

**The Special Education Services Department of the San Francisco Unified School District has partnered with The Bar Association of San Francisco to offer a new way to resolve complaints with the school district regarding the learning needs of your child.**



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## **Collaborative Conference**

Professional facilitators through the Bar Association's Alternative Dispute Resolution Program offer skilled mediation for the prevention and resolution of complaints between parents and school district personnel in a cooperative forum of problem-solving called the "Collaborative Conference".

This process has been shown in other school districts to reduce the level of tension and conflict between parents and district personnel who must work together effectively to advance a child's learning at school.

*The San Francisco Unified School District and The Bar Association of San Francisco Partnership to Keep Moving Your Child's Learning Forward*




THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF  
SAN FRANCISCO



## What is the Collaborative Conference?

The 2-hour Collaborative Conference is a no-attorney zone for the confidential discussion of complaints needing resolution. A skilled, experienced facilitator certified in mediation practice and trained in the policies, procedures and law of special education, facilitates the informal meeting. The goal is to create a positive, peaceable approach to finding student-centered resolutions. There is no requirement that parents choose this alternative. The Collaborative Conference is voluntary, optional and completely confidential. Additionally, the content of what is discussed during a Collaborative Conference, including any information exchanged regarding any provided materials, is to remain confidential and shall not be repeated in a future forum.



## Who attends the Collaborative Conference?

Parents, educational rights holders, non-legal support persons and school district personnel with the greatest understanding of the child's situation attend the Collaborative Conference. A trained facilitator assists with communication and discussion at the Conference and renders in writing any agreements reached.



## Who are the Collaborative Conference Facilitators?

The Bar Association of San Francisco's Panel of Special Education Facilitators (SEF Panel) are certified mediators with the Bar Association's Bay Area Mediation Program who have received 15 hours of specialized training in special education law and the culture of parental and school district relations.

In addition, the facilitators who serve on the SEF Panel have received specific training in the kinds of complaints parents have brought in the special education context and the frustrations, tensions and culture that can bring about difficulties and complaint.



## How Do I Request a Collaborative Conference?

If you wish to request a Collaborative Conference, the ADR Program Administrator will assist you with scheduling a date and time for the conference. Please complete all requested information on the consent form, including your availability for scheduling a conference, sign the form, and return it to the Administrator within 48 hours of receipt for the immediate scheduling of a conference. The Administrator will alert The Bar Association of San Francisco of the scheduling request. The Bar Association will schedule a member of the SEF Panel to facilitate a Collaborative Conference between you and the school district as soon as possible. The ADR Program Administrator will alert you and the participating school personnel by phone and email of the scheduled date and time of your conference. If you have any questions, you may contact the ADR Program Administrator, Ricki Jo Scott, at 415-420-9198 or [scottr@sfsd.edu](mailto:scottr@sfsd.edu).



## Scheduling of Collaborative Conferences, Location and Transportation

Collaborative Conferences will be held at:

- Support for Families of Children with Disabilities at 1663 Mission Street, OR
- The Bar Association of San Francisco at 301 Battery Street, OR
- Leola M. Early Education School at 1520 Oakdale Avenue.

Conferences are generally scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays, at two possible times:

10:00am-12:00pm and 1:00pm and 3:00pm.  
Evening appointments between 4:00pm – 8:00pm may also be arranged upon request.

Use of public transportation, allowing for sufficient time to arrive at the chosen location, is highly encouraged. Interpreters can also be arranged and every effort will be made to allow for childcare services, if necessary.



## What happens after the Collaborative Conference?

When the Collaborative Conference is complete, a final written agreement will be prepared by the facilitator and turned in to the ADR Program Administrator. Both you and the participating school personnel will receive a satisfaction survey to provide feedback and evaluation of the conference. You are highly encouraged to submit this survey so that the school district is aware of your experience. Surveys are completed at the end of the Collaborative Conference and collected by the ADR Program Administrator.

Please note that completing the survey is completely optional.

Thank you for your assistance.