



## How to Contact Us

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### JERRI HAIGLER

#### Director

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**Website:** [www.cms.k12.nc.us](http://www.cms.k12.nc.us)

*look for the Ombudsman's Office page under the "Families" tab*

**Email:** [ombudsman@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:ombudsman@cms.k12.nc.us)

**Phone:** 980-343-0055

**Address letters to:**

#### Ombudsman's Office

1600 Tyvola Road  
Charlotte, NC 28210

**Our goal is to respond to all questions and concerns within 48 hours.**



# Ombudsman's Office



Assisting parents, students, community members, and employees with school and district-related concerns and issues.

## What is an ombudsman?

*(pronounced "om-budz-man")*

The word ombudsman comes from the Swedish word meaning "representative." An ombudsman serves as an intermediary who seeks to resolve school and district issues and concerns from parents, students, employees and members of the public. Our office is a member of the International Ombudsman Association, a worldwide organization which upholds standards and issues certifications.

## Issues We Handle

- ▶ Academics
- ▶ Athletics
- ▶ Attendance
- ▶ Behavior/Discipline
- ▶ Bullying
- ▶ Health/COVID-19
- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Special Education/504
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ and other areas



## Ombudsman's Office

In compliance with federal law, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools administers all education programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination against any person on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, national origin, age or disability.

[www.cms.k12.nc.us](http://www.cms.k12.nc.us)



## We Are

- ▶ **Independent** – we report directly to the Chief of Staff and are not part of another department.
- ▶ **Impartial** – we will not take sides in a dispute; we advocate for fairness and equity; we have no personal stake in the outcome.
- ▶ **Informal** – communication with the Ombudsman's Office does not put the district on notice of a problem. It's a place to explore options and work towards resolution in an informal way.
- ▶ **Confidential** – the identity of those who contact us is kept confidential, except for threats of imminent risk or serious harm. We provide a safe place for discussing concerns.

## Who We Serve

- ▶ Parents/guardians (and prospective families)
- ▶ Students
- ▶ Community members
- ▶ Employees

## What We Do

- ▶ Listen to and clarify concerns
- ▶ Help visitors explore a range of solutions
- ▶ Provide information about rights for dealing with concerns
- ▶ Facilitate informal dispute resolution
- ▶ Coach individuals on how to prepare for difficult conversations

## What Our Office Does Not Do

- ▶ Take personnel action against school staff
- ▶ Overturn student disciplinary decisions
- ▶ Provide legal advice
- ▶ Intervene when parties are involved in legal or administrative proceedings

## When to Contact Us

- ▶ You're facing a problem you have not been able to resolve by speaking to the school principal and learning community superintendent
- ▶ You don't know where to go for help
- ▶ You're having trouble finding the information that you need
- ▶ You have requests for information that go unanswered
- ▶ Communication between the parent and school has broken down



The Ombudsman's Office is responsible for assisting parents, students, community members, and employees with school and district-related concerns and issues. We work to help those who have questions or concerns to find the best channels for resolving them.

Our office was created in 2017 to make CMS more accessible and responsive to all who request our services. The ombudsman is a troubleshooter, who helps remove roadblocks when they occur. The ombudsman also assists in dispute resolution and makes recommendations to the superintendent about potential improvements. We know that the best environment for kids is to have everyone – families, employees and the community – engaged with our public schools. Our office works with families and staff to remove obstacles to full engagement. We work to help all parties find acceptable options and solutions.

We want every student and every family to find what they need in our district. We also recognize that a large district like ours can be sometimes difficult to navigate – and we're here to help.