



Governance and Grievance Policy

Revised September 23, 2021

Thomas MacLaren School is a charter public school, chartered through the Colorado Charter School Institute. The following outlines our governance and grievance policies:

The Board of Directors of Thomas MacLaren School

The purpose of the Board is to set the general direction and policy of the school, not to manage it on a daily basis. Rather, the Executive Director and other administrators manage the school by implementing the policies the Board has enacted. Furthermore, Directors are charged with fostering a positive relationship with MacLaren faculty and staff, parents, students, the Charter School Institute, and the community at large in Colorado Springs. The Board selects and evaluates the Executive Director, oversees the finances of the school, recruits and orients high-quality candidates to serve on the Board, and ensures effective long-range planning. All Board decisions should be made within the parameters of the school's Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and previously enacted policies.

As with all charter schools, Thomas MacLaren School is a separate entity from its authorizer, the Charter School Institute, and the school district in which it is located, Colorado Springs School District 11. By its decisions, the Board shall guard and steward this separateness, both for its own sake and for the sake of the charter school movement.

Grievance Policy

Thomas MacLaren School values open and proactive communication among and between the members of the school community, including parents, students, faculty, staff, administration, and the Board. Issues that are not dealt with directly can become destructive to the school community and, therefore, detrimental to the learning process of our students. As adults we must model for our students a willingness to address conflict directly. As such, Thomas MacLaren School's procedures (outlined below) for settling differences are designed to support prompt and equitable resolution of disagreements at the lowest possible faculty or administrative level.

These procedures guide how faculty, staff, parents and students are expected to express grievances about other members of the school community. The administration and Board both expect that conflict will be addressed and proactively dealt with following the fewest steps of the procedures below. However, if the conflict is not resolved at the lowest faculty or administrative level, the guidelines below provide a process for resolving the conflict.

Grievance Procedures: Thomas MacLaren School is committed to ensuring that the following procedures are followed:

1. Address Issue with Those Directly Involved

The grievant brings the situation or concern to the attention of those directly involved.

Should a student or parent fail to begin the process at the lowest possible level, and instead

go directly to the Head of School or Executive Director with a concern about a teacher or go to a Board member with a concern about a Head of School (for example), the person at the higher level in the policy shall re-direct the grievant to the appropriate level in the process.

2. Address Issue with Appropriate Supervising School Director

If satisfactory resolution is not realized after a direct conversation between the conflicted parties, the situation must be brought to the attention of the Head of School within ten days of the above meeting. The Head of School and the conflicted parties will address the situation, facilitate communication, and develop goals for conflict resolution. The Head of School will monitor this process until resolution is realized or until an impasse is reached.

It is the Head of School's responsibility to manage the ultimate resolution of conflicts among parents, students, faculty, and staff, excepting those that pertain to the Head of School him/herself or to a Head of School's execution of a school-wide policy or procedure.

If the concern is regarding the Head of School or a decision by the Head of School, the Executive Director will facilitate the complaint at this level.

If the concern is regarding the Executive Director, the Board Chair, or designee, will facilitate the complaint at this level.

3. Prepare a Written Grievance for the Board of Directors

If the grievant is not satisfied with the response received via steps one and two, the grievant shall prepare a formal written grievance with the assistance of the facilitator in Step 2. This written grievance should:

1. describe the incident, decision or practice that gave rise to the complaint;
2. cite the contract, policy, or procedure that has been violated and/or rationale for concern;
3. describe what conflict resolution strategies were attempted via steps 1 and 2; and
4. explain what corrective action is being requested.

If the concern is regarding the Executive Director, the Chair of the Board will oversee this process.

4. Provide Written Grievance to the Board

The grievant may request that the matter be brought to the attention of the Board only if the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved. Upon request by the grievant, the Executive Director will forward the written grievance to the Chair of the Board at least one week prior to the next scheduled Board meeting. The Chair, or designee, will review the above process with the grievant and ensure that the proper initial steps were taken.

If the first three steps were properly followed, then the Chair, or designee, will review the written grievance to determine if it merits review by the full Board. If the Chair, or designee, determines that it does not merit full Board review, then he or she will explain the reason(s) for this determination in a brief written statement to the grievant. The Chair, or designee, will then make a determination in light of the evidence given. A written statement of the determination will be given to the grievant within 30 days.

If the Chair, or designee, determines that the grievance should be reviewed by the Board, then it shall be added to the next Board meeting agenda. The written grievance shall be submitted to all Board members as far in advance of the Board meeting as practicable to permit the Board to consider the matter carefully. Grievances shall not be brought to the Board without first being submitted in writing, e.g., as a matter of Public Comment, as this does not give the Board sufficient time to consider the issue(s) and address them through this grievance process. The Board will not hear matters that do not follow this grievance process.

If the grievance goes to the full Board, the grievant will receive a written response within 30 days of the hearing.

The Board will notify its authorizer of the grievance if it involves a student with an IEP or 504 Plan or a student safety issue.

The Board has the discretion not to hear matters that do not follow this grievance process.

5. Address Issue with the Charter School Institute (CSI)

If the grievant has followed the policy and procedures above, and wishes to pursue a concern because it has not been resolved to his or her satisfaction, the grievant must follow CSI's grievance procedures:

1. The grievant must submit the concern in a written format to the Institute Executive Director within five business days after receiving the written decision of the Institute School's Board.
2. The Institute's Executive Director or designee will make the school aware of the concern and determine if any violation of law, rule, policy, or the charter contract has been committed.
3. After review, and to the extent practicable, the Institute's Executive Director will publish his/her conclusions in writing within 15 calendar days of receipt of the written concern.
4. Decisions will not be overturned by the Institute Executive Director unless there are compelling grounds that an Institute School discriminated against a protected class, violated its contract with the Institute, failed to follow its own policies, Institute policies or requirements, or violated any other state or federal law, rule, or policy.
5. If, after review, the Institute Executive Director concludes that a violation has occurred, the Institute's Executive Director will inform the Institute School administration in writing of the violation and direct that the Institute School resolve the situation with the grievant. The Institute may implement procedures in line with the Institute's School Compliance Policy and take any actions provided for in law, policy or contract to resolve the issue.
6. The decision of the Institute Executive Director is final.

Contact information for MacLaren's Board Chair shall be posted on the school website.
Contact information for the Charter School Institute: 303.866.3299 or
legalandpolicy_csi@csi.state.co.us