



# **Socrates Academy Grievance Procedure**

3/13/06

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

### Section One

#### Objective

It is the intent of Socrates Academy to provide an appropriate balanced administrative channel to allow individuals to set forth grievances to and appeal decisions of the Socrates Academy administration. The primary objective of the grievance process is to ensure that the well being of each child and the academic integrity of Socrates Academy are upheld. The grievance procedures, as adopted by Socrates Academy are intended to enhance timely fact-finding, hearing and decision making in the event of a grievance or appeal. These procedures will comply with any existing state and local laws in the State of North Carolina that deal with grievances, complaints, disputes, and conflict resolution.

### Section Two

#### Definitions

For purposes of these procedures, a grievance is broadly described as:

*A formal or informal expression of dissatisfaction about some aspect of the Socrates Academy administrative or academic program as implemented, or, a Socrates Academy action or decision that is brought to the attention of an entity designated by the Socrates Academy Board of Directors and has some responsibility for that aspect of the program or decision.*

A grievance procedure is broadly described as:

*A structured mechanism, formal or informal, that enables an individual or entity to express dissatisfaction about some aspect of the Socrates Academy administrative or academic program as implemented, or, a Socrates Academy action or decision that is brought to the attention of an entity designated by the Board of Directors to obtain a fair and impartial assessment and decision regarding the complaint.*

An informal process is broadly described as:

*A procedure in which internal methods are used to provide early-intervention methods by either written or verbal resolutions that are time-saving and useful for building cooperative, congenial and satisfying relationships with students, parents/guardians/staff, administrators and members of the Board of Directors.*

A formal process is broadly described as:

*A procedure that contains written procedures, including fact-finding and deliberating procedures and/or the use of outside impartial mediators or litigation*

### **Section Three**

#### Characteristics of the Grievance Process

The grievance process will be:

- Available to all
- Applied consistently and impartially
- Inclusive persons involved in the problem will be involved in the solution
- Applied to a clearly defined grievance
- Solution-oriented
- Time-sensitive
- Focused on **what** is right, not **who** is right
- Reviewed periodically, amended and revised as needed

### **Section Four**

#### Elements of the Grievance Process

The elements of Socrates Academy's grievance procedures are as follows:

- A grievance prevention process designed to prevent or address problems or dissatisfaction that might become grievances
- A Grievance Committee appointed by the Board of Directors
- An attempt to resolve the grievance informally
- A procedure for filing a formal grievance
- A clear procedure with timeframe for fact-finding and responding to the grievance
- A procedure through which a grievance can be elevated or appealed to the next highest level for further consideration

### **Section Five**

#### Dispute Avoidance

Socrates Academy should avoid involvement in disputes to the greatest extent possible. Socrates Academy may, however, conduct proactive procedures to avoid possible complaints and grievances, in collaboration with the Board. Using these procedures, Socrates Academy will develop a written grievance and complaint process, that includes satisfaction surveys, and indicators of satisfaction through the number of complaints registered during a period of time and the resolution thereof. Through its informal procedures, the Board may conduct proactive hearings for grievances before the grievances become a public or political embarrassment to Socrates Academy.

## **Section Six**

### Process

All grievances will begin at the informal level.

The following process will be applicable for submission of all complaints, grievances and requests for appeals.

#### Informal Grievance:

- Party/parties express a grievance to the party/parties to whom the grievance is directed. (initial contact)
- Parties involved in the grievance should schedule a meeting as soon as possible, and in a timely manner, to identify the issues involved in the grievance and to seek resolution of the issues.
- Documentation, signed by all parties, that states the outcomes of the meeting, will be proof that the issues have been addressed and resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.
- If a resolution is not agreed upon between all parties involved, then a written complaint must be written and submitted to the next level of authority at Socrates Academy within 10 school days of this meeting by the party/parties who feel(s) the issue remains unresolved.

#### Formal Grievance:

- The formal process will begin once a written grievance is received (within 10 school days) after the informal meeting failed to bring about a satisfactory agreement between all parties. This written grievance should be sent to the Socrates Academy Grievance Committee.
- The Grievance Committee will investigate the facts stated in the grievance and gather information from all involved parties within 10 school days.
- The Grievance Committee will meet to discuss their findings within 15 school days.
- The committee's findings will be sent, in writing, to all involved parties within 20 school days of the Grievance Committee's initial meeting on this issue.

### Appeals:

- Should a request for appeal be necessary, it must be presented, in writing, to the Grievance Committee within 10 school days of receiving the findings.
- This request for appeal will then be taken to the Socrates Academy Board of Directors.
- The Socrates Academy Board of Directors will write a recommendation within 45 school days of receiving the request for appeal.
- This written recommendation will be sent to all parties involved in the grievance.