

NORTH COUNTRY CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICES
A Program of the RURAL LAW CENTER OF NEW YORK

Special Education Mediation

The Organization

North Country Conflict Resolution Services (NCCRS) is a program of the Rural Law Center of New York, Inc. The program is staffed by dispute resolution professionals and certified community volunteers, and is part of the statewide Community Dispute Resolution Centers Program administered by the Unified Court System of the State of New York.

Service Area

The NCCRS dispute resolution centers provide conflict resolution services to residents of northern New York counties. Our services are available in St. Lawrence County, Clinton County, Franklin County, Essex Country and Hamilton County.

For Parents

- The Mediation Process Assures That Your Voice is Heard
- Mediation Helps to Maintain Calm So Everyone is Able to Work Together
- Mediation Helps to Reach the Best Agreement for Your Child

If an agreement is reached, it is put into writing and everyone signs it. After the mediation the CSE and the school promptly put the agreement into effect.

For Schools

- Mediation Allows a Child to Receive Services in a Timely Manner
- The Mediation Process Clarifies Communication Between Parents and the School District
- The child Always Benefits When the Parties Can Talk Openly

Why Does Special Education Mediation Work?

- Voluntary Process
- Free Service

- Impartial Mediators
- Convenient Times and Locations
- Less Stressful than Impartial Hearings
- Chance for an Equal Say in Decisions
- Builds Trust / Improves Communication
- Mutually Agreeable Solutions
- Doesn't Deny or Delay Right to an Impartial Hearing

Special Education Mediation

Special Education Mediation is a process in which parents of children with disabilities and school districts meet with a trained, neutral, person; a mediator, to work out their differences. A Special Education Mediator helps the participants listen to each other's views and then assists them in developing mutually satisfactory solutions. Using conflict resolution skills mediators can provide parents and school districts an opportunity to:

- Talk openly about their differences
- Understand each other's concerns
- Clarify issues
- Find common ground
- Improve communication skills
- Explore creative solutions
- Write lasting agreements

Federal Law requires that school districts offer mediation as an alternative to impartial hearings when disagreements arise.

Who Are the Special Education Mediators?

Mediators who serve NCCRS are members of your own communities and come from a variety of backgrounds. What they have in common is a strong commitment to resolving conflict in a civil and peaceful manner. All mediators have completed from 25-30 hours of basic training in the principles and skills of mediation. After this training mediators must successfully complete an apprenticeship and then receive certification. In addition, Special Education mediators go on to complete advanced trainings which qualify them to mediate in this specialized area.

***Mediation Helps Schools and Parents
Become Better Partners***

What Special Education Issues Can Be Brought to Mediation?

Any Special Education issue can be brought to a mediation session such as:

- **Identification/Classification**
- **Evaluation**
- **Compensatory Education Services**
- **Discipline**
- **Educational Placement**
- **Communication Between Parties**
- **Provision of a Free, Appropriate Education for a Child with a Disability**

How Can I Arrange for Mediation Services?

Contact the Community Dispute Resolution Center office in your county. Contact information for each of the 5 rural county offices served by the North Country Conflict Resolution Services (St. Lawrence, Clinton, Franklin, Essex and Hamilton) is listed in the general information found at the Conflict Resolution tab on this website.