



## New York State Special Education Dispute Resolution Center

*Building Understanding, Resolving Conflicts, Supporting Students*

# What is Special Education Mediation?

**Special education mediation** helps schools and families collaborate for student success.

A **neutral mediator** trained in both mediation and special education facilitates communication to resolve issues.

**Mediation** is **free, voluntary, confidential**, and provides a safe space for open discussion.

Mediators do not take sides, offer legal advice, or impose decisions. Instead, they assist parties in reaching the best solution for the child.

# What issues can be brought to mediation?

- **Identification/Classification** of special education needs
- **Evaluation** of a student's eligibility for special education services
- **Recommendations for special education services**
- **Educational placement**
- **Disciplinary actions** for students with disabilities
- **Attorney's fees** related to special education disputes
- **Other matters** under Federal and State Special Education Law and Regulations (excluding due process hearing requests)

# Why choose mediation?

- **Joint problem solving:** Parties create their own solutions, fostering commitment.
- **Free of charge:** Funded by NYSED at no cost to parents, guardians, or schools.
- **Improved communication:** Mediators clarify interests for better understanding.
- **Quick scheduling:** Mediation typically occurs within two weeks of the request.
- **Supportive environment:** Mediation promotes cooperation and is less adversarial than impartial hearings.
- **Resolve conflict:** Mediators address root causes, not just surface issues.
- **Legally binding:** Signed agreements are enforceable in court.
- **Cost and time efficient:** Mediation is often faster and less expensive than due process hearings.
- **Party buy-in:** Since parties develop solutions, they're more likely to comply.

## Who is SEDRC?

The New York State Special Education Dispute Resolution Center (SEDRC) provides mediation services designed to resolve special education conflicts.

We serve parents, guardians, school district personnel, advocates, and special education mediators.

SEDRC is funded by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and is managed by the New York State Dispute Resolution Association (NYSDRA).

## Contact Us:

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