



Governance and Grievance Policy

Thomas MacLaren School is a public charter 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 Head of School 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 Head of School, 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 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.

If the concern is regarding the Head of School, the Chair of the Board 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 Head of School, the Chair of the Board will oversee this process.

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.

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 Head of School 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 steps were taken before adding the issue to a meeting agenda. 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.

The final forum for conflict resolution, after a grievant has followed the steps outlined above, will be at the level of the Board of Directors.