



Banning Lewis Ranch Academy

Stakeholder Grievance Policy and Procedure

PURPOSE AND SCOPE. Banning Lewis Ranch Academy (BLRA) and Banning Lewis Preparatory Academy (BLPA) strive to be proactive in promoting a positive culture and open communication between our school and its stakeholders. The following policy and procedures apply to grievances, including complaints, concerns, or conflicts of any type that a stakeholder seeks to resolve. The administration and the BLRA Board of Directors are committed to addressing and resolving grievances in a timely and efficient manner. The grievance process may be used for any situation occurring within the operation, or normal procedures of the school, which causes a student, parent or guardian of a BLRA or BLPA student, staff member, or other stakeholder to believe that there has been a violation, misapplication, or misinterpretation of school or Board policy, or state or federal law or regulation.

The Board places great trust in the staff and administration to manage the affairs of the school and to serve our school community. This grievance process should be used only for genuine complaints, concerns, or conflicts that require the attention of the administration, such as Principals, the ACCEL Regional Vice President, or the Board of Directors, and should not be used for simple disagreements that can be addressed informally.

SCHOOL BOARD INVOLVEMENT. Grievances should be handled at the lowest level, and elevated only if necessary to achieve resolution. The Board of Directors will not typically review grievances based on the discretionary day-to-day decision-making or good faith judgment calls made by faculty or administrators, unless there is clear evidence of bias, misconduct, misapplication of policy, or a need to address a substantial issue. While stakeholders may present concerns to the Board during the Public Comment portion of a regular Board meeting, the Board will not address those as grievances unless the process within this policy is being used. If the stakeholder cannot achieve a satisfactory resolution after discussions with BLRA or BLPA administrators, the stakeholder may submit a grievance form to the ACCEL Regional Vice President (RVP) and the Board of Directors for their consideration.

PRINCIPLES FOR RESOLUTION OF CONCERNS. Direct communication between parties is the preferred method of resolving a disagreement. Stakeholders are expected to attempt to resolve concerns by speaking directly with the individual with whom the disagreement exists before escalating concerns, and ultimately submitting a formal grievance. Stakeholders should understand that:

1. While the administration and Board of Directors seeks to support and assist individual families, all decisions must factor in the impact on other students and staff, and decisions should be consistent with school policies and procedures.
2. The Board of Directors expects school administrators to make judgment calls. Generally speaking, judgment calls will not be overturned at a higher level without compelling reasons.

3. Privacy laws or confidentiality requirements may prohibit the disclosure of discipline measures taken with staff or with students, which can be frustrating for both parents and administrators.

TIMELINES. School leadership will seek to respond to grievances in a timely manner. The timelines in the attached procedure, at the discretion of the staff member at each level, may be altered to enable a thorough review or to allow for an outside investigation, (e.g., Office of Civil Rights, Law Enforcement.). Any time extensions should be communicated to the concerned parties as soon as practical.

Attachments:

1. Grievance Process
2. Grievance Form

Adopted: Jan 17, 2023

Last Revised: N/A, new policy

Prior Revised Dates: N/A, new policy

Attachment 1. Grievance Process

This procedure and chart describe the process and timelines for stakeholders to address concerns.

- A. **Initial Concern Addressed with Staff Member.** A stakeholder such as a student, parent, guardian, or employee should attempt to resolve concerns promptly with the staff member concerned via direct communications such as e-mail, in person, or phone. Teachers and coaches are examples of staff members to address first. The staff member should clearly articulate a decision and the rationale.
- B. **Elevated Concern with School Administration.** If the stakeholder is unsatisfied with the decision, the stakeholder can elevate the concern to someone in school administration. For an academic or behavioral concern, this would be an assistant principal or the dean. For a school sports program concern, this would be the Athletic Director. The administrator will seek out perspectives from those involved and schedule a meeting with relevant parties (either a combined or separate meetings with the relevant parties). A decision will be documented in writing and sent to the relevant parties.
- C. **Elevated Concern to a Principal.** If the stakeholder is unsatisfied with the administrator's decision, the stakeholder can elevate the concern to a Principal. The Principal will seek out perspectives from those involved and schedule a combined meeting with relevant parties. Only the parent, guardian, or someone acting in loco parentis shall be permitted to join or represent a student in the conference. If a teacher or coach is involved, that person must also be present. A decision will be documented in writing and sent to the relevant parties.
- D. **Grievance Level 1 – Appeal to ACCEL Schools Regional Vice President (RVP).** If the grievance remains after meeting with the Principal, the grievant may submit a formal grievance form to appeal to the RVP (see Attachment 2 Grievance Form). The RVP will seek out perspectives from those involved, identify additional paths or approaches to help resolve the dispute, and schedule a combined meeting with relevant parties. Only the parent, guardian, or someone active in loco parentis shall be permitted to join or represent a student in the conference with the RVP. The Principal and teacher/coach, will be present as well. A decision will be documented in writing and sent to the relevant parties, with a copy sent to the Board of Directors.
- E. **Grievance Level 2 – Appeal to the Board of Directors.** If the grievance is still not resolved the grievant may appeal the RVP's decision to the Board of Directors by submitting a new Grievance Form. Upon receipt of the form, the Board President will designate a Board Member to contact the grievant and make a recommendation to the Board President about whether the matter should be included in a board session agenda.
 - a. If the Board declines to hold a review, the Board President will notify the grievant in writing with the rationale.
 - b. If the Board decides to hear the appeal, the Board President will determine at which session the case will be heard, either at an upcoming work session or regular session, and occurring within 30 days from form submission. Depending on the sensitivity of the matter, the Board may hear the case in an open session, or in a closed Executive session if the situation meets statutory criteria for Executive Session. All materials should be provided to the Board as soon as possible to enable them to review the case before the meeting. The Board will notify the grievant and RVP of the meeting date and direction for the relevant parties to present their cases, typically allowing 10 minutes per side. The Board will make their decision and, if appropriate due to not violating individual confidentiality, publish it within the Board meeting minutes for that session.

- F. District 49 Grievance Process. A stakeholder may submit a grievance to District 49 using their online form. D49 representatives will assign a D49 staff administrator to address the concern.
- G. The following table lists the steps and associated response timelines.

Initial Attempts to Resolve Disagreement Directly with the Relevant BLRA or BLPA Staff Member:			
Initial Concern – Staff Member	Within 30 calendar days of incident, Stakeholder will contact the Staff Member with their concern.	Staff member will schedule a discussion with the Stakeholder to occur within 7 days of being notified.	Staff member may verbalize or write their decision.
If Direct Engagement Does Not Resolve the Concern:			
Elevated Concern - School Administrator (e.g., Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, Athletic Director)	Within 14 calendar days of the Staff Member’s decision, Stakeholder contacts a school administrator to elevate the concern.	Administrator contacts Stakeholder within 3 working days of receipt of notice to arrange a meeting within 7 calendar days.	Administrator renders decision in writing within 7 calendar days after meeting.
If Elevated Concern is Not Resolved with the Administrator:			
Elevated Concern - Principal	Within 14 calendar days of the administrator’s decision, Stakeholder contacts the Principal to elevate the concern.	Principal contacts Stakeholder within 3 working days of receipt of notice to arrange a meeting within 7 calendar days.	Principal renders decision in writing within 7 calendar days after meeting.
If Concern Remains after Discussions with the Principal:			
Grievance Level 1 - ACCEL Regional Vice President (RVP)	Within 14 calendar days of the decision from the Principal, Stakeholder submits a Grievance Form	RVP contacts Stakeholder within 3 working days of receipt of Grievance Form to arrange a meeting within 7 calendar days	RVP renders decision in writing within 7 calendar days after meeting, and notifies the School Board
If Concern Remains after Decision from RVP:			
Grievance Level 2 - Board of Directors	Within 14 calendar days of the decision from the RVP, Stakeholder submits a new Grievance Form and requests an appeal from the Board of Directors	Board President assigns a Board member to contact the grievant and to make a recommendation to the Board President on whether the Board should hear the case. The Board determines if/when to hear the case, such as at the next scheduled work or regular session.	The Board will make its decision in a public session, with the decision rendered in writing as part of the meeting minutes.

Attachment 2. Grievance Form

Instructions. This form may be submitted online [Banning Lewis Academy Grievance Form \(google.com\)](#) or it can be sent in an email to the Board of Directors at boardblra@blracademy.org with “Formal Grievance” in the Subject line. If you have not attempted to resolve your concern directly with the staff member involved, a school administrator, and the Principal, please do so before you initiate this form. Grievances at Level 1 or 2 will not be responded to if the initial steps of good faith attempts at resolution at the lowest levels have not been taken.

Today’s Date:

Name of Person Initiating this Grievance:

Relationship to Banning Lewis Academy (e.g., Parent, Guardian, Employee, Community Member, Other):

Phone Number:

Email Address:

If grievance involves a student matter, please provide the name of the student(s):

Please provide a summary of your grievance:

Please cite the policy, law, or other guidance that you believe was violated:

Please describe your attempts to seek resolution of this concern and the decisions rendered:

Please describe why you are not satisfied with those decisions:

Please describe your requested resolution: