

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

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Family Engagement and Dispute Resolution Unit

Providing a continuum of resources for Georgia families and school districts

Family Engagement

- Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership
- State Advisory Panel (SAP)
- Collaboration with Parent2Parent of Georgia
- Collaboration with Title I Family-School Partnership Program

Dispute Prevention

- Procedural Safeguards (Parents' Rights)
- Special Education Help Desk
- IEP Facilitation

Dispute Resolution

- Mediation
- Formal Written Complaints
- Due Process Hearings/Resolution Session Meetings

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

	1044 Contacts via Email, Calls and Walk-ins
Most frequent topics	IEPs, Dispute Resolution, Evaluation and Eligibility and most recently Special Education Reimbursement
Other topics of concern	COVID-19 District Plans, Distance Learning Plans, Private/Home School Issues, Autism
Overall Feedback	Respondents were 85% satisfied with Help Desk and said they would recommend utilizing the Help Desk to others.
District concerns	The constantly evolving District responses to COVID - 19 remain a concern.
Key Take-Away	Parents are the primary users of the Help Desk (78%). Calls from District personnel/teachers made up 15%.



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?

Georgia Department of Education Website	55%
Your local school district	15%
Your local community, family or friend	12%
Other	18%

How often have you called the GaDOE Special Education Help Desk within the last year?

First time	43%
2-3	25%
4-5	7%
More than 5 times	5%
Not applicable	20%

How often have you emailed the GaDOE Special Education Help Desk within the last year?

First Time	50%
2-3	33%
4-5	5%
More than 5 times	0%
Not applicable	12%

How helpful was the information that you received from the GaDOE Special Education Help Desk?

Extremely helpful	36%
Helpful	29%
Somewhat Helpful	17%
Not helpful	18%

How likely are you to call or email the GaDOE Special Education Help Desk again?

Extremely	73%
Very	14%
Moderately	1%
Slightly	8%
Not at all	4%

Would you recommend the GaDOE Special Education Help Desk to a friend, family, colleague, school faculty member, or community member?

Yes	88%
No	12%

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



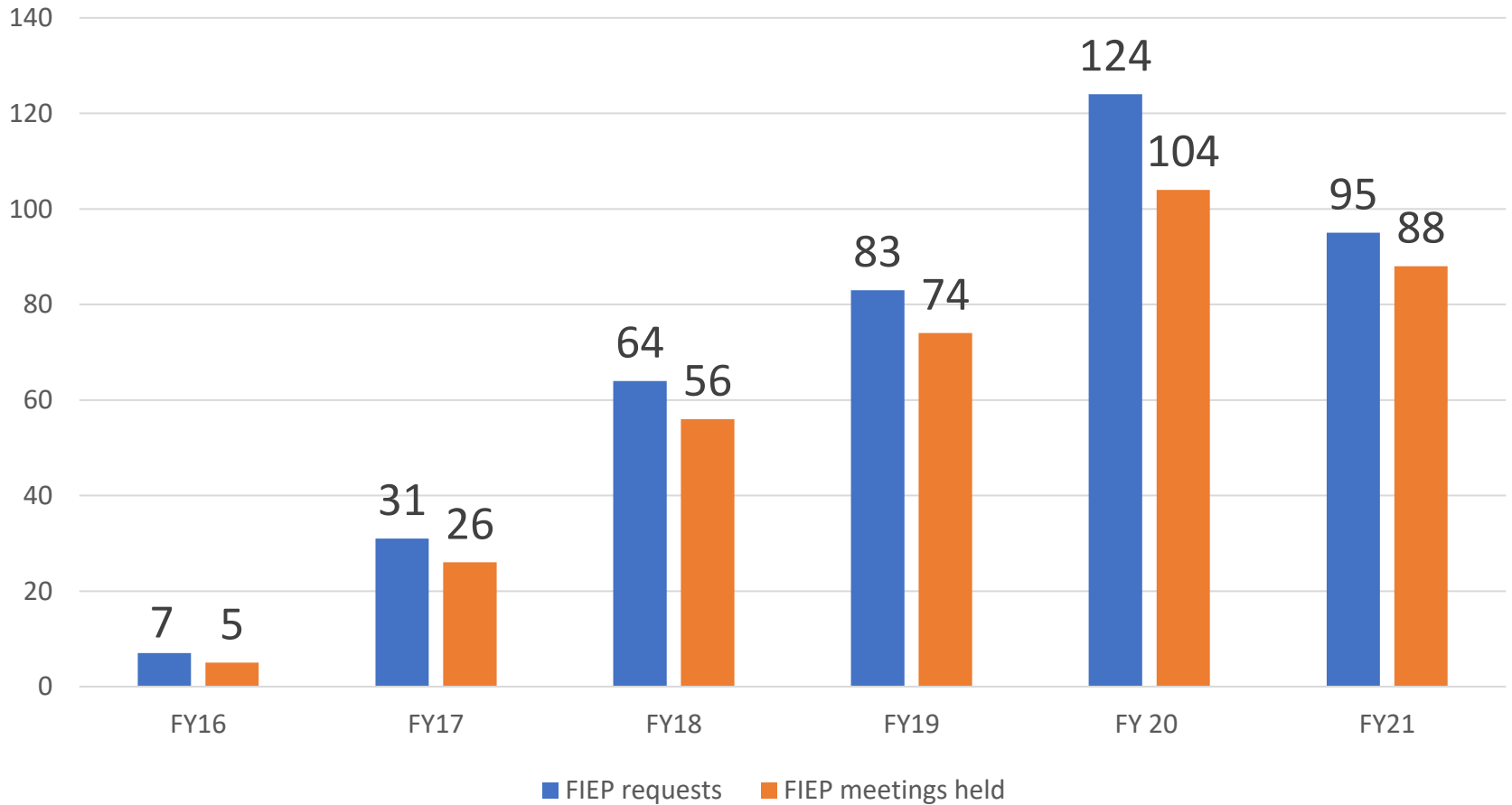
- **What will the facilitator do?**
 - **Guide** the discussions by asking student-focused questions
 - **Assist** IEP Team members in the thoughtful, productive construction of a quality IEP
 - **Help** create an agenda, group norms, and expected outcomes for the meeting
 - **Encourage** full participation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



IEP Facilitation

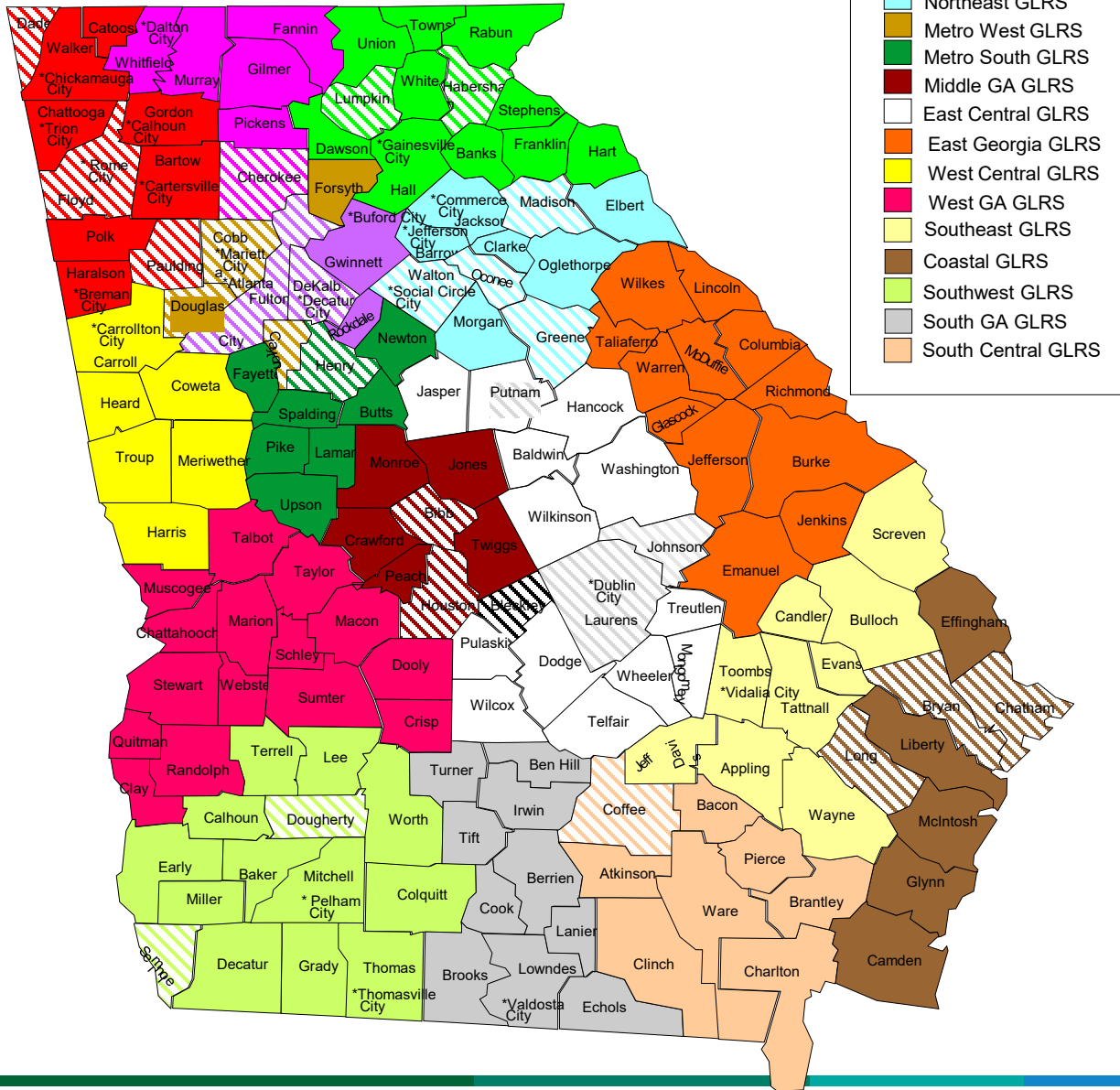
FY21 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021)

- 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.**



Successful
IEP
Meetings

Additional information about FIEP Team meetings

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

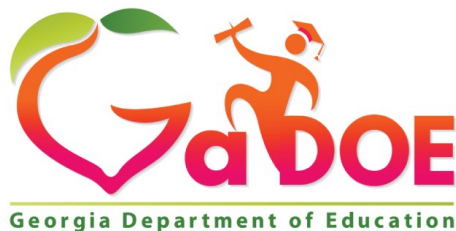
Any Questions???

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