

### **1.006 PARENT/GUARDIAN/STUDENT GRIEVANCES**

Riverside Leadership Academy encourages parents/guardians and staff members to communicate any grievances they have with the appropriate school employee. Riverside Leadership Academy encourages parents/guardians to contact the involved staff members and set up a meeting to discuss the grievance informally before following the procedure outlined in this policy.

A grievance is defined as a formal, written claim by a student and/or parent/guardian alleging that a specific decision made by a school employee has adversely affected the person making the complaint. A grievance may include, but is not limited to, allegations of the following:

- that there has been a violation, misapplication or misinterpretation of state or federal law or regulations, Board policy, or administrative procedure; or
- that a decision made and/or action taken by an employee is unfair, discriminatory, or otherwise not in a student's best interest.

The purpose of this *Grievance Procedure* is to secure, at the lowest possible level, equitable solutions of the problems which arise to affect differences between parents/guardians and/or students and employees.

If the grievance cannot be resolved by the parties directly through informal communication, Riverside Leadership Academy will follow the procedures outlined below. Failure of a student or those making a grievance on behalf of the student to comply with timelines listed below will result in denial of the grievance or appeal. Failure of the school administration to comply with these timelines will result in automatic right of appeal to the next level.

- **Step 1:** The student/parent/guardian should notify the staff member/teacher of their concern within five days of the incident. This could include an email, phone call, or conference. The student/parent/guardian should not move to Step 2 without contacting the staff member/teacher regarding the incident. If there is an occurrence where the student/parent/guardian does not feel comfortable communicating with the staff member directly, they should contact the school administration.
- **Step 2:** Should the student/parent/guardian be unsatisfied with the resolution from Step 1, the parent/guardian or staff member shall communicate their grievance with the Executive Director in writing within five days after working through Step 1. This could include an email or formal letter where the individual bringing the grievance describes the nature of the injustice. The Executive Director will return communication in writing with the person filing the grievance within 48 hours. This communication will include information about how the situation has been resolved or to set up a conference with the individual bringing the grievance. If the grievance involves the Executive Director, the written grievance shall be directed to the Board chairperson and continue through the same process outlined (The Board Chairman will retain the duties of the Executive Director under this scenario). The Executive Director will conduct an investigation within 10 days of receiving the grievance in writing.

- **Step 3:** If the grievance is not resolved through communication with the Executive Director, a conference will be scheduled with the person filing the grievance, the individual accused of wrongdoing, and administration. The Executive Director will serve as a mediator and allow both parties to share their perspective. Within five days of the conference, the Executive Director will provide both parties with a decision based on the information gathered in writing. If either party disagrees with the Executive Director's decision, they will have the opportunity to appeal directly to the Board of Directors.
- **Step 4:** The party requesting an appeal will make a written appeal within 7 days of the Executive Director's decision to the Board of Directors describing the nature of the grievance. The Executive Director will provide objective data that was discovered during their investigation. The Board of Directors will schedule a hearing 14 days from receiving the written appeal request. The appeal hearing will require at least 3 board members and all parties involved will have the opportunity to state their case. After hearing the various testimonies, the panel members will discuss the matter in a closed session and come to a decision. The Board may confirm, overturn, or modify the Executive Director's decision. Within 30 days of the hearing, the board members will communicate their decision in writing with the party filing the appeal.

The decision of the Board will be final and is the last step for all grievances.