FINAL COURSE AND STUDENT GRADE CHANGE POLICY

The Rio Rancho Public Schools Board of Education acknowledges that uniformly applied rules for correction of erroneous grades are necessary to assure the integrity of final grades and course grades and to assure public confidence in the grading process. Therefore, any course grade change, test grade or assignment grade change which is not made in accordance with the following requirements is deemed a violation of this Policy and will result in disciplinary proceedings against the employee and/or student involved.

I. Statewide Tests/Adequate Yearly Progress/Graduation

Test results on any statewide test used to determine adequate yearly progress or graduation from high school may not be changed unless a grade change is necessary due to a clearly clerical mistake, such as when a student is misidentified. In such circumstances, the Superintendent shall promptly notify the assessment and accountability division of the New Mexico Public Education Department (“PED”) for guidance.

II. Final Course Grade Change

A. If a parent, legal guardian of a student, or a student of legal age (“Requestor”) disputes the accuracy of a final course grade, the Requestor must submit a written request for the final course grade (“course grade”) change, with supporting documentation, in substantially the same form as the school provides. Unless the student is still enrolled in the school district at the time of the course grade change request, the request must be made within fifteen (15) days after the student has exited the school unless extenuating circumstances permit consideration of a longer time. Requests for final course grade changes of students who are currently enrolled shall be made no later than 2 weeks after final course grade reports for that semester have been delivered.

No final course grade change shall be considered for any prior school year unless the school determines that a mathematical error or misidentification of a student has resulted in a failing grade and, but for that error, the student would have received a passing grade.

Not later than five (5) school days after receipt of the request, the principal of the student’s school, or the principal’s designee, shall respond in writing to the request. The response shall state whether the request is denied or allowed, and if allowed, what new grade will be entered. Any grade change must be based on articulated reasons in the response such as extenuating circumstances, additional graded work submitted by the student, additional or make-up testing, or any other meaningful criteria that can be verified.

During the investigation period following receipt of a course grade change request, the principal, or appropriate designee, shall make a good faith attempt to obtain written input from the teacher who
issued the grade in dispute. The teacher shall state reasons to support or oppose the requested grade change and provide any documentation to support the teacher’s reasons. During the investigation period the course grade, as originally entered, shall remain effective for determining a student’s eligibility for participation in extra-curricular activities or other school sponsored activities in which a minimum grade point is required.

No person shall pressure or retaliate against the teacher for making a certain recommendation.

The principal or designee shall be responsible for reviewing the request, approving and signing the final written response to any grade change request and for ensuring that this policy was followed.

The written response shall be mailed to the Requestor by first class mail to the Requestor’s address as shown on the request for grade change form. Posting by mail shall be deemed delivery.

B. The final written response shall also inform the Requestor that he or she has five (5) school days following notification of the written response to request a hearing before the superintendent of the schools, or appropriate designee (“hearing officer”), to appeal the decision. If a hearing request is timely, the hearing officer shall set the hearing within ten (10) school days following receipt of the request and shall give the Requestor at least two (2) school days advance written notice of where and when the hearing will be held. The Requestor, at his or her own expense, may have an attorney or other representative at the hearing.

C. The hearing officer shall render a written decision as soon as possible but no later than five (5) school days after the hearing. The decision shall be based only on evidence presented at the hearing and shall include a summary of this evidence and the reasons for the decisions. No record shall be made at the hearing.

D. If the hearing officer decides to uphold the decision of the principal, or principal’s designee, the Requestor shall be notified of that decision. The Requestor shall have the right to submit to the principal of the school a statement of objection, of not more than one (1) page, to the hearing officer’s decision. Any statement from the Requestor shall be placed in the student’s cumulative record folder, shall be disclosed by the school whenever the contested portion of the cumulative record is disclosed, and shall not be destroyed unless the contested portion of the cumulative record is destroyed.

E. The final course grade change documents shall be maintained in a separate file that is destroyed after the student graduates, transfers from, or otherwise leaves the school.

III. Test Grade or Assignment Grade Change

A Requestor shall first submit a written request the teacher of the class giving a test grade or assignment grade for a grade change. The request shall specify the factual grounds for the request. Any request for a change to a test grade or assignment grade must be made within five (5) school days following receipt of that grade.
The teacher shall respond to the request in writing no later than five (5) school days following the request. A student not of legal age must have his or her parent or legal guardian sign the teacher’s written response acknowledging receipt.

A Requestor who disputes the teacher’s decision on the test grade or assignment may appeal to the principal by submitting a written request for review by the Principal within three (3) school days of the teacher’s decision. The principal shall review the teacher’s decision and underlying documentation and shall render a written decision within five (5) school days. The principal’s decision shall be final and not subject to review.

Pending a final decision, the test or assignment grade, as originally entered shall remain effective for determining a student’s eligibility for participation in extra-curricular activities or other school sponsored activities in which a minimum grade point is required.

IV. General Provisions Any course grade change must be available to all students who are similarly situated.

The school shall strictly adhere to all requirements under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”). Furthermore, nothing stated herein shall in any way limit or eliminate the rights afforded to parents under federal regulations 34 CFR Sections 300.618 through 300.621 under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and 34 CFR Sections 99.20 through 99.22 under FERPA, both as they relate to amendment of a student’s educational records.

Rio Rancho Public Schools
Adopted: September 22, 2008