



# Office for Dispute Resolution

via email

August 19, 2009

Dear Colleagues:

The ODR Advisory Panel, which was established and operated under the two-tier system, is being transformed into a new, smaller, readily available and continually functioning “Stakeholder Council”. The goal is to give all Stakeholders functional input on ODR’s activities at a juncture in the process when that involvement can realistically have the maximum effect, while also taking advantage of such a group’s expertise. In order to bring this about, meetings will be held in Harrisburg on a periodic basis, with conference calls in the interim as needed, and reasonable expenses reimbursed for its members.

The Council will be composed of the following:

1. Counsel to ODR, xxxxxxxx, appointed by Bureau Director.
2. One parent attorney, appointed to one-year term first, and renewable thereafter in two-year increments, all by the Bureau Director.
3. One school district attorney, appointed to one-year term first, and renewable thereafter in two-year increments, all by the Bureau Director.
4. One school district staff representative, appointed to a two-year term first, and renewable thereafter in two-year increments, to be designated by the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA), and approved by the Bureau Director who will withhold same only for good cause.
5. One Intermediate Unit (IU) staff representative, appointed to a two-year term first, and renewable thereafter in two-year increments, to be designated by the IU Directors’ Group, and approved by the Bureau Director who will withhold same only for good cause.
6. Two parent advocate representatives, appointed to a two-year term first, and renewable thereafter in two-year increments, to be designated by the Disability Rights Network and/or Value Coalition, and approved by the Bureau Director who will deny same only for good cause.
7. One Parent Training Information Center or Community Parent Resource Center representative, appointed to a two-year term first, and renewable

thereafter in two-year increments, to be designated by that organization, and approved by the Bureau Director, with that approval only denied for good cause.

8. One representative of the community of students with autism, appointed to a two-year term first, and renewable thereafter in two-year increments, to be designated by the appropriate organization, and approved by the Bureau Director, with that approval only denied for good cause.
9. One representative of the community of students who are gifted, appointed to a two-year term first, and renewable thereafter in two-year increments, to be designated by the appropriate organization, and approved by the Bureau Director, with that approval only denied for good cause.

Each of these organizations or groups of people will be asked to designate a member to represent it on the Panel, with approval given by the Bureau Director in all instances absent obvious good cause for not doing so. In this way, the panel will move beyond traditional stakeholder participation to virtual stakeholder selection of its members. Among the many issues that the Council will be asked to consider, as it forms and grows, is whether there is a method by which unaffiliated individuals can be solicited and considered for membership while preserving the self-appointment concept and not unduly swelling its size.

We hope that your organization would be interested in participating. If so, would you please designate a representative and forward his or her name to my legal assistant, Cindy Judy at [cjudy@pattan.net](mailto:cjudy@pattan.net), no later than September 4, 2009. We will then forward all names to the Bureau of Special Education. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either me or Cindy.

Very truly yours,

*Kerry V. Smith, Esquire*

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Director