Dispute Prevention Processes
(Special Education Help Desk & IEP Facilitation)

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Family Engagement and Dispute Resolution
Division for Special Education Services and Supports
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## Family Engagement and Dispute Resolution Unit

Providing a continuum of resources for Georgia families and school districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Engagement</th>
<th>Dispute Prevention</th>
<th>Dispute Resolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership</td>
<td>• Procedural Safeguards (Parents' Rights)</td>
<td>• Mediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• State Advisory Panel (SAP)</td>
<td>• Special Education Help Desk</td>
<td>• Formal Written Complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaboration with Parent2Parent of Georgia</td>
<td>• IEP Facilitation</td>
<td>• Due Process Hearings/Resolution Session Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaboration with Title I Family-School Partnership Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Providing a continuum of resources for Georgia families and school districts.
Dispute Prevention Processes
An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure

- Benjamin Franklin -
Special Education Support Desk

• What is it?
  • A telephone and email information and support line designed to answer special education-related questions and provide individuals with useful information and resources

• Who can use it?
  • Anyone, including parents, teachers, school district administrators, and members of the community
Special Education Support Desk

• What type of information is provided?
  • Explanation of IDEA procedural safeguards (Parents’ Rights)
  • Information about, access to, and assistance with the family engagement resources and dispute prevention and resolution processes
  • Discussion of options for addressing concerns or disagreements about a student’s special education program
  • Information relevant to the education of students with disabilities
  • Information about other agency resources and materials
Special Education Support Desk

• Who is providing the information and support?
  • Members of the GaDOE’s Family Engagement and Dispute Resolution Unit

• How do I access it?
  • Call (404) 657-9968
  • Email at SPEDhelpdesk@doe.k12.ga.us
## Special Education Help Desk FY21 Data
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1044 Contacts via Email, Calls and Walk-ins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most frequent topics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEPs, Dispute Resolution, Evaluation and Eligibility and most recently Special Education Reimbursement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other topics of concern</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 District Plans, Distance Learning Plans, Private/Home School Issues, Autism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Feedback</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents were 85% satisfied with Help Desk and said they would recommend utilizing the Help Desk to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>District concerns</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The constantly evolving District responses to COVID-19 remain a concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Take-Away</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents are the primary users of the Help Desk (78%). Calls from District personnel/teachers made up 15%.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Special Education Help Desk Survey Results
How did you hear about the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) Special Education Help Desk within the last year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Department of Education Website</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your local school district</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your local community, family or friend</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How often have you called the GaDOE Special Education Help Desk within the last year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First time</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 times</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How often have you emailed the GaDOE Special Education Help Desk within the last year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Time</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Time</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 times</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How helpful was the information that you received from the GaDOE Special Education Help Desk?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely helpful</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Helpful</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not helpful</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How likely are you to call or email the GaDOE Special Education Help Desk again?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Would you recommend the GaDOE Special Education Help Desk to a friend, family, colleague, school faculty member, or community member?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How can we improve our service?

• I didn’t see anything wrong with your service as a matter of fact I give it an “A”.
• Could have given more guidance. I was given the obvious answer which did not fit my needs.
• Send reply/response in writing vs oral conversation.
• You all are doing a great job.
• Contact callers as soon as possible.
• Continue to work with school districts and keep the community informed.
• Quicker call back time.
How can we improve our service?

• Instead of paperwork and websites a little more human interaction...
• Great to have personal response.
• Keep up this helpful service to parents!
• Provide Frequently Asked Questions.
• Information is convoluted. There is no start point, no end point.
IEP Facilitation

• What is it?
  • A voluntary, collaborative dispute prevention and resolution process used when members of an IEP Team agree that the presence of a neutral third party would help facilitate communication and problem solving
  • It is the same as any other IEP Team meeting, except that a neutral facilitator joins the meeting
IEP Facilitation

• Who can request it?
  • Any parents or school districts in Georgia for IEP Team meetings.

• Why would someone request it?
  • To help the IEP Team overcome any pressure or anxiety associated with complex or controversial meetings
  • To assist an IEP Team who has had a history of difficult interactions
IEP Facilitation

• What will the facilitator do?
  • **Guide** the discussions by asking student-focused questions
  • **Assist** IEP Team members in the thoughtful, productive construction of a quality IEP
  • **Help** create an agenda, group norms, and expected outcomes for the meeting
  • **Encourage** full participation of all members of the IEP Team

• Who are the facilitators?
  • Our facilitators represent a diverse group of individuals with backgrounds including:
    • parents of students with disabilities
    • attorneys
    • mediators
    • former special education teachers and administrators
    • college professors
IEP Facilitation

• How do parties request an IEP Facilitation?
  • Access the FIEP Team meeting request form from the GaDOE’s website at www.gadoe.org/IEP-Facilitation.
  • Complete and submit the FIEP Team meeting request form to the special education director in the district, who will complete and send to the GaDOE via email at SPEDhelpdesk@doe.k12.ga.us, fax at (770) 344-4458.
  • For questions, parties can contact the Special Education Help Desk at (404) 657-9968.
IEP Facilitation

FY21 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021)
- Utilized in 30 districts
- 95 FIEP requests
- 88 FIEP Team meetings held (26 face to face; 62 virtual)
- 7 withdrawn or no show
- 293 participant surveys
IEP Facilitation

• In FY21, these 30 districts utilized FIEPs:

  - Bibb County
  - Bleckley County
  - Bryan County
  - Cherokee County
  - Clayton County
  - Cobb County
  - Coffee County
  - Dade County
  - Decatur City
  - DeKalb County
  - Dougherty County
  - Douglas County
  - Fulton County
  - Greene County
  - Henry County
  - Houston County
  - Habersham County
  - Johnson County
  - Laurens County
  - Long County
  - Lumpkin County
  - Madison County
  - Oconee County
  - Paulding County
  - Putnam County
  - Rome City
  - Savannah-Chatham County
  - Seminole County
  - Skyview Charter
  - Walton County
30 Participating FIEP Districts

Charter Schools
Skyview Charter
What does the FY2021 participant data show us?

- 88% of participants indicated that they had full opportunity to share input during the IEP Team meeting.
- 91% of participants indicated that felt that they were an equal partner in determining the content of the IEP.
- 84% of participants indicated that the IEP Facilitation provided strategies for future IEP Team meetings.
- 97% of participants felt that the facilitator was neutral and favored neither party.
What does the FY2021 participant data show us?

- 79% of participants indicated that the facilitator was helpful in facilitating discussion to generate and consider options for reaching desired outcomes.
- 89% of participants indicated that the IEP facilitation prevented the need for other dispute resolution processes.
- 80% of participants indicated that they were satisfied with the results of the IEP Facilitation.
- 96% of participants indicated that they would recommend IEP Facilitation to others.
Additional information about FIEP Team meetings

- [www.gadoe.org/IEP-Facilitation](http://www.gadoe.org/IEP-Facilitation) (GaDOE)
- [www.cadreworks.org](http://www.cadreworks.org) (CADRE)
- [https://vimeo.com/180313121/6545e683ec](https://vimeo.com/180313121/6545e683ec) (Illinois)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-bFi_zUuuA&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-bFi_zUuuA&feature=youtu.be) (Florida)
- [http://www4.esc13.net/fiep/fiep-a-facilitated-iep-meeting](http://www4.esc13.net/fiep/fiep-a-facilitated-iep-meeting) (Texas)
Any Questions???

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