A student grievance is a formal written allegation or charge against the College District or a College District employee regarding a College District-related problem or condition that a student believes to be unfair, inequitable, discriminatory, or a hindrance to the educational process.

The student grievance procedure is not intended to supplant the Student Conduct System, which allows the student procedural due process in disciplinary proceedings initiated by the College District. The student grievance procedure is designed to provide the student with the opportunity to file a grievance, as defined above, and to provide a process for resolution of the grievance. A student may file a grievance concerning a policy, procedure, rule, or grade if discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or age is the basis for the grievance.

The student grievance procedure is not applicable to complaints of sexual misconduct, as described in FFDA(LOCAL). Student grievances or complaints involving sexual misconduct shall be governed by FFDA(LOCAL) and FFDA(REGULATION).

The student grievance procedure is not designed to address changes in policy nor does it apply to grading practices. Recommendations for initiating new policy or changing established policy are generally handled through normal administrative channels. A grade dispute that is not based on an allegation of discrimination is handled under FLDB(LOCAL).

Every effort should be made to resolve a grievance informally between the student and the College District employee most directly involved or responsible for the condition that brought about the grievance or, such efforts failing, by the employee’s supervisor. When an issue cannot be resolved informally, students may avail themselves of the formal grievance process.

A student may submit a formal grievance by submitting an online grievance form, available through the Student Services website, or filing a written grievance with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Office (SRRO).

A student must submit the student’s grievance, along with any supporting documentation, within 30 days of the date of the incident that is the subject of the grievance, or the date of written notice to the student of the action that is the subject of the grievance. Exceptions to the 30-day limit will be considered by the SRRO only in extraordinary circumstances.

Once filed, the grievance will be reviewed and investigated by a Student Conduct Officer, who will render a decision based on the
good judgment of a reasonable person. A grievance that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed, but may be refiled with all required information, provided it is re-filed within the designated time for filing. The College District prohibits retaliation against a student for filing or assisting with the filing of a grievance.

The formal grievance process has a maximum of three levels of review, including appeal. The entire process should take no longer than 30 business days. Should the process need to exceed 30 days, the parties to the grievance shall be notified in writing. The process includes:

1. First Level of Review: The SCO shall conduct the first level of review. The SCO, upon receipt of a formal grievance, shall re-view the allegations included in the grievance and any supporting documentation. As deemed necessary and appropriate, the SCO will meet with the grievant and any related parties, collect and review relevant documents and consult with appropriate departments. The SCO will render a decision regarding the allegations contained in the grievance within ten business days of its filing. If the student is not satisfied with the grievance resolution, the student may appeal to the second level of review. Appeals to the second level must be submitted in writing to the SRRP within five business days of the decision date.

2. Second Level of Review: When the grievance cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the student at the First Level of Review, the student may appeal in writing to the Dean of Students by submitting an electronic appeal form. The appeal, the grievance, and the decision of the SCO shall be forwarded to the Dean for consideration. The Dean has authority to require production of documents and/or the appearance of witnesses as may be relevant to and necessary for the review. The Dean shall render a decision in writing within five business days of receipt of the appeal. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student may submit a final appeal.

3. Final Appeal: A student who wishes to appeal the decision of the Dean must submit the request for appeal and its basis in writing to the SCO within five business days of the date of the decision notice. Final appeals will be forwarded for review and considered by the appropriate Vice Chancellor or a designee. The Vice Chancellor or designee will render a decision within five business days of receipt of the appeal.

Board Action

By law, the Board is not required to take any action concerning a grievance but is required to listen if the grievance is presented at a
public meeting. Under the Texas Constitution, any student may present a grievance to the Board regardless of the scope of this policy.

Records Retention

Retention of records related to a grievance shall be in accordance with the College District's record retention procedures. [See CIA]