

KEY MESSAGES

April 25, 2007, Meeting of the *Provincial Advisory Committee on Formal Dispute Resolution Regarding Special Education Programs and Services*

- The Provincial Advisory Committee on Formal Dispute Resolution Regarding Special Education Programs and Services (the “Committee”) had its first meeting on April 25th, 2007. The Committee is composed of members representing parents, students, directors of education, superintendents, principals, teachers, dispute resolution specialists and community members who bring a wealth of knowledge and experiences to the table. The Committee is co-chaired by Mrs. Alison Morse, representing parents and Mr. Jean-Luc Bernard, Director of Education representing educators.
- The Committee’s main task will be to provide advice to the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch of the Ministry of Education on the piloting as well as a provincial policy on formal mechanisms to resolve disputes between parents and educators regarding the provision of special education programs and services. The Committee’s mandate does not pertain to existing identification and placement processes such as the IPRC.
- In fulfilling their mandate, members will be consulting research and reviewing successful dispute resolution practices in place in Ontario, Canada and abroad. Final recommendations are expected by June 2008.
- At the one-day meeting, Committee members reviewed their mandate and discussed their action plan. They received an orientation to research and successful practices in other jurisdictions, and to relevant special education legislation, standards and guidelines. They also worked on principles that will guide their discussions and decision-making process. Members stated they would work to make the Committee’s recommendations practical for all parties.
- The following items will be on the agenda at the Committee’s next meeting, scheduled for May 10th and 11th, 2007.
 - Receive an overview presentation on dispute resolution steps and models;
 - Discuss trends in dispute resolution and consider the structure and principles that frame existing conflict resolution approaches and processes;
 - Review information on the typical causes of conflict regarding special education programs and services; and
 - Consider the steps that would be part of a dispute resolution continuum.

KEY MESSAGES

Meeting of the *Provincial Advisory Committee on Formal Dispute Resolution Regarding Special Education Programs and Services* May 10-11, 2007

- The *Provincial Advisory Committee on Formal Dispute Resolution Regarding Special Education Programs and Services* (the "Committee") had its second meeting on May 10 and 11, 2007.
- Following a general presentation on conflict resolution and principled negotiation, the Committee discussed the potential causes of conflict between parents and schools and school boards regarding the provision of special education programs and services. Members also reviewed data on past disputes resolved through appeals and tribunals.
- Members had an opportunity to hear from two school boards on current practices and to explore the prevention side of the conflict resolution continuum. Practices such as staff training and focused internal and external communications were common themes in the presentations.
- Members felt that the sessions helped them gain clarity on the Committee's mandate and outlined several promising avenues for further discussion.
- The following items will be on the agenda at the Committee's next meeting, scheduled for June 12 and 13, 2007:
 - Discuss the steps that would be part of a conflict resolution continuum; consider how effective parent and community engagement can support effective conflict resolution;
 - Consider a framework for the design and evaluation of six pilot projects across the province;
 - Continue to scope out the typical causes of conflict and issues relating to special education programs and services;
 - Establish a glossary of terminology pertinent to this field – ongoing.