Civility/Grievance Policy

I. Purpose
   a. To solve student, parent and employee-related problems as efficiently and fairly as possible.
   b. To maintain respect for parent/student concerns while also respecting and honoring the staff and administrative structure of the school.
   c. This policy is provided to address student/teacher, parent/teacher and parent/administrator issues and concerns.
   d. The policy will **not be** used for the following:
      i. Employment disputes
      ii. Incidents that require mandatory reporting such as suspected child abuse, educator and employee misconduct, misuse of school-owned technology and student or adult bullying.
      iii. Disputes between or among parents who are not also school employees

II. Initial meeting
   a. If a parent or student has a problem with a teacher’s interaction with a student or the student’s parent or guardian, the parent/complainant should **first** schedule an appointment to meet privately with the teacher, bring information and evidence (if available) and meet with the teacher to discuss the problem. Students/parents should not interrupt a teacher’s class or make unreasonable demands on a teacher’s time.
   b. Teachers and employees should be reasonably available—before and after school and/or during preparation periods or time—to meet with students or parents who make a request to meet. A written request should not be required.
   c. Both parents and school employees must agree to be polite and civil during the meeting.
   d. Neither party should record the meeting without the other party’s permission. A joint recording may be made.
   e. The school employee is responsible for making a **short**, written summary of the meeting. This summary must be provided to the other party, and maintained by the school, at the school’s discretion.
   f. Both parties should agree that their conversation will be confidential—except as required by law or unless the situation could be remedied with others’ involvement. [Example: a parent may share information from an initial meeting with the child involved or with their spouse or domestic partner; a teacher could share or discuss the information with the **direct** supervisor.]

III. Complainant is still dissatisfied
   a. The complaining party will notify the teacher, parent or administrator that the problem has not been remedied—and what the complainant wants to do. This could include meeting with the teacher or administrators (preferably with all parties to the disagreement), asking the teacher, parent or administrator to meet again with additional information or individuals **with relevant**
information, or notifying the individual-complained-against that the complainant intends to talk to the next person in authority.

b. The complainant may schedule a meeting with the original teacher’s or administrator’s immediate supervisor when necessary parties are available. Should the complainant go immediately to the highest administrative level, to charter board members or to charter or State Board of Education administrators, the complainant will be directed back to the next step in this process. School administrators, if approached, should refer the complainant to this policy and politely offer to assist the complainant with re-contacting the original person or in contacting the next appropriate supervisor. [This is a crucial step—if local charter board members or the charter director jumps in, the policy is pointless. If the charter director is contacted by state administrators, the director should explain this policy and encourage state level administrators to let the school honor its policy—unless of course the complaint involves criminal activity.]

IV. Second meeting

a. The complainant should schedule a meeting, at a reasonable time (again, administrators and supervisors should be reasonably available) with the appropriate supervisor. This meeting should take place no more than 10 days following the initial meeting, unless both parties agree to a longer interim period.

b. The complainant should bring a copy of the original meeting summary—or provide the summary or summaries in advance—to the supervisor.

c. Again, the parties must agree to be polite, civil, have open minds and be confidential and professional during the discussion.

d. This second meeting could include the original teacher and/or administrator in addition to the next level of supervisor and the complainant. The higher supervisor should make a thoughtful determination of which parties the second meeting should include. For instance, meetings about bullying or sexual harassment should never bring together an alleged victim and perpetrator (or their parents/guardians), thinking that they can all discuss the problem or incident effectively together.

e. A school participant/employee should be assigned to summarize the meeting. The parent/guardian may also summarize and request that the additional information be included in the student’s records, if the employee’s summary is maintained by the school.

f. The meeting participants should set specific follow-up plans and timelines, as agreed upon by both parties, to assess whether the problem has been remedied.

V. Final administrative action

a. If, after the second meeting and an agreed-upon time period, the complainant is still dissatisfied, the school (higher level administrator) has the responsibility to provide all reasonable options for the complainant. If the complainant and the school administrator cannot reach a satisfactory resolution for the complaint, the complainant has a final administrative opportunity to remedy a problem.
b. All parties should understand and agree that this is the final step in the administrative process. If there is no consensus to solve the problem, the complainant has a final opportunity to present the problem to the local charter board for the board’s decision, consistent with the law.

c. Charter board final review process
   i. The charter board may allow the complainant to present the problem, including previous summaries and evidence to the charter board sitting as a whole.
   ii. The charter board may decline to hear the party’s complaint if the board determines that appropriate final decisions or actions have been taken by the administrator. In this case, the board will notify the complainant that the board supports the school’s final administrative action.
   iii. The charter board may assign an individual board member or a committee of board members to meet with the complainant and direct the complainant to present the information to a committee of board members who will then make a recommendation to the full board for the board’s final action.
   iv. The final written charter board decision is the final administrative decision and is presumed to be a public document, though names may be redacted to protect students.
   v. There is no administrative appeal opportunity for the board’s decision.