Sec. 1. NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Texas Leadership Public Schools (TLPS) strictly prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against an employee on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, pregnancy, or any other legally protected classification. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is also a violation of TLPS policy.

For purposes of this policy, "employee" includes current employees, volunteers and applicants for employment.

Sec. 2. GENERAL NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

a) *Prohibited Conduct*

In this policy, the term "prohibited conduct" includes discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation as defined by this policy, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct.

i. *Prohibited Discrimination*

Discrimination is defined as conduct directed at an employee on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, pregnancy or any other basis prohibited by law that adversely affects his or her employment.

ii. *Prohibited Harassment*

Prohibited harassment of an employee is defined as unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information where:

1. Enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment; or
2. The conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile or abusive.

Harassment may also occur when unwelcome conduct based on an employee's protected characteristic is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

1. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the employee's work performance;
2. Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive work environment; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the employee's performance, environment, or employment opportunities.

Prohibited harassment may include, but is not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, sex, or need for workplace accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name calling, slurs, or rumors;

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physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other stereotypes; or other types of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

iii. *Prohibited Retaliation*

TLPS expressly prohibits retaliation against an employee who makes a claim alleging to have experienced discrimination or harassment, or an employee who, in good faith, makes a report, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates in an investigation.

Examples of retaliation may include termination, refusal to hire, demotion, and denial of promotion. Retaliation may also include threats, unjustified negative evaluations, unjustified negative references, or increased surveillance.

iv. *False Claims*

An employee who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate or participate in an investigation regarding discrimination or harassment is subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

b) *Reporting Prohibited Conduct (Non-Sexual Harassment)*

An employee who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct, or that another employee has experienced prohibited conduct, should immediately report the alleged conduct to the Principal or his or her supervisor, or to one of the school officials identified below.

In this policy, "prohibited conduct" includes discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct.

The reporting procedures in this Section 2 will apply to all allegations of prohibited conduct other than allegations of harassment prohibited by Title IX. For allegations of sex-based harassment that, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX (including sexual harassment), see the procedures below at Section 3, Sexual Harassment Prohibited – Title IX Policy.

i. *Title IX Coordinator*

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating TLPS's efforts to comply with its responsibilities under Title IX with respect to discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment. TLPS designates the following person(s) to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended:

Curtis Milbourn, 3522 West Loop 306, San Angelo, TX 76904
(325) 653-3200, Curtis.Milbourn@TexasLeadership.net

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ii. *ADA/Section 504 Coordinator*

TLPS designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with legal requirements concerning discrimination on the basis of disability:

Gretchen Reichenker, 3522 West Loop 306, San Angelo, TX 76904
(325) 653-3200, Gretchen.Reichenker@texasleadership.net

iii. *Title VII/Age Coordinator*

TLPS designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with legal requirements concerning discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, and age:

Curtis Milbourn, 3522 West Loop 306, San Angelo, TX 76904
(325) 653-3200, Curtis.Milbourn@TexasLeadership.net

iv. *All Other Complaints*

Reports concerning prohibited conduct against the Title IX Coordinator, ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, and/or Title VII/Age Coordinator may be made to the Superintendent or designee. Reports concerning prohibited conduct against the Superintendent or designee may be directed to the Board.

c) *Timely Reporting*

Employees shall report prohibited conduct as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act.

Any supervisor who receives a report of prohibited conduct shall immediately inform the appropriate TLPS official identified above.

d) *Investigating Reports of Prohibited Conduct*

TLPS may request, but not insist upon, a written report describing any alleged prohibited conduct. If a report is made orally, the TLPS official receiving the report shall reduce the report to writing.

After receiving a report or notice of a report, the appropriate Compliance Coordinator shall determine if the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct under this policy. If so, the Compliance Coordinator shall immediately authorize or conduct an investigation, regardless of whether a criminal or regulatory investigation concerning the allegations is pending. The investigation may be conducted by the Compliance Coordinator or designee, or by a third party authorized by TLPS, such as an attorney. The employee's Principal or supervisor shall be notified of the investigation, if appropriate.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews of individuals with knowledge of the allegations, including the person making the report, and the person against whom the report is filed. The investigation may also include consideration of documents or other information concerning the allegations.

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If appropriate, TLPS shall take prompt action to prevent prohibited conduct from occurring during the course of the investigation.

i. *Concluding the Investigation*

Investigations of prohibited conduct should be completed as soon as reasonably possible and appropriate under the circumstances. The investigator shall prepare a written report of the investigation, and provide the report to the TLPS official overseeing the investigation.

ii. *School Action*

If an investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, TLPS shall promptly take appropriate disciplinary or corrective action to address the conduct.

TLPS may also take action following an investigation, even if the alleged conduct did not rise to the level of prohibited or unlawful conduct.

iii. *Confidentiality*

TLPS shall respect the privacy of all individuals involved in a report or investigation of prohibited conduct. Limited disclosures may be necessary.

iv. *Appeal*

A complainant who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may appeal through Board Policy PG-XX (Employee Complaints and Grievances – General).

e) *Records Retention*

Copies of reports alleging prohibited conduct, investigation reports, and other related records shall be maintained for at least three years.

Sec. 3. SEXUAL HARASSMENT PROHIBITED – TITLE IX POLICY

a) *Definitions for Title IX Terms*

i. *Actual Knowledge*

"Actual knowledge" means notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to TLPS's Title IX Coordinator or any TLPS official who has authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of TLPS, or to any employee of an elementary and secondary school. Imputation of knowledge based solely on vicarious liability or constructive notice is insufficient to constitute actual knowledge. This standard is not met when the only official of TLPS with actual knowledge is the respondent (as that term is defined below). The mere ability or obligation to report sexual harassment or to inform a student about how to report sexual harassment, or having been trained to do so, does not qualify an individual as one who has authority to

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institute corrective measures on behalf of TLPS. "Notice" as used in this definition includes, but is not limited to, a report of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator. *34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a)*.

ii. *Complainant*

"Complainant" means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment. *34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a)*.

iii. *Consent*

"Consent" is not currently defined by the Title IX regulations, nor do the regulations require TLPS to adopt a particular definition of consent with respect to sexual assault. *34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a)*.

iv. *Deliberate Indifference Standard*

If TLPS has actual knowledge of sexual harassment in an education program or activity of TLPS against a person in the United States, it must respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent. TLPS is deliberately indifferent only if its response to sexual harassment is clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. *34 C.F.R. § 106.44*.

v. *Education Program or Activity*

For purposes of this Title IX policy, "education program or activity" includes locations, events, or circumstances over which TLPS exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which sexual harassment occurs. *34 C.F.R. § 106.44*.

vi. *Formal Complaint*

"Formal complaint" means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that TLPS investigate the allegation of sexual harassment. At the time of filing a formal complaint, a complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in TLPS's education program or activity. A formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by email, by using the contact information for the Title IX Coordinator provided by TLPS, and by any additional method designated by TLPS. As used in this definition, the term "document filed by a complainant" means a document or electronic submission (such as by email or through an online portal provided for this purpose by TLPS) that contains the complainant's physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicates that the complainant is the person filing the formal complaint. Where the Title IX Coordinator signs a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not a complainant or otherwise a party to the Title IX formal complaint, and must comply with the requirements of the Title IX formal process, including the informal resolution process. *34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a)*.

vii. *Respondent*

"Respondent" means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment. *34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a)*.

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viii. *Sexual Harassment*

"Sexual harassment" means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. An employee of TLPS conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of TLPS on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to TLPS's education program or activity; or
3. "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1091(f)(6)(A)(v); "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(10); "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(8); or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(30).

34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a).

ix. *Supportive Measures*

"Supportive measures" means non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to TLPS's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or TLPS's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. Supportive measures may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other similar measures. TLPS must maintain as confidential any supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair TLPS's ability to provide the supportive measures. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures. *34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a)*.

b) *Requirement to Designate Title IX Coordinator*

TLPS must designate at least one employee as a Title IX Coordinator to coordinate TLPS's efforts to comply with its requirements under Title IX.

c) *Notification of Title IX Policy*

TLPS must notify applicants for admission and employment, students, parents or legal guardians of students, and all professional organizations holding professional agreements with TLPS of the name or title, office address, email address, and telephone number of the employee or employees designated as the Title IX Coordinator.

TLPS must also notify the individuals noted above that TLPS does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education program or activity that it operates, and that it is required under Title IX not to discriminate in such a manner. The notification must also state that the requirement not to discriminate in the education

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program or activity extends to admission and employment, and that inquiries about the application of Title IX to TLPS may be referred to the designated Title IX Coordinator, to the assistant secretary for civil rights of the Department of Education, or both.

34 C.F.R. § 106.8(a), (b)(1).

d) *Handbook Information and Website Postings*

TLPS must prominently display the contact information required to be listed for the Title IX Coordinator and the nondiscrimination policy described in "Notification of Title IX Policy," above, on the TLPS website, if any, and in the Employee Handbook and Student / Parent Handbook.

TLPS may not use or distribute a publication stating that TLPS treats applicants, students, or employees differently on the basis of sex except when such treatment is permitted by Title IX.

34 C.F.R. § 106.8(b)(2).

e) *Reporting Sex Discrimination / Sexual Harassment*

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, whether or not the reporting person is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment. Reports may be made in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email through the contact information listed for TLPS's Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Reports may be made at any time (including during nonbusiness hours) by using the telephone number or email address, or by mail to the office address, listed for the Title IX Coordinator. *34 C.F.R. § 106.8(a)*.

f) *Complaint Procedures*

TLPS must adopt and publish procedures that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited by Title IX, and a formal Title IX complaint process that complies with applicable federal regulations.

TLPS must provide notice to the individuals identified in Sec. 3(c) above of the school's procedures and Title IX formal complaint process, including how to report or file a complaint of sex discrimination, how to report or file a formal complaint of sexual harassment, and how TLPS will respond.

The requirements of this provision apply only to sex discrimination occurring against a person in the United States.

34 C.F.R. § 106.8(c)-(d).

g) *Response by Title IX Coordinator*

The Title IX Coordinator must promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures, consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures, , inform the complainant

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of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint, and explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

i. *Required Supportive Measures*

TLPS's response must treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures and by following a grievance process that complies with the Title IX regulations (*see* Process for Formal Title IX Complaint, Sec. 3(h) below) before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent.

34 C.F.R. § 106.44(a).

ii. *Response to Formal Complaint*

In response to a formal complaint, TLPS must follow a process that complies with the Title IX regulations (*see* Process for Formal Title IX Complaint, Sec. 3(h) below).

34 C.F.R. § 106.44(b)(1).

iii. *Emergency Removals*

TLPS is not precluded from removing a respondent from its education program or activity on an emergency basis, provided that TLPS:

1. Undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis;
2. Determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal; and
3. Provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

This may not be construed to modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

34 C.F.R. 106.44(c).

iv. *Administrative Leave*

TLPS is not prohibited from placing a nonstudent employee respondent on administrative leave during the pendency of a Title IX formal complaint. This does not modify any rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act. *34 C.F.R. § 106.44(d)*.

h) *Process for Title IX Formal Complaint*

For purposes of addressing formal complaints of sexual harassment, TLPS's process must comply with the requirements listed in this section. Any provisions, rules, or practices other than those required by the Title

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IX regulations or this policy that TLPS adopts as part of its process for handling formal complaints of sexual harassment must apply equally to both parties. *34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)*.

TLPS's Title IX formal complaint process must:

1. Treat complainants and respondents equally by providing remedies to a complainant where a determination of responsibility for sexual harassment has been made against the respondent, and by following a process that complies with the Title IX regulations before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent. Remedies must be designed to restore or preserve equal access to TLPS's education program or activity. Such remedies may include the same individualized services described as supportive measures; however, remedies need not be non-disciplinary or non-punitive and need not avoid burdening the respondent.
2. Require an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence—including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence—and provide that credibility determinations may not be based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.
3. Require that any individual designated by TLPS as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or any person designated by TLPS to facilitate an informal resolution process, not to have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent. TLPS must ensure that Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process receive training on the definition of sexual harassment, the scope of TLPS's education program or activity, how to conduct an investigation and Title IX formal complaint process (including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes, as applicable), and how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias. TLPS must ensure that decision-makers receive training on any technology to be used at a live hearing, if any, and on issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant. TLPS must also ensure that investigators receive training on relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence. Any materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process must not rely on sex stereotypes and must promote impartial investigations and adjudications of formal complaints of sexual harassment.
4. Include a presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the Title IX formal complaint process.
5. Include reasonably prompt timeframes for concluding the grievance process, including reasonably prompt timeframes for filing and resolving appeals and informal resolution processes if TLPS offers informal resolution processes, and a process that allows for the temporary delay of the Title IX formal complaint process or the limited extension of time frames for good cause with written notice to the complainant and the respondent of the delay or extension and the reasons for the action. Good cause may include considerations such as the absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.

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6. Describe the range of possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies or list the possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies that TLPS may implement following any determination of responsibility.
7. State whether the standard of evidence to be used to determine responsibility is the preponderance of the evidence standard or the clear and convincing evidence standard, apply the same standard of evidence for formal complaints against students as for formal complaints against employees, including faculty, and apply the same standard of evidence to all formal complaints of sexual harassment.
8. Include the procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal.
9. Describe the range of supportive measures available to complainants and respondents.
10. Not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally-recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.

34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(1).

i. *Notice of Allegations*

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, TLPS must provide the following written notice to the parties who are known:

1. Notice of TLPS's Title IX formal complaint process, including any informal resolution process.
2. Notice of the allegations of sexual harassment potentially constituting sexual harassment, including sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time to prepare a response before any initial interview. Sufficient details include:

    a. The identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known;
    b. The conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment; and
    c. The date and location of the alleged incident, if known.

    The written notice must include a statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the Title IX formal complaint process. The written notice must inform the parties that they may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney and may inspect and review evidence. The written notice must inform the parties of any provision in TLPS's Code of Conduct that prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the Title IX formal complaint process.

If, in the course of an investigation, TLPS decides to investigate allegations about the complainant or respondent that are not included in the notice of allegations, TLPS must provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(2).

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ii. *Dismissal of Formal Complaint*

TLPS must investigate the allegations in a formal complaint.

If the conduct alleged in the formal complaint would not constitute sexual harassment even if proved, did not occur in TLPS's education program or activity, or did not occur against a person in the United States, then TLPS must dismiss the formal complaint with regard to that conduct for purposes of sexual harassment under Title IX; such a dismissal does not preclude action under another provision of TLPS's Code of Conduct.

TLPSmay dismiss the formal complaint or any allegations therein if, at any time during the investigation or hearing (if applicable):

1. A complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein;
2. The respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by TLPS; or
3. Specific circumstances prevent TLPS from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.

Upon a dismissal of a formal complaint, TLPS must promptly send written notice of the dismissal and reason(s) therefore simultaneously to the parties.

34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(3).

iii. *Consolidation of Formal Complaints*

TLPS may consolidate formal complaints as to allegations of sexual harassment against more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances. Where a Title IX formal complaint process involves more than one complainant or more than one respondent, references in this section to the singular "party," "complainant," or "respondent" include the plural, as applicable. *34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(4)*.

iv. *Investigating Formal Complaints*

When investigating a formal complaint and throughout the Title IX formal complaint process, TLPS must:

1. Ensure that the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rest on TLPS and not on the parties, provided that TLPS cannot access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional's or paraprofessional's capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party, unless TLPS obtains that party's voluntary, written consent to do so for a Title IX formal complaint. If a party is not an "eligible student," as defined in the FERPA regulations, TLPS must obtain the voluntary, written consent of a "parent," as defined in the FERPA regulations.

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2. Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.
3. Not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence.
4. Provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any Title IX formal complaint proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related or proceeding by the advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, and attorney, and not limit the choice or presence of the advisor for either the complainant or respondent in any meeting or Title IX formal complaint proceeding; however, TLPS may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties.
5. Provide, to a party whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all hearings (if applicable), investigative interviews, or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.
6. Provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint, including the evidence upon which TLPS does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source, so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation. Prior to completion of the investigative report, TLPS must send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties must have at least ten days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completion of the investigative report. TLPS must make all such evidence subject to the parties' inspection and review available at any hearing (if applicable) to give each party equal opportunity to refer to such evidence during the hearing, including for purposes of cross-examination.
7. Create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence and, at least ten days prior to a hearing (if a hearing is required or otherwise provided) or other time of determination regarding responsibility, send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the investigative report in an electronic format or a hard copy, for their review and written response.

34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(5).

v. *Hearings*

TLPS's Title IX formal complaint process may, but need not, provide for a hearing. With or without a hearing, after TLPS has sent to the investigate report to the parties and before reaching a determination regarding responsibility, the decision-maker(s) must afford each party the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party. With or without a hearing, questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent. The decision-maker(s) must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant. *34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(6)(ii)*.

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vi. *Determination Regarding Responsibility*

The decision-maker(s), who cannot be the same person(s) as the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator(s), must issue a written determination regarding responsibility. To reach this determination, TLPS must apply the same standard of evidence described at "Process for Title IX Formal Complaint, Sec. 3(h) above. The written determination must include:

1. Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment.
2. A description of the procedural steps taken from receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather other evidence, and hearings held (if any).
3. Findings of fact supporting the determination.
4. Conclusions regarding the application of TLPS's Code of Conduct to the facts.
5. A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions TLPS imposes on the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to TLPS's education program or activity will be provided by TLPS to the complainant.
6. TLPS's procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal.

TLPS must provide the written determination to the parties simultaneously. The determination regarding responsibility becomes final either on the date that TLPS provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(7)(i)-(iii).

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies identified in a determination regarding responsibility. *34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(7)(iv)*.

vii. *Appeals*

TLPS must offer both parties an appeal from a determination regarding responsibility, and from TLPS's dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations therein, on the following bases:

1. Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
2. New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination on responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and
3. The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

TLPS may offer an appeal equally to both parties on additional bases.

As to all appeals, TLPS must:

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1. Notify the other party in writing when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties;
2. Ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal is not the same person as the decision-maker(s) that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator;
3. Ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal complies with standards regarding conflict of interest and bias found in the Title IX regulations (as discussed in "Process for Formal Title IX Complaint," Sec. 3(h) above);
4. Give both parties a reasonable, equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome;
5. Issue a written decision describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result; and
6. Provide the written decision simultaneously to both parties.

34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(8).

viii. *Informal Resolution*

TLPS may not require as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continuing employment, or enjoyment of any other right, waiver of the right to an investigation and adjudication of formal complaints of sexual harassment consistent with Title IX. Similarly, TLPS may not require the parties to participate in an informal resolution process and may not offer an informal resolution process unless a formal complaint is filed. However, at any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility, TLPS may facilitate an informal resolution process, such as mediation, that does not involve a full investigation and adjudication.

With respect to informal resolution, TLPS must provide written notice to the parties disclosing:

1. The allegations;
2. The requirements of the informal resolution process including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations, provided, however, that at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint; and
3. Any consequences resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared.

TLPS also must obtain the parties' voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process.

TLPS cannot offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.

34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(9).

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ix. *Recordkeeping*

TLPS must maintain for a period of seven years records of:

1. Each sexual harassment investigation including any determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent, and any remedies provided to the complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to TLPS's education program or activity;
2. Any appeal and the result therefrom;
3. Any informal resolution and the result therefrom; and
4. All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process. TLPS must make these training materials publicly available on its website or, if TLPS does not maintain a website, TLPS must make these materials available upon request for inspection by members of the public.

For each response required under "Response by Title IX Coordinator," Sec. 3(g) above, TLPS must create and maintain for a period of seven years records of any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment. In each instance, TLPS must document the basis for its conclusion that its response was not deliberately indifferent, and document that it has taken measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to TLPS's education program or activity.

If TLPS does not provide a complainant with supportive measures, TLPS must document the reasons why such a response was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. The documentation of certain bases or measures does not limit TLPS in the future from providing additional explanations or detailing additional measures taken.

34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(10).

i) *Retaliation Prohibited*

Neither TLPS nor any other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under Title IX.

Intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, including charges against an individual for Code of Conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination, or a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, constitutes retaliation.

Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the "Process for Formal Title IX Complaint," Sec. 3(h) above.

The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment does not constitute retaliation prohibited by Title IX.

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Charging an individual with a Code of Conduct violation for making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of a Title IX formal complaint proceeding does not constitute retaliation prohibited by Title IX provided, however, that a determination regarding responsibility alone is not sufficient to conclude that any party made a materially false statement in bad faith.

34 C.F.R. § 106.71(a)-(b).

j) ***Confidentiality***

TLPS must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any respondent, and nay witness, except as may be permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") statute, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, or FERPA regulations, 34 C.F.R. part 99, or as required by law, or to carry out the purposes of the Title IX regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 106, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding arising thereunder. *34 C.F.R. § 106.71(a)*.

k) ***Relationship to General Non-Discrimination Policy***

The formal complaint investigation and resolution process outlined above in Sec. 3(h) applies only to formal complaints alleging sexual harassment under Title IX, but not to complaints alleging sex discrimination that do not constitute sexual harassment. Complaints of sex discrimination that do not constitute sexual harassment may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator and will be handled under TLPS's general process for receiving reports of suspected discrimination and harassment, as outlined in Section 2 above.

Sec. 4. DISTRIBUTION OF POLICY

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that this policy and accompanying procedures are made available to all employees through the TLPS Employee Handbook.

Sec. 5. LIABILITY FOR HARASSMENT

TLPS accepts no liability for harassment of any student or employee by another employee. Any TLPS employee who is found to have engaged in prohibited conduct is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

TLPS does not consider conduct in violation of this policy to be within the course and scope of employment or the direct consequences of the discharge of one's duties. Accordingly, to the extent permitted by law, TLPS reserves the right not to provide a defense or pay damages assessed against employees for conduct in violation of this policy.

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