

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD**

<p><b>Charter Actions Requiring a Vote</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Approve a Charter Application</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Approve a Charter Renewal (15 yrs.)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Approve Charter Continuance (5 or 10 yrs.)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Approve a Charter Amendment Request</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Approve a Charter Agreement</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Give a Charter Notice of Concern</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Lift the Charter Notice of Concern</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Commence Charter Revocation Proceedings</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Revoke a Charter</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Board Action, Other _____</li></ul>	<p><b>Non-Voting Board Items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing Item</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Read into Record</li></ul>
<p><b>Policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open a New Policy or Changes to a Policy for Public Comment</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Approve a New Policy</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Approve Revisions to an Existing Policy</li></ul>	

**PREPARED BY:**        **Theresa Kemp – Specialist; Equity, Audits, and Support Team**

**SUBJECT:**            **Open for Public Comment: Revisions to the DC Public Charter School Board Community Complaints Policy**

**DATE:**                **October 19, 2020**

---

**Proposal**

The DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) staff recommends its Board open for public comment revisions to the Community Complaints Policy (Attachment A). Public comment will remain open until November 19, 2020, with a public hearing on November 16, 2020. The Board is scheduled to vote on the proposal at its meeting on December 14, 2020.

**Summary of Revisions**

DC PCSB staff has revised the Community Complaint Policy to update the process for responding to complaints; explain how complaints may be escalated; clarify what interventions DC PCSB staff may employ for specific types of complaints; elaborate on how complaints will be closed; and ensure alignment to DC PCSB’s Data and Document Submission Policy (Attachment B). Key revisions are summarized in the table below.

Revised Policy	Current Policy	Rationale for Change
Explanation provided that escalation may occur in cases including where allegations are systemic, allegations include serious health/safety issues, and/or the school is non-responsive or has not made an effort to address the complaint	Not included	To ensure schools know what circumstances may lead to further DC PCSB intervention
Escalation activities explained, including early warning or out of compliance notice, desk or on-site audit, unannounced visits, meeting with DC PCSB staff or Board, and/or Notice of Concern	Not included	To ensure intervention steps are clearly defined and aligned to existing DC PCSB policies
Recommendation to consider informal mediation	Not included	To ensure the complainant and the school have exhausted all possibilities when seeking resolution
Shortened timeline for schools to respond to complainants with time sensitive grievances	“Within five business days, the school must respond to DC PCSB via email or phone acknowledging receipt of the complaint and provide information regarding the steps the school has taken to address the concern.”	To ensure schools respond to complaint right away, especially with time sensitive issues (e.g., student cannot access the learning program)

Revised Policy	Current Policy	Rationale for Change
Updated language on how DC PCSB will close out a complaint	“DC PCSB considers a complaint ‘closed’ when the school has documented that it has made a good faith effort to address the concern.”	To provide a clearer definition of “good faith effort” and account for instances in which the complainant remains dissatisfied with a school’s response

**Background**

On September 30, 2011, DC PCSB voted to adopt the Parent Complaint Policy. On October 26, 2015, DC PCSB voted to revise the policy and change the name to the “Community Complaints Policy.” Under that policy, parents/guardians, staff, and community members have the opportunity to reach out to DC PCSB should they have a complaint against a school. The primary goal is to ensure that the school has (a) followed its complaint process in order to address the complainant’s concern (see D.C. Code § 38-1802.04(c)(13)); (b) is in compliance with its charter and charter agreement; and (c) has not violated any applicable laws.

**Attachments**

- Attachment A: Revised Community Complaint Policy (Redlined)
- Attachment B: Data Document and Submission Policy