



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
*STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION*



**Connecticut State Advisory Council for Special Education**

**Dispute Resolution Ad-Hoc Committee**

**Monday, May 24, 2021**

**\*\*\*\*\* 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. \*\*\*\*\***

Teams Meeting

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Tom Cosker, Tammy Raccio, Jen Lussier, Catherine Summ, Jolie Medina, Bryan Klimkiewicz, Sean Cronin, Nachi Bhatt and Goviana Morales.

**Guests:** Jay Brown (SDE), Kerri Sorenson (Rhode Island ), Sue Donovan (Rhode Island), Jennifer Enos (Rhode Island) and Deborah Belanger (Rhode Island)

**I. Call to Order:**

Meeting called to order at 3:0 pm by

**II. Public Comment:**

SAC meetings are public meetings and members of the public may participate.

Call-In Number: 866-880-0098

Participant Code: 89689633

**III. Introductions**

Kerri Sorenson, Susan Donovan, Jennifer Enos and Deborah Belanger

**IV. Rhode Island Call Center**

There are external and internal call centers that will be discussed in this meeting by Rhode Island administration.

Kerri Sorenson talks about RIDE and RIPEN. There is an assigned individual taking calls there from 8 am to 3 pm Monday to Friday, and they are located at the state not at RIDE. Get calls from all throughout the community and can range but not limited to principals, families and advocates to.

Sean Cronin asks about the number of complaints they feel have been reduced by having the call center. Sue responds and provides examples of calls that the center receives along with how they

handle the calls. She add that the call center has been running about 15 years. Deborah B. responds further to Sean C and Kerri S. does as well.

Tom C. asks about how many complaints go into RIDE a month. Sue D. and Kerri S. respond to talk data, mediators and how the call center works with RIPEN to provide supports.

If all remedies exhausted and going to complaint, does the center assist with submitting a complaint.

Sean C. asks about staff and training. What types of training would the person assigned receive? Asks about de-escalation techniques.

Deborah S. responds to say that RIDE is working very closely with the call center. They have many professionals who are parents of special needs students and talks about access and providing the individuals with extensive training.

Sue D. shares the following via chat: RIPIN requires all staff to obtain their Community Health Worker (CHW) certification within 12-18 months of employment. The parent center will also have the advantage of the technical assistance of the National and Regional training centers (SPAN, CPIR, Cadre, etc...)

Kerri S. clarifies that RIDE call center works with the state department team versus the RIPEN call center.

Jennifer E. talk s about parents not knowing their options or not going through the process before immediately going to mediation or the dispute resolution process.

Tom C. asks about Rhode Island and mentions about the timeliness issues in CT with responding to complaints. Do they respond sooner rather than later due to the call center being able to resolve issues before they get to that level. Kerri S. responds.

Jen L. asks questions to Rhode Island who responds.

Jay B. asks about how people in roles like Jennifer Enos get further training to keep updated with the evolving issues in special education. Deborah Belanger responds to say all staff gets training on basic rights for special education. They also receive information from OSEP and RIDE. Kerri S. further responds about the different types of information and areas that it will come from and they do not have a set outline of formal training. Experience as a parent and employees of the call center is one way and all the stakeholders they work with too. Sue D. talks about WestEd and keeping up on all the trainings that are available to them. Deborah B. talks about the RIDE parent center is a small piece of RIPEN and experience is really happening in repetitive work.

Tom C. asks about advisory boards in Rhode Island. Deborah B. says they do work with local advisory boards that are legislative and mandated along with their charter schools.

Rhode Island asks if we are looking to form a call center in CT and comments that they would like to see that and they would further assist if CT does move forward with a center. Deborah Belanger mentions that Rhode Island being able to advise and attend professional development also reassures that the center works and that parent voice is valued.

Tammy asks about what dispute resolution information is public. Kerri Sorenson responds that the RIDE website has the mediation results.

**V. Summary/Action Items**

**VI. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.