

PACER is proud to be Minnesota's Parent Training and Information Center

Providing information, training, and assistance to parents of children and young adults with disabilities to expand educational opportunities and enhance quality of life for all since 1978.



PACER Center, Inc.
8161 Normandale Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044
(952) 838-9000
(800) 537-2237
pacer@pacer.org
pacer.org

This brochure is made possible through funding from the
Minnesota Department of Education.

Minnesota Dispute Resolution Options

Special education meetings
where parents and school
districts work together to
resolve disagreements



(952) 838-9000 | pacer@pacer.org | pacer.org

PACER Center encourages parents to first try to resolve disagreements by sharing your concerns about your child's educational services with their Individualized Education Program (IEP) case manager and/or the school district's special education director.

Call **(952) 838-9000** or email **pacer@pacer.org** to talk to a PACER parent advocate about any concerns or questions you may have about strategies for communicating more effectively with the school district and all your dispute resolution options.

To learn about other dispute resolution options in Minnesota, see PACER Center's [Minnesota Dispute Resolution Options: Complaint processes available to parents of students with disabilities.](#)

You can also contact the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Division of Assistance and Compliance at **(651) 582-8689** or **mde.assistance-compliance@state.mn.us**.

MDE offers additional online resources for parents to support [Resolving Conflicts in Special Education.](#)

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
Why request	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
How to request	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 Request for Facilitated Team Meeting form 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 Request for Mediation form 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.
Who participates	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
Timeline	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 <i>Request for Facilitated Team Meeting</i> form from both the parent and the school district	Usually held within three weeks of the MDE receiving a completed <i>Request for Mediation form</i> from both the parent and the school district
Outcome	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
You can also contact the MDE Division of Assistance and Compliance at (651) 582-8689 or mde.assistance-compliance@state.mn.us