subject of a due-process hearing, or have been previously resolved in a due-process hearing.