

# Minnesota Dispute Resolution Options

A comparison chart of **special education meetings** where parents and school districts work together to resolve disagreements

TYPE OF MEETING:	CONCILIATION CONFERENCE	FACILITATED TEAM MEETING	MEDIATION
<b>Why request</b>	If you disagree with a school district proposal or refusal in a Prior Written Notice (PWN) to initiate or change your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement or the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education to your child	If you and the school district cannot agree on an appropriate Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) for your child and you need help from a neutral third party to write a plan that the whole team can agree on	If you and the school district disagree and there seems to be no way to move forward, and you need help from a neutral third party to clearly communicate concerns, find common ground, build trust, and explore possible solutions
<b>How to request</b>	Object to the PWN in writing within 14 days of the date the school district sent you the PWN and request a Conciliation Conference. NOTE: Another option is to object to the PWN in writing within 14 days and request a meeting with appropriate members of the IEP team.	Complete a <a href="#">Request for Facilitated Team Meeting form</a> and send it to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). The school district can also request this meeting. The process is voluntary and only moves forward if both you and the school district agree to participate.	Complete a <a href="#">Request for Mediation form</a> and send it to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). The school district can also request this meeting. The process is voluntary and only moves forward if both you and the school district agree to participate.
<b>Who participates</b>	A district representative with authority to make decisions that may resolve the disagreement, other appropriate school staff, parent, student (if appropriate), and others invited by the parent (such as a PACER parent advocate)	The entire IEP, IFSP, or multi-agency team, parent, student (if appropriate), others invited by the parent (such as a PACER parent advocate), and an impartial facilitator assigned by the MDE	A balanced group of people on both sides of the table, including a district representative with decision-making authority, school staff who work with the student, parent, student (if appropriate), others invited by the parent (such as a PACER parent advocate), and an impartial mediator assigned by the MDE
<b>Timeline</b>	Held within 10 calendar days of the date the school district receives a parent's request for this meeting	Usually held within three weeks of the MDE receiving a completed <a href="#">Request for Facilitated Team Meeting form</a> from both the parent and the school district	Usually held within three weeks of the MDE receiving a completed <a href="#">Request for Mediation form</a> from both the parent and the school district
<b>Outcome</b>	Within five school days after the Conciliation Conference, the district must send you a written memorandum describing the final proposed offer of service and any proposed IEP or evaluation plan resulting from the Conciliation Conference	If agreement is reached, an appropriate IEP or IFSP is developed and sent to the parent with a PWN following the Facilitated Team Meeting	If agreement is reached, a legally binding Mediated Agreement may be signed by the parent and the school district authorized representative

To talk to a PACER parent advocate about your dispute resolution options, call (952) 838-9000 or email [PACER@PACER.org](mailto:PACER@PACER.org)  
 You can also contact the MDE Division of Assistance and Compliance at (651) 582-8689 or [mde.assistance-compliance@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.assistance-compliance@state.mn.us)