



What Parents and Staff Need to Know About Resolving Disputes and Requesting a Due Process Hearing

This document is designed to provide information regarding dispute resolution, including due process procedures for matters regarding students eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the Richmond County School System. Copies of all information may be mailed to you upon request by calling 706-826-1132 and may also be accessed on the System website, www.rcboe.org.

What can a parent/guardian do to resolve a concern regarding his/her child's education (identification, evaluation, placement, or provision of free appropriate public education-FAPE)?

The following options are available to all parents and guardians. [NOTE: Any of the below options may be pursued at any time and are not required to be utilized in the following sequence.]

- Contact your child's teacher.
 - Contact the school principal. See list of "Our Schools" on RCSS website for contact information: <https://www.rcboe.org/>
- Contact the Senior Coordinator for your school:
 - Area 1- Dr. Barnes, Area 2- Dr. Ogden, or Area 3- Dr. Taylor 706-826-1132
- Request a System Level Resolution Meeting. (See form attached to this document.)
- Contact the Director of Special Education: Ms. Newsome 706-826-1132.
- You may file a Formal Complaint with the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE).
 - <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Formal-Complaints.aspx>

- The complaint may be in the form of a written letter or the form found on the GADOE website for a Formal Complaint. You do not need an attorney to file a complaint. **You do not need permission or a signature from anyone in the School System to file your complaint, but you do need to provide a copy of your complaint to School System personnel.**
- Your written complaint must include:
 - A statement that the System has violated a requirement of IDEA within the past year.
 - The facts on which this statement is based. (A description of the problem.)
 - A description of the solution or action you feel would solve the problem.
 - Indication of whether you would agree to participate in mediation.
- You may file for a Due Process Hearing with the Georgia Department of Education.
 - <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Due-Process-Hearing-Requests.aspx>
 - Within 15 days of notice that you have filed for a Due Process Hearing, GADOE will offer a resolution meeting and/or mediation scheduled by the System. If either party rejects the resolution or mediation meeting, or if an agreement cannot be reached within 30 days, the Due Process Hearing will proceed. Families usually want an attorney present, but an attorney is not required.
- You may request mediation from the Georgia Department of Education.
 - <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Mediation-Requests.aspx>
 - You do not need an attorney and there is no cost for mediation. Mediators are trained in conflict resolution and work with both parties for collaborative problem solving. Once you request mediation from GADOE, a mediator will be assigned to work with you and the System to reach a mutually agreeable solution.

How to Request a System Level Resolution Meeting:

1. Complete the attached form *System Resolution Meeting Request*.
2. Submit the form to RCSS Special Education Staff by one of the methods listed on the Request form.
3. System staff will contact you in a timely manner to arrange a meeting for involved parties to reach an agreeable resolution.

4. ***[Note: The System Resolution Meeting is one option for dispute resolution and is NOT required to be pursued prior to utilizing any of the other dispute resolution methods.]***

How to File for a Due Process Hearing:

1. Complete the Due Process Hearing Request found on the GADOE site:
<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Documents/Dispute%20Resolution/Due%20Process%20Hearing%20Request%20Form.pdf>
2. Send a copy to the Georgia Department of Education (instructions on the last page of the GADOE form) AND to the Richmond County School System by any of the following methods :
 - a. Fax to (706) 826-4649
 - b. Email to newsota@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us
 - c. Hand deliver to the Special Education Department on the 3rd floor at 864 Broad Street, Augusta, GA 30901. ***(NOTE: The copy does not have to be hand delivered to the System and does NOT have to be signed by System personnel prior to submission to GADOE.)***

Please call 706-826-1132 if you need clarification regarding dispute resolution procedures and options.

The Richmond County School System will not engage in any retaliatory practices against any person (parent, student or staff) who participates in or initiates a due process complaint against the System. The School System will not interfere with an individual's right to request a due process hearing or pursue any other applicable dispute resolution options.



Request for System Resolution Meeting

Name of Person filing complaint _____ Home Phone # _____
Street Address _____ Fax number _____
City, State, Zip _____ Work Phone # _____
Email _____ Cell Phone # _____

Parent (if other than party filing complaint) _____ Home Phone # _____
Street Address _____ Fax number _____
City, State, Zip _____ Work Phone # _____
Email _____ Cell Phone # _____

Full Name of Child _____ Date of Birth _____
Current School _____

What Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA) regulation(s) or Special Education Rule(s) do you feel have been violated?

Please describe the problem. Use additional pages if more space is needed.

Describe the solution or action you feel would resolve this problem. Use additional pages if more space is needed.

When are you available to meet with System and/or school staff to share your concern and discuss mutually agreeable resolutions?

Best Days _____ Best times _____

Parent/guardian signature _____

Date _____

Please submit this form to RCSS Special Education staff in any one of the following ways:

- a. Fax: (706) 826-4649
- b. Email options:
 - Area 1- Dr. Barnes barnesh@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us
 - Area 2- Dr. Ogden ogdench@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us
 - Area 3- Dr. Taylor taylobr@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us
 - Director-Ms. Newsome newsota@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us
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