

Santa Barbara County Special Education Local Plan Area

Policy: Alternative Dispute Resolution with Parents/Guardians

BP 1001

It is the intent of the Santa Barbara County SELPA that parties to a special education dispute (e.g., parents/guardians and member local educational agencies (“LEAs”)) be encouraged to seek resolution through alternative dispute resolution (“ADR”) procedures prior to, and instead of, proceeding with more formal dispute resolution processes such as a Uniform Complaint, compliance complaint, Office for Civil Rights (“OCR”) complaint, due process hearing, or other formal process. While it is strongly encouraged, participating in ADR is voluntary and is not a prerequisite to participating in one of these more formal processes.

ADR is intended to be an informal process conducted in a nonadversarial atmosphere to resolve issues relating to the identification, assessment, or educational placement of the student, or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the student, to the satisfaction of both parties. ADR is also intended to resolve issues related to a breakdown in communication and/or a lack of trust between the parties; the use of a neutral facilitator can often mend and rehabilitate these issues. Therefore, attorneys or other independent contractors used to provide legal advocacy services may not attend or otherwise participate in the ADR processes unless the attorney or advocate is the parent/guardian of the student.

APPROVED: June 1, 2026

California Code

Education Code 52073.2	Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999: Local Control and Accountability Plans and the Statewide System of Support
Education Code 56205	Elements of the Local Plan: State Requirements
Education Code 56500.3	Special Education Programs: Procedural Safeguards