October 4, 2019

Dear Parents and Legal Guardians,

Tacoma Public Schools is taking this opportunity to inform parents and legal guardians of their rights under ESSA to gather information about their student(s) teacher and/or para qualifications, their right to request information in the language of their choice, and their right to file a complaint against the school district or the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

**You have the right to ask for a Teacher’s and/or Paraeducator’s qualifications.**

In compliance with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Tacoma Public School District would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student’s teacher(s) or instructional paraprofessional(s).

**A. The following information may be requested for teacher(s):**

1. Whether the teacher has met Washington teacher certification requirements for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
2. Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Washington qualifications or certification criteria have been waived.
3. The college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher.
4. Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

**B. The following information may be requested for instructional paraprofessional(s):**

Paraprofessionals must work under the supervision of a certified teacher. In schools that operate a schoolwide program, all paraprofessionals must meet professional qualifications. Paraeducators can provide a copy of their high school diploma — transcripts are not necessary. Schools that operate a Title I, Part A program must have a high school diploma or GED and completed the following:

1. Completed at least two years of study at an institution of higher education; or
2. Obtained an associate’s or higher degree; or
3. Pass the ETS ParaPro Assessment. The assessment measures skills, and content knowledge related to reading, writing and math;
4. Completed previously the apprenticeship requirements and must present a journeycard or certificate. The portfolio and apprenticeships are no longer offered for enrollment; however, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will continue to honor this pathway.

If you wish to request information concerning your child’s teacher’s and instructional paraprofessional’s qualifications, please contact the district’s public records officer.

**Phone:** (253) 571-1093  
**Email:** publicrecords@tacoma.k12.wa.us
You have the right to access information in your Language of Choice.

These are your rights:

Under state and federal civil rights laws, you have the right to access information in your language. You have the right to request a translator or translation services in the language you choose. If you have concerns about your school’s interpretation or translation services, or if you were not offered an interpreter or translation services you requested, you have several options.

1. Talk with your principal or a school employee that you are comfortable with. A discussion with your school principal is often the best first step to address your concerns. Explain what happened, and let your principal know how they can help to resolve the problem.
2. Talk with your school district. You can also contact the school district to share your concerns. You can call the civil rights coordinator or the superintendent at the district office.
3. Ask for help resolving your concerns. You can also contact these agencies for information about your rights or for assistance to resolve your concerns
   b. Office of the Education Ombuds, 1-866-797-7597 omb wa.gov
4. You can file a complaint. To file a complaint, explain what happened in writing, in any language, and send it to the district by mail, email, or hand delivery. Make sure to keep a copy for your records. Within 30 calendar days, the district will investigate your complaint and respond to you in writing. More information about your complaint options are online here: www.k12.wa.us/Equity/Complaints.aspx.

You have the right to register a complaint against the school district or OSPI.

Complaint Procedures

A citizen complaint is a written statement that alleges a violation of a federal rule, law or regulation or state regulation that applies to a federal program.

- Anyone can file a citizen complaint
- There is no special form
- There is no need to know the law that governs that federal program to file a complaint

Follow these steps (1-5) to complete the citizen complaint process.

1. Use Your Local Process First
The process for filing a complaint can be found by visiting Tacoma Public School’s website and clicking on the “About” tab. Under this tab you will select “Programs and Departments”. Please scroll down and click on the “Title I / Learning Assistance Program” link. Once you are on the “Title I, Part A” Page, you will select the link at the top of the page titled “Family Resources”. Under the “Resources” heading, you will find the “Citizen Complaint against School District” link. Please follow these instructions to register your complaint.

If you have followed the citizen complaint process for our school district and are unable to reach a satisfactory solution, use the citizen complain process through OSPI.

2. **File a Citizen Complaint Through OSPI**

A citizen complaint must be in writing, signed by the person filing the complaint and should include:

- **Contact information of the person filing the complaint.** (Your name, address, telephone number and email, if you have one.)
  1. **Optional:** If someone is helping you to file this citizen complaint, include 1) their contact information, 2) your relationship to them – example: family member, relative, friend or advocate.

- **Information about the school district, ESD (Educational School District) or school service provider you believe committed this violation.** Name and address of the school district, ESD or school service provider you think violated a federal rule, law or regulation or state regulation that applies to a federal program.

- **The facts – what, who and when.** Include a description of the facts and dates, in general, of when you think the alleged violation happened.
  1. What specific requirement has been violated?
  2. When did this violation occur?
  3. Who do you believe is responsible: names of all the people, and the program or organization involved.

  **Optional:** Did you file a written citizen complaint first with the school district, ESD of school service provider? Although not a requirement by Chapter 392-168 WAC, it is helpful if we can review a copy of your citizen complaint and the results, if any.

- **The resolution you expect.** A proposed solution, if you think you know or have ideas about how the issue can be resolved.

3. **Mail or Fax Your Written Citizen Complaint to OSPI**

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Attn: Citizen Complaint – Title I, Part A
P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504
Fax: (360) 586-3305

4. **OSPI Staff Process Your Complaint**

Once federal program staff at OSPI receive your written complaint, here is what follows:

1. OSPI sends a copy of your complaint to the school district, ESD or school service provider.
2. The school district, ESD or school service provider begins a formal investigation led by a designated employee.
3. The designated employee provides the written response of the investigation to OSPI – within **20 calendar days**.
4. OSPI staff will send you a copy of the results of the investigation conducted by the school district, ESD or school provider.
Their response must clearly state one of two results:

- Denial of the allegations in your complaint and the reason for the denial.
- Proposal of reasonable actions that will correct the violation.

If you need to provide more information about the allegations in the complaint, send that information to OSPI within 5 calendar days of the date of response from the school district, ESD or school service provider.

5. Final Decision by OSPI

OSPI will send you the final decision in writing within 60 calendar days of the date federal program staff at OSPI received your written complaint – unless exceptional circumstances demand that this investigation take more time. Here are the steps that OSPI staff will follow to reach a final decision:

1. Review all the information gathered related to your complaint. The review could include the results of an independent, on-site investigation.
2. Decide independently whether or not the district, ESD or school service provider violated a federal rule, law or regulation of a state regulation that applies to a federal program.
3. Provide you with the final decision: Findings of fact, conclusions, and reasonable measures necessary to correct any violation.
4. The district, ESD or service school provider must make corrective actions OSPI prescribes within 30 calendar days of the final decision.
5. A citizen complaint is considered resolved when OSPI has issued a final written decision and corrective measures, if necessary, are complete.

Extend or Waive Timelines
If you as the complainant, and the school district, ESD or school service provider named in your citizen complaint agree to extend the timelines, this agreement must be in writing and sent to OSPI within 10 calendar days of the date the school district, ESD or school service provider received notification from OSPI.

If you require any further information, please contact the Tacoma Public School’s Title I/LAP Department at (253) 571-1346, or title1@tacoma.k12.wa.us.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Carla J. Santorno
Superintendent
Tacoma Public Schools