

# **The Learning Center! GRIEVANCE POLICY for STUDENTS/PARENTS**

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## **OPTIONS FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS**

The board strives to resolve concerns and complaints of students and parents whenever possible and has established processes, including mechanisms for resolving complaints in an informal manner.

While the board encourages resolutions of complaints through informal means, it recognizes that, at times, a formal process may be necessary for certain types of complaints or if the informal process did not produce satisfactory results.

Any parent or student who has questions about the options for proceeding with a complaint or concern may request to view a copy of all board policies or a meeting with the school director.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Days-** Days refer to working days, not including weekends, school holidays or school vacations as set forth in the school calendar. Every effort will be made to resolve complaints made near the end of the school year prior to the end of the school year.

**Final Administrative Decision-** A final administrative decision is the decision of the Director from which no further appeal at the school level is available.

**Grievance-** A grievance is a formal complaint regarding specific decisions made by school personnel that alleges that such decisions have adversely affected the person making the complaint. The term “grievance” does not include any matter for which the method of review is prescribed by law, for which there is a more specific board policy providing a process for addressing the concern, or upon which the board is without authority to act.

**Grievant-** The grievant is the parent, student or group of parents or students submitting the grievance.

**Official-** The official is the school employee hearing and responding to the grievant.

## **TIMELINE OF PROCESS**

The number of days indicated at each step of the process should be considered a maximum and every effort should be made to expedite the process.

Failure by the official at any step of the process to communicate a decision within the specified time limit will permit the grievant to appeal the grievance to the next step unless the official has notified the grievant of the delay and the reason for the delay.

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Failure by the grievant at any step of the process to appeal a grievance to the next step within the specified time limit will be considered acceptance of the decision at the current step, unless the grievant has notified the official of the delay and the reason for the delay and the official has consented in writing to the delay.

## **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

No reprisals of any kind will be taken by the board or by an employee of the school against any grievant because of his or her participation in a grievance.

All meetings and hearings conducted pursuant to this policy will be private.

The board and school officials will consider requests to hear grievances from a group of grievants, but the board and officials have the discretion to hear and respond to grievants individually.

The grievant may have a representative, including an attorney, at any stage of the grievance. However, if the grievant intends to be represented by legal counsel, he/she must notify the appropriate school official in advance so the school personnel also will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel.

## **PROCESS FOR GRIEVANCE**

### **Filing a Grievance**

#### **Informal Process**

1. Speak directly to the teacher or staff member with whom you have the grievance. Most problems are solved through this process.
2. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, you may submit a letter outlining the grievance to the Director, or request a face-to-face meeting.
3. If the grievance is not settled as a result of this letter or meeting, the Director shall schedule a conference with all involved parties and, afterward, render a final administrative decision within five (5) days of the meeting.

#### **Formal Process- Appeal to the Board**

If the grievant has alleged a violation of a specified federal or state law, federal or state regulation, State Board of Education policy or procedure, or local Board of Directors policy or procedure, the grievant will have the right to appeal a final administrative decision to the Board. If a grievant has not alleged such specific violations, he/she may request a board hearing, which the board may grant at its discretion.

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An appeal must be submitted within five (5) days of receiving the final administrative decision and provide the following information in writing to the Board Chair:

- The name of the school employee or other individual whose decision or action is at issue;
- The specific decision, action, issue;
- Any board policy, state or federal law, state or federal regulation, or State Board of Education policy or procedure that the grievant believes has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated; and
- The specific resolution desired.

The board may choose to review the written documents and respond or schedule a hearing in closed session with the grievant at the next scheduled monthly board meeting.

The Board shall render a written decision on the grievance under consideration within five (5) days after the meeting and immediately provide a copy of the decision to all parties of interest.

*Approved August 13, 2013*

*Amended April 8, 2014*