



SELPA MEMBER DISTRICTS

Almond Acres Charter Academy
(805) 467-2095

Atascadero Unified School District
(805) 462-4230

Bellevue-Santa Fe Charter
(805) 595-7169

Cayucos Elementary School District
(805) 995-3694

Coast Unified School District
(805) 909-0641

SLO County Office of Education
(805) 593-3186

Lucia Mar Unified School District
(805) 474-3000 ext. 1152

Paso Robles Joint Unified School District
(805) 769-1000 Ext 30415

Pleasant Valley JUESD
(805) 467-3453

San Luis Coastal Unified School District
(805) 549-1220

San Miguel Joint Union School District
(805) 227-1040

Shandon Joint Unified School District
(805) 238-0286

Templeton Unified School District
(805) 434-5853

ADR is Voluntary

All ADR activities are voluntary and mutually agreed to by the parents and district. The goal is to reach local resolution of disputes, maintain positive relationships, and ensure an appropriate education for the student.

The **San Luis Obispo** SELPA is committed to helping families and schools solve problems and conflicts in the fastest and easiest way. As part of this commitment, we are proud to offer the following services:

**Coaching
Workshops
Conferencing
Facilitated IEPs
Dispute Resolution Sessions
Independent Education Advocate**

How do I start the process?

Contact the SLO SELPA (805) 782-7301 and ask to speak with the ADR Coordinator.

How do I benefit from ADR options?

Confidential

Everyone involved in the ADR process is bound by agreement and law to maintain confidentiality.

More Satisfaction

The process is more satisfying than legal action because ADR allows parties in conflict to control and shape their own agreement.

No Cost

ADR options are provided at no cost.

Fast

Formal state-level Due Process has a 45 day timeline. ADR options do not delay the 45 day timeline for Due Process.

Liz Smith, SELPA Director
San Luis Obispo County SELPA
(805) 782-7301

Guide to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)



Include • Inspire • Engage

8005 Morro Road
Atascadero, CA 93422
(805) 782-7301
www.sloelpa.org
 @SLO_SELPA

Informal Alternatives to Resolve Special Education Disputes

ADR Helpline
(805) 593-3122

Local ADR Components

Coaching

Staff is available to meet with teams or parents to coach on helpful resolution strategies, effective communication techniques and options for resolving conflicts.

Staff/Parent Workshops

A variety of opportunities are available, including team and relationship building.

ADR Intake

The SELPA ADR Coordinator listens to your concerns, helps you identify your interests and identifies a process to help, coordinates meetings, and monitors ADR activities.

Conferencing

The SELPA staff is available to conference with parents or district staff to intervene early, offer suggestions, and resolve concerns.

Facilitated IEP Meetings (FIEP)

A formal IEP meeting facilitated by a neutral facilitator. The process enables the IEP team to build relationships, focus on the IEP content and the student, honor time limits and the IEP process, and work toward a resolution by the IEP team.

Dispute Resolution Session

A problem-solving method that brings disputing parties together to reach a mutually satisfying agreement with the guidance of a trained, impartial mediator. The session allows both parties to listen and express their point of view.

The parties decide whether or not the dispute is settled. When an agreement is reached, the specifics are put in writing and signed by all parties to signify the commitment of both parties to uphold the resolution. If an agreement is not reached, either party can file for Due Process.



ADR is an informal method of settling disagreements that may arise during an IEP meeting. ADR uses specific options of this process to open communication, promote understanding, and reach agreements that support and strengthen relationships. ADR is designed to meet the interests of the parties involved that result in a mutually agreeable outcome, rather than a decision solely made by a third party, hearing officer, or judge.

SELPA's Role In Disputes

The San Luis Obispo SELPA, through a grant from the California Department of Education (CDE), has been charged with providing Alternative Dispute Resolution activities for parents and schools within this county.

In addition to the structured processes of Intake, Conferencing, FIEPs and Resolution sessions, the SELPA provides other services, such as:

Information. The SELPA is available to discuss special education related issues on a confidential basis and provide information to parents relevant to their concerns or issues.

Compliance Assistance. The SELPA staff offers conflict resolution related to special education compliance and placement issues for LEAs and other agencies. Student specific disputes between parents and districts can often be resolved by providing suggestions and options to avoid state mediations, due process hearings, and/or compliance complaints. The SELPA staff work with parents to explore issues and find solutions. Upon request, SELPA provides technical assistance to districts for compliance.

What is the Difference Between Local ADR and a State Due Process Hearing?

A Dispute Resolution session is a voluntary, confidential, informal meeting at which the parties and an experienced, impartial mediator attempt to resolve the dispute in a cooperative, non-adversarial atmosphere. The mediator facilitates communication between the parties. The participation of the mediator makes it more likely that the parties will reach a mutually satisfactory resolution.

Due Process refers to the legal procedures that can be raised when there is a concern that certain principles or practices have not been followed for children with special education services. Due Process ensures that specific procedures and timelines are followed and is guaranteed by federal law.

The Due Process Hearing has three levels: a resolution session, mediation meeting, and formal administrative fair hearing. Once a school district receives notice that a parent has filed a Due Process Hearing Request, the district has 15 days to hold a mandatory resolution session with the parents to resolve the dispute before a hearing is held. The district's lawyer is not allowed to attend the resolution session "unless" the parent brings a lawyer.

If the issue is not resolved in the resolution session, the matter will proceed to mediation. The mediation meeting is a meeting in which both parties voluntarily agree to meet with an Administrative Law Judge, provided by the Office of Administrative Hearing, to facilitate mutually agreeable settlement agreements. If an agreement is not reached, then the issue will proceed to a Due Process hearing.