

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
April 21, 2016

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

02. Action: Approval to begin Administrative Procedures Act process: To establish Part 3, Chapter 99, Rule 99.1 - Title IX Grievance Policy [Goal 1 - MBE Strategic Plan]

Executive Summary

This effort will align the grievance policy for Schools under the governance of the Mississippi Department of Education for Title IX Discrimination grievances/complaints. Upon concluding the Administrative Procedures Act process, the grievance policy will go into effect for the upcoming school year, and will be made reference to in the 2016-2017 school year handbooks as follows:

Right to Express Concerns, Complaints or Grievances

Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment must be handled in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Mississippi Department of Education Board Policy Part 3, Chapter 99, Rule 99.1.

In subsequent school years, the full policy will be printed in each school's handbook.

This item references Goal 1 of the *Mississippi Board of Education 2016-2020 Strategic Plan*.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

**PROPOSED
TITLE IX GRIEVANCE POLICY
for Schools Under the Governance of the
Mississippi Department of Education's Board**

Mississippi School for the Arts
Mississippi School for the Blind
Mississippi School for the Deaf
Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science

Right to Express Concerns, Complaints or Grievances

Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment must be handled in accordance with the procedures set forth in the *Title IX Grievance Policy* and accompanying *Title IX Grievance Forms*. Mississippi schools under the governance of the Mississippi Department of Education's Board are committed to maintaining a school community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential.

It is the policy of the Mississippi Board of Education and the Mississippi Department of Education to maintain a safe and supportive learning and educational environment that is free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination.

Administrative Decisions: The following procedures are to be followed when submitting student/parent/guardian grievances regarding administrative decisions. Prior to submitting a formal grievance, a student/parent will express his or her concern to the school level administrator for resolution.

Level 1: If the student/parent/guardian deems the resolution unsatisfactory, the student/parent/guardian shall submit his or her initial written grievance to the student's principal. In the event that the grievance is alleged against a school administrator other than the Principal, the Principal shall investigate allegations as soon as circumstances allow, but not later than five (5) work days of submission of the original written grievance. The Principal shall discuss with the student/parent/guardian the nature of the grievance and any action that the Principal believes should be taken to resolve the concern of the student/parent/guardian. The Principal shall provide a written response to the student/parent/guardian no later than ten (10) work days after receipt of the student/parent/guardian's original written grievance. If there is no administrative response to the student/parent/guardian grievance within the ten (10) work days, or if the response is unsatisfactory, the grievance is elevated to Level 2.

In the event that the grievance is alleged against the Principal or the Principal deems the matters outside the scope of his or her authority, the student/parent/guardian may proceed directly to Level 2.

Level 2: If the student/parent/guardian desires further review of his or her grievance, then the student/parent/guardian must submit a copy of the grievance to the Superintendent of the school or the Superintendent's designee, along with a written statement detailing the student/parent/guardian's reasons for dissatisfaction with the decision of the Principal. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall investigate and review the matter. The investigation shall include the original written complaint and the Principal's response. After review, the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall provide a written response to the student/parent/guardian postmarked no later than ten (10) work days following receipt of the grievance form.

If there is no response by the Superintendent of the school or the superintendent's designee to the student/parent/guardian grievance within the ten (10) work days, or if the response is unsatisfactory to the student/parent/guardian, the student/parent/guardian may advance the grievance to Level 3.

Level 3: The student/parent/guardian, after review of the written response from the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee, may appeal that response to the State Superintendent or the State Superintendent's designee no later than ten (10) work days after receipt of the written communication at Level 2. The State Superintendent or the State Superintendent's designee shall review the grievance and shall provide the student/parent/guardian a written response postmarked within ten (10) work days following the receipt of the appeal. The decision of the State Superintendent shall be final.