

Resource Guide:

Conflict Resolution Policy

Background

Pursuant to Section 6.3 of the Charter Contract, each school must adopt a Conflict Resolution Policy:

6.3 Conflict Resolution Policy. The School shall adopt, update and adhere to a Conflict Resolution Policy to provide parents and students due process in the event that a conflict arises; provided that where a dispute resolution process is defined for a particular program area (e.g., IDEA, Section 504, etc.), the School shall comply with the process for that particular program area which shall control. The Commission shall not intervene in the School's Conflict and Resolution procedures except where the dispute pertains to a possible violation of any law or term under this Contract.

In addition to situations where due process is legally required, such as student suspensions of more than ten days, governing boards should also determine whether and which additional situations warrant due process. The conflict resolution policy, for example, may address disagreements between students and teachers and/or parents and teachers. It might address disagreements between students that do not rise to the level of more severe discipline (e.g., students teasing one another).

The Conflict Resolution Policy should establish a process for resolving these and other types of disagreements. The policy might detail how issues should be initially addressed, and when and whether the issues should be brought to the school principal or other administrators.

Finally, rather than having a separate conflict resolution policy, a governing board may decide to embed conflict resolution within other required policies, such as Student Discipline and Conduct, or include it in the Student and/or Personnel Handbook. A board also might choose to combine the complaints procedure with the conflict resolution policy. In the event that a board combines or includes conflict resolution within another area, please clearly identify where the conflict resolution policy appears to the Organizational Performance Management team.

Conflict Resolution – Checklist

The following questions are offered as issues to consider when reviewing, developing and implementing conflict resolution policies. The checklist is not mean to be prescriptive or regulatory in nature.

Clearly defined. *Does the policy clearly define conflict resolution procedures for students and parents? Does it specify to whom concerns should be initially addressed? Does it specify the points at which school administrators and/or the board become involved?*

Flexibility. *Does the policy provide for options when resolving conflicts? Some conflicts may be handled informally while others may require more formal procedures.*

Timeframes. *Does the policy establish specific or general timelines? For example, a policy may require that conflicts are addressed within 14 days or a “reasonable” time.*

Recordkeeping. How will the school record disputes?

Dissemination. *Is the policy effectively disseminated to students, staff, and parents?*