

**SUMMIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS WASHINGTON**  
**Complaint Procedures**

The Governing Board recognizes that Summit Public Schools Washington (“SPS”) has primary responsibility for ensuring that it complies with the applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs.

SPS shall follow the Complaint Procedures when addressing:

- **Complaints that SPS has violated anti-discrimination laws.**
- **Complaints regarding curriculum development and instructional materials.**
- **Complaints regarding the operation and administration of the charter school by its enrolled students and their parents (RCW 28A.710.187)**

Anyone may file a complaint against SPS alleging that Summit has violated anti-discrimination laws. SPS does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

This complaint procedure is designed to assure that the resolution of real or alleged violations are directed toward a just solution that is satisfactory to the complainant, the administration and the Board of Directors. This grievance procedure will apply to the general conditions of the nondiscrimination policy, curriculum development and instructional materials, and complaints regarding the operation and administration of the charter school by its enrolled students and their parents (RCW 28A.710.187).

**Definitions:**

As used in this procedure:

A. **“Grievance”** means a complaint which has been filed by a complainant relating to alleged violations of any state or federal anti-discrimination laws.

B. **“Complaint”** means a written charge alleging specific acts, conditions, or circumstances, which are in violation of the anti-discrimination laws, or complaints regarding curriculum development and instructional materials, and the operation and administration of the school. The time period for filing a complaint is one year from the date of the occurrence that is the subject matter of the complaint. However, a complaint filing deadline may not be imposed if the complainant was prevented from filing due to: 1) Specific misrepresentations by SPS that it had resolved the problem forming the basis of the complaint; or 2) Withholding of information that the Summit was required to provide under WAC 392-190-065 or WAC 392-190-005. Complaints may be submitted by mail, fax, e-mail or hand-delivery to any SPS campus, to the SPS compliance officer at the school responsible for investigating discrimination complaints, or to Summit’s home office compliance officer. Any Summit employee who receives a complaint that meets these criteria will promptly notify the compliance officer.

C. **“Respondent”** means the person alleged to be responsible or who may be

responsible for the violation alleged in the complaint.

The Board acknowledges and respects every individual's rights to privacy. Discrimination, intimidation, harassment, and bullying complaints shall be investigated in a manner that protects [to the greatest extent possible] the confidentiality of the parties and the integrity of the process. SPS cannot guarantee anonymity of the complainant. This includes keeping the identity of the complainant confidential except to the extent necessary to carry out the investigation, as determined by the Superintendent of SPS or their designee on a case-by-case basis.

The primary purpose of this procedure is to secure an equitable solution to a justifiable complaint. To this end, specific steps will be taken. Summit Public Schools is prohibited by law from intimidating, threatening, coercing or discriminating against any individual for the purpose of interfering with their right to file a grievance under this policy and procedure and from retaliating against an individual for filing such a grievance.

### **SPS Washington Schools Compliance Officers**

The following employees of Summit Public Schools are designated as compliance officers to receive and investigate complaints and ensure SPS's compliance with the law; when families wish to make complaints, they should contact the compliance officer for their school:

The list is available at Summit's website, [here](#).

The CEO shall ensure that Summit employees designated to investigate complaints are knowledgeable about laws and programs for which they are responsible. Such employees may have access to legal counsel as determined by the Superintendent or designee.

## **NOTIFICATIONS**

Complaint Procedures are available on the SPS website, and procedures and forms are available at every SPS school site and the SPS Home Office. Complaint procedures are made available in different languages to students of the school where 15% or more students speak a primary language other than English.

Copies of the SPS complaint procedures shall be available free of charge.

## **PROCEDURES**

The following procedures shall be used to address all complaints that allege a violation of federal or state laws or regulations governing educational programs. The compliance officer shall maintain a record of each complaint and subsequent related actions. All parties involved in allegations shall be notified when a complaint is filed, when a complaint meeting or hearing is scheduled, and when a decision or ruling is made.

### **Informal Process for Resolution**

Anyone with an allegation of discrimination may request an informal meeting with the compliance officer or designated employee to resolve their concerns. Such a meeting will be at the option of the complainant. If unable to resolve the issue at this meeting, the complainant may submit a written complaint to the compliance officer. During the course of the informal process, SPS must notify complainant of their right to file a formal complaint.

### **Formal Process for Resolution**

#### **Level One: Complaint to Summit Public Schools**

- A. The complaint must set forth the specific acts, conditions or circumstances alleged to be in violation. Upon receipt of a complaint, the compliance officer will provide the complainant a copy of this procedure. The compliance officer will investigate the allegations within 30 calendar days. SPS and complainant may agree to resolve the complaint in lieu of an investigation. The officer shall provide the CEO or designee with a full written report of the complaint and the results of the investigation.
- B. The CEO or designee will respond to the complainant with a written decision as expeditiously as possible, but in no event later than 30 calendar days following receipt of the written complaint, unless otherwise agreed to by the complainant or if exceptional circumstances related to the complaint require an extension of the time limit. In the event an extension is needed, SPS will notify the complainant in writing of the reason for the extension and the anticipated response date. At the time SPS responds to the complainant, SPS must send a copy of the response to the office of the superintendent of public instruction.
- C. The decision of the CEO or designee will include: 1) a summary of the results of the investigation; 2) whether Summit has failed to comply with anti-discrimination laws; 3) if non-compliance is found, corrective measures Summit deems necessary to correct it; and 4) notice of the complainant's right to appeal to the Board and the necessary filing information. The CEO or designee's response will be provided in a language the complainant can understand and may require language assistance for

complainants with limited English proficiency in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

- D. Any corrective measures deemed necessary shall be instituted as expeditiously as possible, but in no event later than 30 calendar days following the CEO or designee's mailing of a written response to the complaining party unless otherwise agreed to by the complainant.

### **Level Two – Appeal to the Board of Directors**

- A. If a complainant disagrees with the CEO or designee's written decision, the complainant may appeal the decision to the Board by filing a written notice of appeal with the secretary of the Board within ten (10) calendar days following the date upon which the complainant received the response.
- B. The Board shall schedule a hearing to commence by the twentieth (20th) calendar day following the filing of the written notice of appeal, unless otherwise agreed to by the complainant and the CEO or designee or for good cause. Both parties shall be allowed to present such witnesses and testimony as the Board deems relevant and material. Unless otherwise agreed to by the complainant, the Board will render a written decision within thirty (30) calendar days following the filing of the notice of appeal and provide the complainant with a copy of the decision.
- C. The decision of the Board will be provided in a language the complainant can understand, which may require language assistance for complainants with limited English proficiency in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.
- D. The decision will include notice of the complainant's right to appeal to the superintendent of Public Instruction and will identify where and to whom the appeal must be filed. SPS will send a copy of the appeal decision to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

### **Level Three - Complaint to the Superintendent of Public Instruction**

If a complainant disagrees with the decision of the Board, or if Summit fails to comply with this procedure, the complainant may file a complaint with the Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

- A. A complaint must be received by the Superintendent of Public Instruction on or before the twentieth (20) calendar day following the date upon which the complainant received written notice of the Board's decision, unless the superintendent of Public Instruction grants an extension for good cause. Complaints may be submitted by mail, fax, electronic mail, or hand delivery.
- B. A complaint must be in writing and include: 1) A description of the specific acts, conditions or circumstances alleged to violate applicable anti-discrimination laws; 2) The name and contact information, including address, of the complainant; 3) The name and address of the Summit campus subject to the complaint; 4) A copy of Summit's complaint and appeal decision, if any; and 5) A proposed resolution of the complaint or relief requested. If the allegations regard a specific student, the

complaint must also include the name and address of the student, or in the case of a homeless child or youth, contact information.

- C. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction may initiate an investigation, which may include conducting an independent on-site review. OSPI may also investigate additional issues related to the complaint that were not included in the initial complaint or appeal to the CEO or the Board. Following the investigation, OSPI will make an independent determination as to whether SPS has failed to comply with RCW 28A.642.010 or Chapter 392-190, WAC and will issue a written decision to the complainant and SPS that addresses each allegation in the complaint and any other noncompliance issues it has identified. The written decision will include corrective actions deemed necessary to correct noncompliance and documentation the district must provide to demonstrate that corrective action has been completed.

All corrective actions must be completed within the timelines established by OSPI in the written decision unless OSPI grants an extension. If timely compliance is not achieved, OSPI may take action, including but not limited to referring SPS to appropriate state or federal agencies empowered to order compliance.

A complaint may be resolved at any time when, before the completion of the investigation, SPS voluntarily agrees to resolve the complaint. OSPI may provide technical assistance and dispute resolution methods to resolve a complaint.

#### **Level Four - Administrative Hearing**

A complainant or charter school that desires to appeal the written decision of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction may file a written notice of appeal with OSPI within thirty (30) calendar days following the date of receipt of that office's written decision. OSPI will conduct a formal administrative hearing in conformance with the Administrative Procedures Act, Chapter 34.05, RCW.

#### **Mediation**

At any time during the discrimination complaint procedure set forth in WAC 392-190-065 through 392-190-075, SPS may, at its own expense, offer mediation. The complainant and SPS may agree to extend the discrimination complaint process deadlines in order to pursue mediation.

The purpose of mediation is to provide both the complainant and SPS an opportunity to resolve disputes and reach a mutually acceptable agreement through the use of an impartial mediator. Mediation must be voluntary and requires the mutual agreement of both parties. It may be terminated by either party at any time during the mediation process. It may not be used to deny or delay a complainant's right to utilize the complaint procedures.

Mediation must be conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator who may not:

- A. Be an employee of Summit Public Schools, any school district, public charter school, or other public or private agency that is providing education-related services to a student who is the subject of the complaint being mediated; or

- B. Have a personal or professional conflict of interest. A mediator is not considered an employee of SPS or a charter school or other public or private agency solely because he or she serves as a mediator.

If the parties reach agreement through mediation, they may execute a legally binding agreement that sets forth the resolution and states that all discussions that occurred during the course of mediation will remain confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent complaint, due process hearing or civil proceeding. The agreement must be signed by the complainant and an SPS representative who has authority to bind Summit.

### **Preservation of Records**

The files containing copies of all correspondence relative to each complaint communicated to SPS and the disposition, including any corrective measures instituted by SPS, will be retained in the office of the compliance officer for a period of six years.

### **Washington Charter Commission Complaint Process**

Learn more and access this process [here](#).