

POLICY 3.31

5-C I recommend that the Board approve development of the proposed revised Policy 3.31, entitled "Grievance Procedure for Employees."

[Contact: Darron Davis, PX 48953.]

<u>Development</u> CONSENT ITEM

- This policy provides revised guidelines for employee grievance procedures.
- Portions of this policy have been removed as they are addressed by other Board Policies.
- This revision also updates statutory references.

POLICY 3.31

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR EMPLOYEES

- 3 1. Purpose.-- The purpose of this procedure is to secure, at the lowest administrative 4 level, equitable solutions to claim(s) arising from a violation, misapplication, or 5 misinterpretation of School Board Policies or Administrative Directives, which may 6 include discrimination or harassment prohibited by Policies 3.05 and 3.19 and to 7 establish an orderly succession of procedures wherein these solutions may be 8 pursued. The provisions of this policy do not apply to employees covered by a 9 collective bargaining agreement. No employees, including probationary 10 employees, may use the grievance procedure in any way to appeal:
- a. <u>A suspension or termination of employment;</u>
- b. A non-renewal of a contract and/or a nonreappointment;
- 13 c. The professional judgments and conclusions of the supervisor in conducting a performance evaluation; and/or
- d. The procedures and decisions made pursuant to this Policy.
- No grievance shall be processed anonymously.
- 2. <u>Definitions.</u>-- As used herein, the following terms have these meanings:
- a. A "grievance" is a written complaint which alleges a violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of School Board Policy or Administrative Directives, including excluding discrimination or harassment prohibited by and addressed in Policies 3.05 and 3.19.
- b. The term "employee" includes every employee, instructional or noninstructional, of the School Board of Palm Beach County.
- 25 C. The terms "grievant" and "complainant" refer to an employee (or an applicant as defined in subsection(2)(c)) who alleges in writing that he/she has been subjected to a violation, misapplication, or misinterpretation of School Board Policies or Administrative Directives discrimination or harassment as prohibited by Policies 3.05 and 3.19.
- d. "Accused/employee" refers to an employee who is alleged to have subjected another employee to <u>a violation, misapplication, or misinterpretation of School Board Policies or Administrative Directives discrimination or harassment as prohibited by Policies 3.05 and 3.19.</u>

- e. The term "applicant", as used herein, means any person applying for employment with the District, as well as a current District employee who applies for aother instructional or non-instructional position within the District.
- f. The term "supervisor" means the principal, director, area superintendent,
 Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent of Schools or other department
 administrator who has the direct responsibility of supervising or managing the
 aggrieved employee and who has the authority to take action necessary to
 resolve the grievance. For purposes of this Policy, this term may also include a
 consultant retained by the Board to provide interim management assistance.
- g. The term "superior" as used herein refers to the supervisor of the aggrieved employee's immediate supervisor.
- h. A "chief officer" is the <u>Chief of Staff,</u> Chief Academic Officer or the Chief Operating Officer.
- i. The term "days" in this Policy shall mean work days unless calendar days are specified.
- 48 3. Procedure for Grievances (Other than Alleged Harassment or Discrimination). --49 The following grievance procedure applies when the grievance is based on an 50 allegation other than discrimination or harassment under Policies 3.05 and 3.19. (If 51 the grievance is based on allegations of discrimination or harassment as prohibited 52 by Policies 3.05 and 3.19, procedures of Section (4) shall apply, instead.) of a 53 violation, misapplication, or misinterpretation of School Board Policies or 54 Administrative Directives. Failure of the grievant to appeal the grievance to the next 55 level within the timeline set forth herein shall be deemed to be acceptance of the 56 decisions rendered at that level. Failure at any step of this procedure to 57 communicate the decision on a grievance within the specified timelines shall permit 58 the grievant to appeal to the next level. The timelines specified at each level shall 59 be considered a maximum except when extended in writing by mutual consent.
 - a. <u>Level One</u>: Informal Conference

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- Within ten (10) work days after the employee first knows or reasonably should have known of the grievable incident, the employee shall initially discuss the matter with the immediate supervisor with the objective of informally resolving the matter. The grievant shall inform the supervisor that he/she is availing himself/herself of the grievance process. The supervisor shall summarize the conversation in writing within ten (10) work days of the discussion, and that writing must be signed by the employee making the informal complaint or marked as "refused to sign", if appropriate.
- b. <u>Level Two</u>: Filing a Written Grievance

- i. Within ten <u>fifteen</u> (10 <u>15</u>) work days after the informal conference described in Level One, if no satisfactory disposition is made, the employee may file a written grievance with the supervisor. The written grievance shall set forth specifically the event(s) upon which the grievance is based, citing the Policy and/or Directive alleged to be violated, the date the alleged infraction took place, and grounds upon which the grievance is made. The employee must sign and date the grievance.
- ii. Within ten fifteen (10 15) work days after receiving the written grievance, the supervisor shall schedule another meeting with the employee. Within ten fifteen (10 15) work days of the second meeting, and after investigating the allegations, the supervisor shall issue a written decision to the employee.

c. <u>Level Three</u>: Review by the Supervisor's Superior or Chief Officer

- i. Within ten fifteen (10 15) work days after the supervisor's decision, if the employee is not satisfied with the supervisor's decision or if no decision has been issued, the employee may forward the written grievance and the supervisor's decision to the supervisor's superior or to the applicable chief officer. The written grievance shall set forth specifically the event(s) upon which the grievance is based, citing the Policy and/or Directive alleged to be violated, the date the alleged infraction took place, and grounds upon which the grievance is made. The employee must sign and date the grievance. The written grievance shall set forth the event(s) upon which the grievance is based. If the grievance is not forwarded to the superior or chief officer within the designated time, the grievance is considered withdrawn from the grievance process and shall be so noted in the grievance file.
- ii. Within ten <u>fifteen</u> (40 <u>15</u>) work days after receiving the grievance, the superior or chief officer will schedule a meeting with the employee. Within ten <u>fifteen</u> (40 <u>15</u>) work days of that meeting, meeting, and after further investigating the allegations as appropriate, the superior or chief officer shall issue a written decision to the employee. A copy shall be provided to the supervisor.

d. <u>Level Four</u>: Appeal to the <u>Applicable Chief Officer</u> Superintendent

i. Within ten <u>fifteen</u> (10 15) work days after the superior issues a written decision, if the employee is not satisfied with the decision (or if no decision has been issued within ten <u>fifteen</u> (10 15) work days of the meeting), the employee may appeal the decision, in writing, to the <u>Applicable Chief Officer Superintendent</u>. If the grievance is not forwarded

109 to the Applicable Chief Officer Superintendent within the designated time. the grievance is considered withdrawn from the grievance process and 110 111 shall be so noted in the grievance file. 112 ii. The Applicable Chief Officer Superintendent /designee shall may appoint an ad hoc grievance review committee. The chair of the committee will be 113 the highest-ranking District official on the committee. The committee will 114 115 consist of: 116 Α. one (1) member from District management, selected by the 117 Superintendent; 118 B. one (1) member selected by the grievant; and 119 a third member selected by agreement of the first two (2) members. 120 If the third member is not selected by the other committee members 121 within seven (7) calendar days, the Superintendent/designee shall appoint a third member to serve on the committee. 122 123 iii. 124 125 126

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- iii. In an effort to resolve the grievance, within ten fifteen (10 15) work days after the committee is designated, the committee shall meet with the grievant and the supervisor or superior of the person alleged to have violated, misinterpreted, or misapplied a Policy or Directive. Other persons may be presented as witnesses at the meeting by either the grievant or the supervisor/superior. The committee shall issue a written recommendation within ten fifteen (10 15) work days after the meeting, determining whether any violation has occurred, and if so, an appropriate remedy. A copy of the recommendation shall be provided to the grievant, supervisor or superior, the Director of Labor Relations, and the Superintendent.
- iv. The recommendation of the committee shall be forwarded to the Superintendent for review. The Superintendent/designee shall review the recommendation of the committee and the record of the grievance. If the Superintendent/designee finds that a meeting with the grievant would assist in the final determination, the Superintendent/ designee may schedule a meeting for the purposes of this review. The Superintendent/ designee's decision is the final and binding decision of the District.
- 4. Reporting and Resolving Allegations of Harassment or Discrimination.-- When the cause for the grievance is an allegation of discrimination or harassment of an employee (or applicant, as defined in subsection (2)(e)), the following procedures shall apply:
 - a. <u>Level One: Reporting to the Supervisor or EEO Coordinator and Investigation</u> by the EEO Coordinator/Designee

Reporting Discrimination or Harassment.-- Any employee (or applicant as i. defined in subsection (2)(e)) who believes he/she is a victim of discrimination or harassment as prohibited by Policies 3.05 and 3.19, may report the incident(s) in writing to the principal or other immediate supervisor, as applicable. Due to the sensitive nature of sexual harassment complaints, or in the event of an allegation of harassment or discrimination by one's supervisor, the complaint may be filed in writing directly with the District's Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinator ("EEO Coordinator"). The EEO Coordinator is located at: 3370 Forest Hill Boulevard, Suite A-115, West Palm Beach, Florida, 33406; Telephone: (561) 434-8637.

- ii. Complaints should be filed as soon as possible after the alleged incident, but must be filed within sixty (60) calendar days after the employee (or applicant as defined in subsection (2)(e)) first knows or should have known of the grievable incident. Failure on the part of the complainant to initiate and/or follow up on a complaint in a timely manner may result in the complaint being deemed abandoned.
- iii. The principal/designee or other immediate supervisor (as applicable) or EEO Coordinator may assist the individual in putting the complaint in writing; reviewing it with the complainant; and obtaining the complainant's signature. The complainant will be requested to provide signed, specific information regarding the alleged discrimination or harassment, the alleged offender(s), witnesses, and other relevant information. All complaints filed with the principal/designee or other supervisor must be reported to the area superintendent (if applicable) and the EEO Coordinator.
- iv. It is the responsibility of the principal, or other supervisor as applicable, to forward all harassment or discrimination complaints to the area superintendent (if applicable) and EEO Coordinator within two (2) work days.
- b. <u>Investigation by EEO Coordinator/Designee.-- The EEO Coordinator/designee shall document and begin within two (2) work days to thoroughly investigate all complaints of harassment or discrimination, including the following steps:</u>
 - i. promptly talk with the complainant. The complainant shall have an opportunity to describe the incident, present any evidence, name witnesses, and put his/her complaint in writing if he/she has not already done so;
 - ii. talk with any witnesses or others who may have relevant information; and
 - iii. conduct an investigative meeting with the accused/employee, and the

186 187			ations and allow the accused/employee to respond to the allegations.		
188	iv.	Durir	ng the investigation, the EEO Coordinator may recommend to the		
189			f Personnel Officer/designee any action deemed necessary to protect		
190			complainant or other employees, consistent with the requirements of		
191			icable laws.		
192	V.	Whe	n necessary to carry out the investigation or for other good reasons,		
193			consistent with federal and state privacy laws, the EEO Coordinator		
194		shou	ıld discuss the complaint with any of the following persons, as		
195		appr	opriate:		
196		A.	Superintendent/designee;		
197		B.	chief officer;		
198		C.	area superintendent/designee;		
199		D.	associate superintendents;		
200		E.	Chief of School Police;		
201		F.	Chief Personnel Officer:		
202			Director of Labor Relations:		
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203		H.	legal counsel for the Board;		
204		l.	another employee whose knowledge of the persons involved may		
205			help determine the truth;		
206			the exclusive bargaining representative(s) or their legal counsel, if		
207			appropriate; and		
208		K.	the accused/employee.		
209 c.			of the EEO Coordinator/DesigneeUpon completion of the		
210	inve	estigat	ion, the EEO Coordinator/designee shall make a decision, within		
211	thirt	y (30) calendar days of receiving the complaint if possible, about the		
212		validity of the allegations in the complaint. The EEO Coordinator shall discuss the determination and any recommended corrective action with the			
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214	prin	principal/designee or other immediate supervisor, as applicable. In reaching a			
215	dec	ision a	about the complaint, the following should be taken into account:		
216	i.	writte	en statements of witness, the complainant, and accused/employee		
217			representative thereof); and written or oral advice from District		

218		administrators listed above in supparagraphs (4)(b)(v)A-H;
219		ii. the details and consistency of each person's account;
220		iii. evidence of how the complainant reacted to the incident;
221 222 223 224		iv. evidence of past instances of harassment or discrimination by the accused/employee (provided that, if evidence of past harassment/discrimination is to be considered, the principal/designee must review in their entirety the files regarding those past incidents);
225 226 227 228		v. evidence of past harassment or discrimination complaints that were found to be untrue (provided that, if evidence of past accusations or complaints is to be considered, the principal/designee/supervisor must review in their entirety the files regarding those past incidents); and
229 230		vi. case law, state and federal laws and regulations, and Board Policies prohibiting harassment and discrimination.
231 232	d.	To determine the severity of the harassment or discrimination, factors such as the following may be considered:
233		i. how the misconduct affected an employee's work;
234		ii. the type, frequency, and duration of the misconduct;
235		iii. the number of persons involved;
236		iv. the subject(s) of harassment or discrimination;
237		v. the place and situation where the incident occurred; and
238		vi. other incidents at the site.
239 240 241 242	e.	The recommendations for action(s) to be taken, consistent with any applicable collective-bargaining agreement provisions, to resolve a complaint of harassment or discrimination by an employee may include, but are not limited to, the following:
243		i. no action, if the complaint is unsubstantiated;
244		ii. training requirements for the accused/employee;
245		iii. oral reprimand of the accused/employee;
246		iv. written reprimand of the accused/employee;

248 vi. termination of the accused/employee. f. Level Two: Appeal to the Chief Operating Officer/Designee .-- If the 249 complainant or accused/employee wishes to appeal the action taken in 250 251 resolution of the complaint, such appeal shall be filed in accordance either with 252 this Policy or relevant collective bargaining agreement, as applicable. For those employees not in a bargaining unit, the appeal shall be filed in 253 254 accordance with the following procedures: 255 i. If the grievant or accused/employee desires to appeal the EEO Coordinator's decision, it may be appealed in writing to the Chief 256 257 Operating Officer/designee within ten (10) work days after receipt of the decision. 258 259 ii. If the Chief Operating Officer is directly involved with a complaint or with the parties to the complaint complainant or accused/employee, then the 260 261 Chief Academic Officer shall be asked to review the matter. 262 iii. Notice of the appeal shall be given to the opposite party within two (2) work days of receipt of appeal. 263 264 The Chief Operating Officer/designee shall review the written complaint. ίV. the accused/employee's response to the complaint, and all 265 documentation pertaining to the alleged sexual harassment or 266 discrimination, including the EEO Coordinator's decision. 267 268 The Chief Operating Officer/designee, in his/her discretion, may request 269 additional information. The Chief Operating Officer/designee shall issue a written decision to the parties within twenty (20) calendar days of request 270 271 of the appeal. 272 Level Three: Appeal to the Superintendent -- Within ten (10) work days after g. 273 the Chief Operating Officer/designee issues a written decision, if a party is not 274 satisfied with the decision (or if no decision has been issued within ten (10) 275 work days of the meeting), the party may appeal the decision in writing to the Superintendent. If the grievance is not forwarded to the Superintendent within 276 277 the designated time, the grievance is considered withdrawn from the grievance process and shall be so noted in the grievance file. 278 279 i. Notice of the appeal shall be given to the opposite party within two (2)

The Superintendent/designee shall appoint an ad hoc grievance review

committee as specified in paragraph (3)(d)(ii), above.

work days of receipt of appeal.

suspension of the accused/employee; or

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- A. In an effort to resolve the grievance, within ten (10) work days after the committee is designated, the committee shall meet with the appealing party and, if deemed appropriate, may also meet with the opposite party. Other persons may be presented as witnesses at the meeting by either the appealing party or the opposite party.
 - B. The committee shall issue a written recommendation within ten (10) work days after the meeting, determining whether any violation has occurred, and if so, recommending an appropriate remedy. A copy of the recommendation shall be provided to both parties, the grievant's supervisor and the Director of Labor Relations (if appropriate), and the Superintendent.
 - iii. The Superintendent/designee shall review the recommendation of the grievance review committee and the record of the grievance. If the Superintendent/designee finds that a meeting with the grievant and/or accused/employee would assist in the final determination, the Superintendent/ designee may recommend scheduling a meeting for the purposes of this review. The Superintendent/designee's decision is the final and binding decision of the District.
 - h. If the complainant is not satisfied with the results of the procedures contained in this Section, he/or she may utilize other means for resolution as provided by law, including seeking recourse through the federal Office for Civil Rights ("OCR") or Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC").
- 305 5. Rights of Employees (and Applicants as Defined in Subsection (2)(e))
- 306 During any of the grievance levels, the employee (or applicant as defined in a. 307 subsection(2)(e)) represented bγ а person may be 308 employee's/applicant's choice once the grievance is filed with the supervisor. For grievances governed by Section (3) that are filed by employees/applicants 309 310 who choose to be represented by legal counsel, the process will begin at the 311 chief officer phase of Level 3 under subsection (3)(c) of the grievance process.
 - b. <u>No retaliation or reprisals of any kind</u> shall be taken by any member of the administration or other employee against the employee, representative, or any other participant in the grievance procedure by reason of such participation.

315 6. General Provisions

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a. Grievance report forms for filing a grievance (PBSC 0114) shall be available in the Department of Labor Relations on the School Board website. Employees are to be notified of the procedures in this Policy through the Policy's distribution to schools and departments and its posting on the School Board Policies website.

- 321 b. Failure of the employee to advance the grievance through the procedure 322 within the time lines designated will result in immediate dismissal of the 323 grievance.
- 324 C. If a preliminary investigation is begun regarding a complaint, the written complaint and documents relating to the investigation are confidential, 325 326 pursuant to Fla. Stat. §§ 119.07(3)(p) & (u), 231.291(3)(a)1 1012.33, and 327 231.262(1)(a) 1012.796, until the investigation is either concluded or ceases to 328 be active.
- 329 d. All records pertaining to a grievance may be filed in a separate grievance file 330 and may not be kept in the official "personnel file" of the employee/applicant. 331 but this grievance file will be treated as provided by Fla. Stat. §§ 119.07 and 332 231.291(4) 1012.31. All decisions of management are to be forwarded to the 333 labor relations department, which may shall be designated as the custodian of 334 those records for grievances involving a bargaining unit member. The 335 grievance file is subject to disclosure pursuant to the Public Records law and 336 Fla. Stat. § 231.291(4) <u>1012.31</u>.
- 337 If a grievance is filed under the grievance procedure in a collective bargaining agreement, the employee may shall not pursue the grievance under this 338 339 procedure.
- 340 The filing of a grievance shall not interfere with the right of the School Board to f. 341 carry out its responsibilities, subject to the final decision on a grievance.

342 7. Superintendent, Chief Counsel, and District Auditor

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- When the Grievant is a Direct Board Report.-- Employees who report directly a. to the Board (Superintendent, Chief Counsel, and District Auditor) shall file any grievance in writing with the Board Chair. The Chair should request appropriate District personnel to begin the investigation/resolution process set forth in Section (3) or (4) above, as applicable.
- When the Grievant is an Employee in the Office of a Direct Board Report.-b. Employees of the Office of Superintendent, Office of District Auditor, and Office of Chief Counsel should file any initial grievance with their direct 350 supervisor (or the EEO Coordinator, if the allegation is based on harassment or discrimination) pursuant to Section (3) or (4) above (unless the grievance is against a direct Board report, in which case subsection (c) below shall apply). If the grievance is not resolved at this level, the grievance may be appealed as set forth under Section (3) or (4) above, as applicable.
- 356 When the Accused is a Direct Board Report.-- When a direct Board report (the C. Superintendent, Chief Counsel, or District Auditor) is the accused, the grievant 357 358 shall file the complaint in writing with the Board Chair, who shall take prompt

359	acti	ction as specified below:	
360	i.	First, the Chair shall notify the accused of the complaint.	
361 362	ii.	Second, the Chair shall notify the Board of the complaint. The Board shall determine if the complaint appears to merit formal investigation.	
363 364 365 366	iii.	If the Board deems the complaint to merit formal investigation, the Board shall set the parameters for the investigation. The investigation should seek the accused/employee's response as well as the statements of the grievant and witnesses.	
367 368 369 370 371	iv.	If a preliminary investigation is begun, the written complaint and documents relating to the investigation are confidential, pursuant to Fla. Stat. §§ 119.07(3)(p) & (u), 231.291(3)(a)1 1012.31, and 231.262(1)(a) 1012.796, until the investigation is either concluded or ceases to be active.	
372	V.	To conduct the investigation, the Board may consider:	
373 374 375		A. retaining outside special counsel (which should be an attorney or law firm that is not currently retained by the Board and has not handled any matters for or against the Board within the past five years);	
376 377		B. requesting the personnel-investigation department of another Florida school district to conduct the inquiry;	
378		C. contracting with the DOE Office of Inspector General; or	
379 380		D. if applicable, referring the matter to the State Attorney's Office, the Commission on Ethics, or other applicable state agency.	
381 382	vi.	The Board and the employee should receive the final investigative report at the same time.	
383 384 385 386	vii.	Upon receiving the report, the Board shall determine whether any action is required. The accused/employee and/or the employee's representative shall have a right to address the Board at the meeting where the decision will be made.	
387 388 389 390 391 392	viii.	Consistent with the employment contract, if informal action such as a reprimand is deemed necessary, such action may be reflected in the employee's evaluation and personnel file. In accordance with the employment contract, if formal action such as demotion, suspension, or termination is deemed necessary, the employee shall receive appropriate notice and opportunity for a hearing under Fla. Stat. §§ 120.569 and	

393 394	120.57, and the Board's final order may be appealable pursuant to Fla. Stat. § 120.68.
395 396	STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Fla. Stat. §§ 230.22(2); 230.23(22); 230.23005(11); 231.001 <u>1001.41; 1001.42; 1001.43; 10012.23</u>
397	LAWS IMPLEMENTED: Fla. Stat. §§ 119.07(3)(p) & (u); 228.2001; 230.22(1); 231.001;
398	231.291; 231.262(1) 1001.41; 1012.23; 1012.31; 1012.796
399	HISTORY: 3/11/87; 9/22/99; 11/11/02;/2010

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Legal Signoff:		
The Legal Departm for development by		osed Policy 3.31 and finds it legally sufficient
Attorney	 Date	