



## SFUSD and The Bar Association of San Francisco's Communications Strategies Program for District Personnel

### **How do I make a referral for a family for ADR?**

Call or email the Program Administrator for ADR. [scottr@sfusd.edu](mailto:scottr@sfusd.edu) or 415-420-9198

### **What are the Steps I take before making a referral to ADR?**

#### Checklist of what school sites should do prior to requesting or suggesting a Collaborative Conference

Before requesting or suggesting a Collaborative Conference, there are a few things to attempt in-house that might resolve concerns more quickly, while at the same time strengthening the working relationship between the family and school site.

Below is a recommended order of assisting families:

- ★ Case Manager contacts the family to discuss concerns
- ★ Notify the Principal and (s)he contacts the family to discuss concerns
- ★ Content Specialist is notified and contacts the family to discuss concerns
- ★ Be sure that your Special Education Supervisor is aware of the parent and/or school site's concerns and provide the results of any contact the Case Manager and Principal made with the family
- ★ If the parent has had prior contact with a Family Resource Specialist from the CAC, Support for Families or the district Ombudsperson, suggest parents contact them for support and the Case Manager may reach out to them as well

## **What is the SFUSD and The Bar Association of San Francisco's Communications Strategies Program for District Personnel?**

The Communications Strategies Program for District Personnel is a collaboration between the Special Education Department of SFUSD and The Bar Association of San Francisco's Alternative Dispute Resolution Program. Its goal is to bring effective communication strategies to district supervisors and school district personnel for the prevention and resolution of complaints related to services of students in special education. The purpose of this program is to facilitate better approaches to working with parents in distress regarding the learning needs of their child and problem solving in an effective way through better communication.

## **Why engage in the Communications Strategies Program?**

The value of this program is that certified mediators, who are adept at managing people in all conditions and under all circumstances, are skilled communicators who possess negotiation and resolution skills. Communication strategists guide district personnel toward the best approaches and ways of communicating with distressed parents to encourage the resolution of complaints.

## **How Does the Communications Strategies Program Work?**

The Communications Coaching Program will provide up to two hours of consultation on a weekly basis, as needed, from professional Bar Association mediators, trained in special education processes, IEPs and parent-teacher-specialist relationships to counsel school district supervisors on communication and resolution strategies for compliance complaints. There will be a rotation of an on-call mediator to be available every week of the school year.

## **How Do I Request a Communications Strategy Session?**

Contact Ricki Jo Scott, Program Administrator for ADR to speak with an available communications strategy facilitator regarding a complaint, including CDE complaints. The Program Administrator will alert the Bar Association of San Francisco Facilitator of the scheduling request and confirm the date and time of your phone conversation by phone, email and/or text.  
415-420-9198, [scottr@sfusd.edu](mailto:scottr@sfusd.edu)

## **What is the Long-Term Goal of the Communications Strategy Program?**

It is hoped that weekly, on-call consultancy with certified mediators for school district supervisors and personnel on the communication strategies best suited to fairly and constructively respond to a given complaint will help to improve communications

strategies used overall between parents and the school district. The Communication Strategy Sessions will also shape communication when differences arise, moving forward.