

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is an informal alternative for resolving disputes involving families of Special Education students. This program brings together parents, teachers and administrators in an informal setting for the purpose of resolving disagreements. It is a process that encourages all parties to "problem solve" and to achieve a mutually beneficial agreement to best meet the needs of individual students.

It is always best to solve problems as close to the source as possible. For instance, if you are concerned that a feature of your IEP is not be implemented, start your discussion with the special education staff responsible for implementation of the IEP. If the two of you are not able to resolve the issue, then you might speak with the Principal or Special Education Administrator. If that is not helpful, you can talk with the Director of Special Education/SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Area) Director, or possibly the Assistant Superintendent of Office of School Support Services.

Many SELPAs have instituted a program of options to assist parents and district in resolving differences in a non-adversarial manner. These options can include Facilitated IEP Meetings and Resolution sessions. These alternative or appropriate methods encourage the use of collaborative strategies that focus on resolving disagreements.

Long Beach Unified School District is committed to helping families and schools resolve issues and conflicts related to special education disputes. Our goal is to assist and intervene early, offering suggestions to resolve concerns. We are proud to offer the following services:

**Facilitated IEP's** – Request an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) neutral facilitator when you are concerned the IEP team meeting may have very challenging issues to resolve.

- **Facilitated I.E.P. meetings**

This voluntary process is one in which an impartial facilitator conducts the meeting. The facilitator uses specific strategies to create an environment in which communication is clear.

A facilitator:

- Develops a meeting agenda and helps set ground rules for the meeting with the team
- Keeps team members focused on developing a satisfactory IEP
- Guides team discussion
- Promotes a mutual problem solving approach
- Builds agreement and working relationships
- Assists team members in resolving differences or conflict

A facilitator does NOT:

- Impose a decision on a group
- Take sides, place blame or decide if an issue is right or wrong
- Facilitate disputes unrelated to the IEP

**Resolution Sessions** – The Resolution Session may be held prior to filing for due process or a compliance complaint. This is a problem solving meeting between parents and the school with the help of an ADR neutral facilitator.

**Professional Development** – The SELPA offers a variety of different workshops and training to meet your needs. Training topics may include the following:

- Communication skills
- Looking at Problems from a different perspective
- Facilitation skills
- Working collaboratively with the IEP team
- Administrative designee training

To access any SELPA ADR service, please contact the following:

Ariana Zambada, Special Education Staff Secretary @ 562-997-8005

Or

Marc Purchin – mpurchin@purchinconsulting.com