

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR
FILING, PROCESSING AND RESOLVING COMPLAINTS
ALLEGING DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION**

This Grievance Procedure is applicable to complaints of discrimination involving race, color, national origin, religion, disability, veteran status, age or genetic information. It is not applicable to sex discrimination or sexual harassment and, complaints related to these areas are addressed by Northwest Tech's policy *Title IX—Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment*.

Definitions

Complaint: A written or verbal complaint alleging any action, policy, procedure or practice that discriminates on the basis of race, color, sex, pregnancy, gender, gender expression or identity, national origin, religion, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, or genetic information (including harassment and retaliation).

Grievant: Any person enrolled in or employed by the technology center or a parent/guardian of a minor student, or member of the public who submits a complaint alleging discrimination based on race, color, sex, pregnancy, gender, gender expression or identity, national origin, religion, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, or genetic information (including harassment or retaliation). For purposes of this policy, a parent or guardian's complaint or grievance shall be handled in the same manner as a minor student's complaint.

Coordinator(s): The person(s) designated to coordinate efforts to comply with and carry out responsibilities under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act and any other state and federal laws addressing equal educational opportunity. The Coordinator under Title VI, IX, Section 504/Title II and the Age Act is responsible for processing complaints. The Coordinator of each statutory scheme may be the same person or different persons, but each coordinator will receive relevant training in order to perform his/her duties. Grievances filed pursuant to the technology center's Title IX policy are subject to the Title IX complaint process.

Section 504/Title II Coordinator (for questions or complaints based on disability)

Alva Campus
Northwest Technology Center
580.327.0344
1801 11th Street
Alva, OK 73717

Fairview Campus
Northwest Technology Center
580.227.3708
801 Vo-Tech Drive
Fairview, OK 73737

Title VI Coordinator (for questions or complaints based on race, color and national origin)

Alva Campus
Northwest Technology Center
580.327.0344
1801 11th Street
Alva, OK 73717

Fairview Campus
Northwest Technology Center
580.227.3708
801 Vo-Tech Drive
Fairview, OK 73737

Title IX Coordinator (for questions or complaints based on sex, pregnancy, gender, gender expression or identity)

Alva Campus
Northwest Technology Center
580.327.0344
1801 11th Street
Alva, OK 73717

Fairview Campus
Northwest Technology Center
580.227.3708
801 Vo-Tech Drive
Fairview, OK 73737

Age Act Coordinator (for questions or complaints based on age)

Alva Campus
Northwest Technology Center
580.327.0344
1801 11th Street
Alva, OK 73717

Fairview Campus
Northwest Technology Center
580.227.3708
801 Vo-Tech Drive
Fairview, OK 73737

Any individual who has experienced some other form of discrimination, including discrimination not listed above, may contact:

Superintendent
Northwest Technology Center
580.327.0344
1801 11th Street
Alva, OK 73717

Respondent: The person alleged to be responsible for the alleged discrimination contained in a complaint. The term may be used to designate persons with responsibility for a particular action or those persons with supervisory responsibility for procedures and policies in those areas covered in the complaint.

Day: Day means a working day when the technology center's main administrative offices are open. The calculation of days in complaint processing shall exclude Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays.

Pre-Filing Procedures

Prior to the filing of a written complaint, the student or employee is encouraged to visit with the campus director or the technology center's ADA, Title VI and VII or 504 Coordinator, as applicable, and reasonable effort should be made at this level to resolve the problem or complaint.

Filing, Investigation, Hearing and Review Procedures

The Grievant submits a written or verbal complaint to one of the Coordinators, as applicable, stating the basis, nature and date of the alleged discrimination, harassment or retaliation, the names of persons responsible (where known) and requested action. If the applicable Coordinator is the person alleged to have committed the discriminatory act(s), then the complaint should be submitted to the superintendent for assignment. Complaint forms are available from the offices of the technology center's Coordinators.

The responsible Coordinator conducts a complete and impartial investigation within 10 days of receiving the complaint, to the extent reasonably possible, which shall include but not be limited to, interviewing the Grievant and any witnesses, review of documents and interviewing the Respondent. The Coordinator will ask the Respondent to (a) confirm or deny facts; (b) indicate acceptance or rejection of the Grievant's requested action; and (c) outline alternatives.

The Coordinator will not delay the investigation of the discrimination complaint, even if an outside entity or law enforcement agency is investigating a complaint involving the same facts and allegations, and the Coordinator will not wait for the conclusion or outcome of a criminal investigation or proceeding to begin an investigation required by the technology center's grievance policy. However, a simultaneous investigation by law enforcement may limit or in some instances make it impossible to proceed with the district's investigation. Under no circumstances will the district impede or obstruct a criminal investigation.

As to complaints of discrimination by students, parents/guardians of minors, and school employees, the Coordinator will disclose the complaint, the identity of the Grievant and information regarding the person who allegedly committed the discriminatory act only to the extent necessary to fully investigate the complaint and only when the disclosure is required or permitted by law. If the Grievant wishes to remain anonymous, the Coordinator will advise the Grievant that such confidentiality may limit the technology center's ability to fully respond to the complaint. If the Grievant asks to remain anonymous, the Coordinator will still proceed with the investigation.

Within 5 days after completing the investigation, the applicable Coordinator will issue a written decision to the Grievant and Respondent. The report will include (a) a summary of facts, (b) an analysis of the appropriate legal standards applied to the facts, and (c) findings regarding whether the alleged discrimination occurred. If a finding is made that discrimination occurred, the Coordinator's report shall also contain (a) recommended interim and permanent steps, including examples of the range of possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies available to address the discriminatory effects on the grievant and other, necessary to eliminate the discrimination, prevent its reoccurrence, and remedy its effects, as well as (b) the resources, including medical and counseling resources, that are available to students and witnesses. The decision will be based on a preponderance of evidence standard (i.e., it is more likely than not that the alleged discrimination occurred).

If the Grievant or Respondent is not satisfied with the decision, he or she must notify the applicable Coordinator, in writing, within 5 days and request an appeal to the superintendent. The written appeal shall contain a specific statement explaining the basis for the appeal.

Within 5 days after receiving the appeal request, the applicable Coordinator will refer the matter to the superintendent for a hearing. The Grievant and Respondent will be afforded

similar rights (i.e., timely access to information that will be used at the hearing, opportunity to present his or her side of the story, presentation of character witnesses, review of party statements). If the superintendent is the person alleged to have committed the discriminatory act(s), then a different decision maker will be appointed to maintain impartiality. The Coordinator will schedule the hearing with the Grievant, the Respondent and the superintendent. Advanced written notice of the hearing will be provided to both the Grievant and Respondent so as to provide each reasonable time to prepare for such hearing. The hearing will be conducted within 10 days after the Coordinator refers the matter to the superintendent for hearing.

The superintendent will review the information collected through the investigation and may ask for additional oral or written evidence from the parties and any other individual he or she deems relevant. The applicable Coordinator will make arrangements to audiotape any oral evidence presented.

Within 5 days after completing the investigation the superintendent will issue a written decision to the Grievant and Respondent.

If the Grievant or Respondent is not happy with the decision, he or she must notify the superintendent, in writing, within 5 days, and request an appeal. The written appeal shall contain a specific statement explaining the basis of the appeal.

The superintendent will notify the board of education, in writing, within 5 days after receiving the appeal. Within 30 days from the date of notification to the board of education the board will designate an impartial hearing officer to oversee the appeal. The hearing officer will act as an appellate official by reviewing the decisions and the evidence presented below, holding a hearing within 10 days to consider any additional evidence the parties may wish to present. The hearing officer will make arrangements to audiotape any oral evidence presented. The hearing officer will issue a written decision within 5 days of the hearing to both Grievant and Respondent. The decision of the hearing officer is a final decision.

General Provisions

Duty of Technology Center Employees to Report Alleged Discrimination: Technology center employees, supervisors and administrators are required to immediately report any complaints, reports, observations, or other information of alleged discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, to the designated Coordinator, even if that technology center employee is investigating the alleged discrimination as part of the technology center's student or employee disciplinary process, and provide the Complainant with information for filing a complaint form if requested, and contact information for the technology center's designated Coordinator. If the technology center is using its disciplinary procedures to investigate and resolve an alleged discrimination complaint, those disciplinary procedures will comply with the technology center's standards for a prompt and equitable grievance procedure.

Extension of Time: Any time limits set by these procedures may be extended by mutual consent of the parties involved. The total number of days from the date the complaint is filed until the board of education issues a final decision shall be no more than 120 days.

Access to Regulations: Upon request, the Coordinator shall provide copies of any policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, pregnancy, gender, gender

expression or identity, national origin, religion, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, or genetic information.

Confidentiality of Records: Complaint records will remain confidential, to the extent allowed by law, unless permission is given by the parties involved to release such information. All complaint records will be kept separate from any other records of the technology center. No complaint record shall be entered in any personnel file unless adverse employment action is taken against an employee. Complaint records shall be maintained on file for three years after complaint resolution.

Representation: The Grievant and the Respondent may have a representative assist them through the grievance process and accompany them to any hearing.

Corrective Action: After all facts and circumstances are reviewed, the technology center shall take any and all disciplinary actions to prevent further harassment or discrimination. Possible disciplinary or remedial actions include, but are not limited to: education, training and counseling, transfer, and/or suspension of a secondary student, expulsion of an adult student, and education, training, counseling, transfer, suspension and/or termination of an employee.

Retaliation: The technology center prohibits retaliation, intimidation, threats, or coercion of any person for opposing discrimination or for participating in the technology center's discrimination complaint process or making a complaint, testifying, assisting, appealing, or participating in any other discrimination complaint proceeding or hearing. The technology center will take steps to prevent the alleged perpetrator or anyone else at the technology center from retaliating against the alleged victim or any person who acts to oppose discrimination or participates in the complaint process. These steps include notifying students and employees that they are protected from retaliation, making sure that victims know how to report future problems and making follow-up inquiries to see if there have been any new incidents. If retaliation occurs, the technology center will take strong responsive action.

Basis of Decision: At each step in the grievance procedure, the decision maker will take or recommend the taking of appropriate measures based on the facts, as revealed by the investigation and hearing, taken as a whole, and the totality of the circumstances, such as the nature, extent, context and gravity of the activities or incidents. Any disciplinary decision will be made as a proportional response to the violation.

Designees: The designation of a technology center official responsible for prescribed actions shall automatically include the official's designee in instances where an official is unable, unavailable or it appears that the official may have a conflict of interest that causes the official to recuse from involvement in the matter. The designee shall have the same authority as the official in matters involving this policy and the duties it imposes.

Section 504 Due Process Procedures: For information concerning the impartial hearing and review procedures under Section 504, the Grievant should contact:

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Northwest Technology Center
580.327.0344
1801 11th Street
Alva, OK 73717

Fairview Campus
Northwest Technology Center
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801 Vo-Tech Drive
Fairview, OK 73737

Notice: The technology center will notify all students, parents or guardians, members of the public and employees of the name, office and telephone number of each Coordinator and this Grievance Procedure in writing via school publications and/or postings at each campus to which employees or students are assigned.

Outside Assistance: Individuals may also file complaints alleging discrimination, harassment or retaliation with the Office of Civil Rights. The OCR may be contacted at:

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
One Petticoat Lane
1010 Walnut Street, Suite 320
Kansas City, MO 64106
(816) 268-0550
(816) 268-0599 (Fax)
(877) 521-2172 (TTY)
E-mail: OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov