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Post Mediation – Recommendations to improve the process
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Like Marion and Pat who did an outstanding job with "during mediation" I was able to find a relatively small number of categories to fit the recommendations into. Here are what think could be concrete actions which are feasible to implement and, if implemented, will improve the process.

1. DE Surveys

Actually I don't know whether is feasible given the workload at DE, but the suggestion that parties be informed as to the results of the follow up is interesting. Certainly if the survey finds something that ought to be addressed by one or more party I would think it prudent for DE to let them know about it.

2. Dismissing preappeals.

I think ALJs and DE would have to address to question raised about paperwork for dismissal. I don't really understand what was being asked.

3. Role of the shepherd

The mediator and ALJ group should write a brief "job description" for the shepherd that DE could send to all parties after a conference call. That would give the parties extra food for thought re who the shepherd should be. This could be a daunting task given that sometimes the need is just for a contact person and other times there need for a compliance monitor. I think we should discuss this as a group at the next in-service and if we agree that a job description would be helpful work together at that meeting in at least roughing one out.

4. Follow-up meetings (IEP) and otherwise

If DE approves, I think mediators could make it standard practice to inform parties who have agreed on a next steps meeting (including an IEP meeting) that the mediator would be available to facilitate that meeting if the parties so desire.

5. Signatures

- a. When an agreement has been finalized and sent to the parties with a request that the signature page be signed returned to the mediator by a certain date, and I think mediators should make it a regular practice to follow up when it is not returned (allowing for a grace period of a week at most).

- b. We can ask that the signed signature page be faxed to us and we should also include a stamped return envelope for those who don't have easy access to a fax machine.
 - c. We still need to hear from Thomas re the acceptability of emailed signatures.
6. Persons allowed at a mediation session
- It should be made clear to parents (just those unrepresented) that they can bring support persons with them to a mediation session if they desired and if they inform the mediator and the LEA/AEA in advance. The mediator could do this in the scheduling conference call in the same way that the mediator could mention the option of having legal representation.