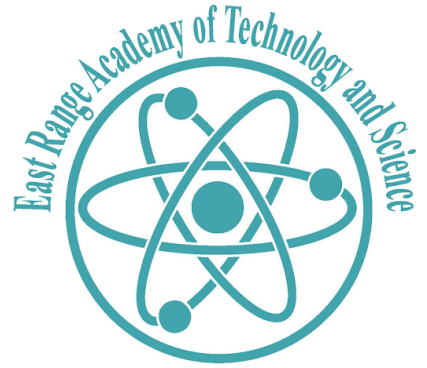


Board Policy
505
**Prohibition Against Unfair
Discriminatory Practices in Education
and Grievance Procedures**



Adopted: 10/2/2017

Revised:

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish definitions, reporting processes, grievance and investigation procedures regarding claims of unfair discriminatory practices in education.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Board of East Range Academy of Technology and Science to prohibit any student, employee or agent from discriminating against, or engaging in unlawful discriminatory conduct with regard to, an East Range Academy student through conduct (e.g., physical, oral, graphic or written) that is based upon that student's race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex/gender, sexual orientation, disability, status with regard to public assistance, marital status or age [hereinafter referred to as "protected class"] as defined by this policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Disability. "Disability" means any condition or characteristic that renders a person a disabled person. A disabled person is any person who (1) has a physical, sensory, or mental impairment which materially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.
- B. Discriminate. The term "discriminate" includes segregate or separate and, for purposes of discrimination based on sex, it includes sexual harassment. It also includes:
 - 1. An "unfair discriminatory practice", as described in Minn. Stat. §§363A.13, 363A.14 and 363A.15;

2. Any violation of federal laws prohibiting discrimination in education (including “Title IX”; “Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973” and the “Americans with Disabilities Act”).
- C. National Origin. “National origin” means the place of birth of an individual or of any of the individual's lineal ancestors.
- D. Sexual Harassment. “Sexual harassment” includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:
1. Submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining education;
 2. Submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's education;
 3. That conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's employment or education or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.
- E. Sexual Orientation. “Sexual orientation” means having or being perceived as having an emotional, physical, or sexual attachment to another person without regard to the sex of that person or having or being perceived as having an orientation for such attachment, or having or being perceived as having a self-image or identity not traditionally associated with one's biological maleness or femaleness.

IV. APPLICABILITY OF THIS POLICY

- A. The anti-discrimination laws and this policy apply to all of the academic and nonacademic (e.g. athletic, and extracurricular) programs of East Range Academy, whether conducted in school facilities or elsewhere.
- B. For purposes of this policy, any student who is discriminated against, including being subjected to violence, by peers or East Range Academy employees or agents based upon that student’s membership in a protected class, may file a complaint as described more fully in section VI below.
- C. For purposes of this policy, any East Range Academy student who is harassed or discriminated against, including being subjected to violence by students or East Range Academy employees based upon that student’s membership in a protected class may file a complaint as described more fully in section VI below.

V. PROHIBITED PRACTICES

A. Non-Discrimination in programs and benefits.

East Range Academy will not discriminate in any manner in the full utilization of or benefit from any of the services it renders to any person because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability. East Range Academy will also ensure physical and program access for disabled persons. "Program access" includes but is not limited to providing taped texts, interpreters or other methods of making orally delivered materials available, readers in libraries, adapted classroom equipment, and similar auxiliary aids or services. Program access does not include providing attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature.

B. Exclude, expel, or selection.

East Range Academy will not exclude, expel, or otherwise discriminate against a person seeking admission as a student, or a person enrolled as a student because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability.

C. Admission form or inquiry.

East Range Academy will not make or use a written or oral inquiry, or form of application for admission that elicits or attempts to elicit information, or to make or keep a record, concerning the creed, religion, sexual orientation, or disability of a person seeking admission, except as permitted by rules of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights.

D. Purpose for information and record.

East Range Academy will not make or use a written or oral inquiry or form of application that elicits or attempts to elicit information, or to keep a record concerning the race, color, national origin, sex, age, or marital status of a person seeking admission, unless the information is collected for purposes of evaluating the effectiveness of recruitment, admissions, and other educational policies, and is maintained separately from the application.

VI. COMPLIANCE OFFICER DESIGNATIONS, REPORTING PROCEDURES

- A. East Range Academy will investigate all complaints, formal or informal, oral or written, of discrimination or unlawful discriminatory conduct based upon a student's membership in a protected class.

B. Title IX Coordinator.

Pursuant to Title IX, East Range Academy designates the HR Specialist to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under the regulations, including Title IX complaint investigation (Title IX Coordinator) and Section 504 compliance.

C. Human Rights Officer Designation.

1. The Board of East Range Academy hereby designates the HR Specialist as the school's human rights officer to receive reports or complaints of discrimination, harassment or violence based upon a student's membership in a protected class.
2. If the complaint involves the designated human rights officer, the complaint will be filed directly with the Director.

D. Reporting Procedures

For purposes of meeting state and federal reporting requirements, the following reporting procedure will be made available for students and staff who wish to report an incident(s) that may involve discrimination or unlawful discriminatory conduct, based upon actual or perceived sex/gender status, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, disability, receipt of public assistance or marital status and age.

1. Any individual may make an oral or written report regarding alleged discrimination against a student to any staff supervisor or the Director, who must then submit the oral or written complaint/report to the human rights officer without screening or investigating the credibility of the report. If the Director is not available on the date of the report, or if the Director is the subject of the complaint, then the school official receiving the report must forward the oral or written report/complaint directly to the human rights officer.
 2. If the report was given orally, the staff supervisor or Director will personally reduce it to written form within 24 hours and forward it to the human rights officer.
 3. If the staff supervisor or the Director fails to forward any harassment or violence report or complaint (written or oral) to the human rights officer within 24 hours, that individual will be subject to disciplinary action.
- E. The human rights officer may request, but not insist, upon a written complaint. The East Range Academy Board encourages the reporting party to complete the complaint form for written complaints. Alternative means of filing a complaint, such as through a personal interview or by audio/video recording, will be made available upon request for qualified persons with a disability.

- F. East Range Academy will conspicuously post the name of the human rights officer(s), Director and Board members, including mailing addresses and telephone numbers as follows:
1. The Human Rights Officer is: -----
 2. Mailing address: 8541 Park Ridge Drive, Mt. Iron, MN 55768
 3. Telephone number: 218-744-7965
 4. Email address: fswanson@mnerats.org
 5. The Director is: Tara Lere
 6. Mailing address: 8541 Park Ridge Drive, Mt. Iron, MN 55768
 7. Telephone number: 218-744-7965
 8. Email address: tlere@mnerats.org
 9. The East Range Academy Board Chair is: Erin Haglund
 10. Mailing address: 8541 Park Ridge Drive, Mt. Iron, MN 55768
 11. Telephone number: 218-744-7965
 12. Email address: ehaglund@mnerats.org

VII. INVESTIGATION

- A. The human rights officer, Title IX coordinator or designated neutral party, upon receipt of a complaint alleging discrimination, harassment or violence toward a student will promptly undertake an investigation if deemed appropriate. The investigation will be completed within 30 calendar days from receipt of the complaint, unless impractical.
- B. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator.
- C. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, East Range Academy will consider the facts and the surrounding circumstances, such as the nature of the behavior, past incidents or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved, and the context in which the alleged incident occurred.
- D. East Range Academy may take immediate steps to protect the parties involved in the complaint process, pending completion of an investigation of alleged unlawful discrimination of an employee.
- E. Upon completion of the preliminary investigation, a draft report will be made to the Director. If the complaint involves the human rights officer or the Director, the draft report must be filed directly with the East Range Academy Board Chair. The draft report will include the facts, a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated and whether a violation of this policy has occurred, as well as a description of any proposed resolution which may include alternate dispute resolution. The Director, or Board Chair if the complaint

is against the Director, will make a final determination regarding whether or not the complaint is substantiated.

- F. Upon completion of the investigation and upon determination of substantiation by the Director, the human rights officer will inform the complainant/reporter of his or her right to review the written report at the school building where the complainant/reporter is employed in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.
- G. Upon completion of the investigation and upon determination of substantiation by the Director or Board Chair, if the complainant/reporter is a student, the human rights officer will inform the parent/guardian of his or her right to review the written report at the school building where the student reporter is enrolled in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.
- H. East Range Academy will comply with federal and state law pertaining to retention of records.

VIII. APPEAL

If the grievance has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant/reporter, s/he may appeal to the Board Chair within ten (10) school days of receipt of the findings of the investigation. The Board Chair will conduct a review of the appeal and, within ten (10) school days of receipt of the appeal, will affirm, reverse, or modify the findings of the report. The decision of the Board Chair is final, and action will occur as addressed in IX below.

IX. ACTION BASED ON FINDINGS

- A. Upon conclusion of the investigation and receipt of the findings, the school will take appropriate and effective action. If it is determined that a violation of this policy has occurred, such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination or discharge. Actions may also include alternate dispute resolution, including restorative justice programs, school-wide training, counseling, and class transfer. Any action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable contracts, state and federal law, and school policies.
- B. The result of the school's investigation of each complaint filed under these procedures will be reported in writing to the complainant by the school in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.

X. REPRISAL

East Range Academy will take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who reports alleged unlawful discrimination toward an employee or student or any person who testifies, assists, participates in

an investigation or hearing related to alleged unlawful discrimination covered by this policy. Reprisal also includes retaliation against a student or employee who associates with a person or group or persons who members of a protected class. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation or harassment. Reprisal is also prohibited based upon a request for a religious or disability accommodation.

XI. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If there is a conflict of interest with respect to any party affected by this policy, appropriate accommodations will be made, such as, but not limited to, appointing or contracting with a neutral third party investigator to conduct the investigation, or recusal from the process by the person for whom a conflict or potential conflict of interest exists.

XII. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY AND TRAINING

- A. This policy will be conspicuously posted throughout each school building in areas accessible to students and staff members.
- B. This policy will be given to each East Range Academy student at the beginning of each school year, and to each employee and independent contractor at the time of entering into the person's employment contract.
- C. This policy will be included in the employee handbook and the school's student handbook on school policies.
- D. The school has developed the following process for discussing the school's harassment and violence policy with students and school employees:
 - 1. This policy will be reviewed with employees at the time of their hiring and as part of any staff training regarding discrimination.
 - 2. This policy will be reviewed with students at the beginning of the school year or as needed with students who enroll after the start of the school year.
- E. The East Range Academy Board will review this policy periodically for compliance with state and federal law.
- F. East Range Academy will post this policy on its website and ensure that it is easily accessible to view and download.

XIII. RIGHT TO ALTERNATIVE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse which may include filing charges with the agencies below, filing a report with a law enforcement agency, or initiating action in state or federal court. For claims of unlawful discrimination/harassment:

Minnesota Department of Human Rights

Freeman Building
625 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55155
toll free: 800.657.3704
tty: 651.296.1283
fax: 651.296.9042
www.humanrights.state.mn.us

U.S. Department of Education

Office for Civil rights, Region V
500 W. Madison Street- Suite 1475
Chicago IL 60661
Tel: 312.730.1560
TDD: 312.730.1609