

# Sonoma Charter School

## Policy Memo 604a

### **Subject: Issue Resolution; Policy for Dealing with**

1. **Purpose.** This memo sets forth our policy for dealing with issue resolutions.
2. **Effective Date.** June 10, 2013. This memo replaces all previous policies on this subject.
3. **Parties.** A dispute may involve the following parties:
  - Student-Student
  - Student - Teacher
  - Parent-Student
  - Parent-Employee
  - Staff - Director
  - Community member-Employee.
4. **Concept.** On occasion, issues may arise between parties at Sonoma Charter School. The Charter School developed this protocol to help resolve issues when they arise. It is always the goal to have issue resolution at the lowest and most informal level.

Please be advised of the following:

- This protocol is for issue resolution and is not an appeal process.
  - Personnel and student discipline issues are not covered by this protocol. Personnel actions are at the discretion of the Director with the rare exception of Governing Board oversight, as determined by the Governing Board. All employees of the Charter School remain employed on an “at-will” basis.
  - Any findings and/or recommendations resulting from this protocol are not binding to the parties.
  - Should an issue come before the Governing Board, the decision of the Governing Board is final.
5. The Charter School Issue Resolution Protocol includes the following steps:
    - 1) The parties discuss the issue and attempt to resolve it on their own.
    - 2) If unresolved, the parties meet together with the Director to resolve the issue.
    - 3) If unresolved, the parties meet with the Governing Board Chair to resolve the issue. This step must be requested in writing and follow protocol in Policy Memo 604.
    - 4) If unresolved, the issue may be brought before the Governing Board. This step must be requested in writing as per Policy Memo 604.
  - Unless the issue involves confidential personnel or pupil information, an issue brought before the Governing Board may occur in open session.

- No third party (employees, parents, students, etc.) has a right to come into closed session to address the Board. Any and all issues must be reduced to writing for the Governing Board's review in advance of any Board meeting.
- The Governing Board may be unable to hear certain issues due to legal reasons.
- The Governing Board has full discretion to decline to hear an issue.

With respect to an issue involving an employee and the Director, the employee and the Director may meet with a neutral mediator to be selected by the Charter School from outside the school community following Step 3 above. This step must be requested in writing. The mediator should take notes, and recommend a course of action. Should the protocol proceed to the Governing Board (Step 4), the mediator may be asked to describe the mediation and outcomes.

4. **Written Complaint.** In processing a written complaint, we follow a five-step procedure.
  - a. **Investigation.** Director talks with the parties, using best efforts to determine the facts and the position of each party.
  - b. **Mediation.** If Director judges that the complaint would be best resolved through a meeting of the parties, Director shall attempt to mediate the dispute.
  - c. **Action.** If Director judges that a complaint against a staff member or student is valid, Director may take appropriate disciplinary action.
  - d. **Resolution.** Director issues a written statement of resolution, covering:
    - 1) Outcome of mediation
    - 2) Director's findings
    - 3) Any disciplinary action taken.
  - e. **Appeal.** Any appeal of Director's disposition of the complaint proceeds as follows:
    - 1) Dissatisfied party files with Director a written request for appeal.
    - 2) Chair schedules a closed session to hear the appeal at a meeting of Governing Board.
    - 3) Decision of Governing Board is final.
6. **See attached protocol for**
7. **Questions.** Refer any questions to Director.