

Dispute Resolution Database Structure and Elements

Introduction

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act includes a number of procedural safeguards designed to protect the rights of parents and their child with a disability, as well as give families and schools a mechanism for resolving disputes. Procedures to handle disputes including complaints, mediation requests and due process hearings have been developed by each state along with policies designed to insure the presence of the safeguards.

With policies and procedures in place, most states developed tracking systems to ensure that alternative dispute resolution procedures were implemented and completed in a timely manner. These tracking systems have been developed and maintained using a variety of media. Many states started with paper files, with most gradually moving toward the use of computer systems to maintain their records.

During 1999, CADRE in cooperation with NASDSE, conducted a national screening of the current status of alternative dispute resolution data collection procedures carried out within the states. Following the screening, a more in-depth study of state dispute resolution data collection procedures was conducted within ten states.

In general, the sampled states have developed logging procedures within each formal dispute resolution process to follow the cases through the process. However, none of the ten sampled states had a case management system that integrates or goes across all three formal procedures (i.e., complaints resolution, mediation, and due process). The availability of such information would provide excellent management information for decision-making within the SEAs.

To help facilitate the development of dispute resolution case management database systems, CADRE and NASDSE formed a design team for the purpose of determining the data elements that would best be considered for inclusion in such a data base system. Participants from Illinois, Texas, Indiana, Maine, Idaho, and Washington State provided design team input to establish a

comprehensive list of data elements and suggestions regarding its structure. The following provides the information developed by the database design team.

Database Structure

It is probably best to think of structuring the dispute resolution system database as a relational database. However, newer software, such as Microsoft's Access, can also provide object management and utilization -- a feature with nice benefits for dispute resolution systems. Thinking of the data base as relational requires that we identify linking variables (in Green) that can be used to structure the database. Older database structures may require placing all of the variables in the same database structure as a single record and, consequently, not need linking variables. It is preferable to move to newer software when possible.

At the present time, some states collect the SSN for their students and keep it in a master file along with additional student information. Because it is a unique number, it works well as a linking variable if most of the students have obtained their SSN. Some states do not collect SSNs; however, they do assign a unique number to the student when they enroll in the public school system. This unique number can also be used to link files.

For states that have neither of the above, linking can be accomplished in at least two other ways. A log of dispute resolution cases can be kept that assigns a unique number to each child entering the dispute resolution system along with identifying information such as gender, address, date of birth, etc. When a new case enters the system, the log can be searched to determine if the child has a previous entry in the log and, consequently, has a unique identifier number already assigned. If so, it can be used. If not, a new one can be assigned and recorded in the log. This approach works well when more than one person, program, or agency enters cases into the database.

A second way of linking students without assigned numbers is to use the DOB and last name as linking variables in the database. This procedure will link almost all students correctly, with the exception of twins or students with the last name who were born on the same day. To prevent this linking problem, the first name can also be used as a link. Using name fields introduces the possibility of keying errors and different versions of the first name. A few well-designed queries can overcome this problem most of the time.

If one reviews the variables listed in the Master Dispute Resolution System Variables (Table 7) below, there are some variables that are related to the case and will most likely not change over the life of the case. Such variables can be placed in the Complainant part of the database (Table 1 below). Once these variables are keyed or loaded into the table, they can be used to form the entire case and some of the variables (in Green) can be used to link to other tables.

Table 1. Variables that most likely will not change and can be placed in the Complainant table in the Database.

Complainant Information
Student's First Name
Student's Last Name
Student's DOB
Student's SSN, ID#, or Case Number
Students Category
Parent/Guardian Salutation
Parent/Guardian Name
Parent/Guardian Street Address (line 1)
Parent/Guardian Street Address (line 2)
Parent/Guardian City
Parent/Guardian State
Parent/Guardian Zip Code
Parent/Guardian Telephone
Parent/Guardian Fax Number
Complainant Salutation
Complainant Name
Complainant Street Address (line 1)
Complainant Street Address (Line 2)
Complainant City

Complainant State
Complainant Zip Code
Complainant Telephone
Complainant Fax Number
Systemic Dispute Party
District/Agency

Table 2 below contains the variables that some State Education Agencies may be able to obtain by linking to other files or databases to automatically populate and update these variables in the dispute resolution database. In most SEAs, there is an established mailing list of Superintendents, Directors of Special Education, and LEA Representatives that the database can automatically obtain and thus eliminate the need to enter the information.

Table 2. Variables that may be loaded automatically form other software files.

VARIABLE
District/Agency
LEA Representative's Salutation
LEA Representative's Name
LEA Representative's Street Address (line 1)
LEA Representative's Street Address (line 2)
LEA Representative's City
LEA Representative's State
LEA Representative's Zip Code
LEA Representative's Telephone
LEA Representative's Fax Number
LEA Superintendent Salutation
LEA Superintendent's Name
LEA Superintendent's Street Address (line 1)

LEA Superintendent's Street Address (line 2)
LEA Superintendent's City
LEA Superintendent's State
LEA Superintendent's Zip Code
LEA Superintendent's Telephone
LEA Superintendent's Fax Number
LEA Sp. Ed. Director 's Salutation
LEA Sp. Ed. Director 's Name
LEA Sp. Ed. Director 's Street Address (line 1)
LEA Sp. Ed. Director's Street Address (line 2)
LEA Sp. Ed. Director's City
LEA Sp. Ed. Director's State
LEA Sp. Ed. Director's Zip Code
LEA Sp. Ed. Director's Telephone
LEA Sp. Ed. Director's Fax Number

Some of the variables identified will be used with all types of disputes, while others will be unique to one or two types of dispute resolution. Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 below provide a listing of the variables and their use with the various types of dispute resolution. Programmers may want to place the variables that apply to all dispute resolution types in one database table and the variables that are unique to a process in separate tables such as displayed below.

A simpler approach would be to include all of these variables in one database table and use separate forms to enter the three types of dispute resolution information. One could also create one entry form for these variables that is laid out so that entry for each unique dispute process has its own section. SEAs will find that the way they have structured the systems to work will impact who enters the data. In addition, the database will need to be structured to interface with the dispute resolution system components as the SEA has designed and implemented them.

Table 3. Variables used to document all dispute resolution processes.

Student's SSN, ID#, or Case Number
Names and address that may change over time
Type of Dispute Resolution Process
Disposition of Case
Disposition Notes
Case archived
Dispute Statement
First Issues Involved
Issue One Prevailing Party
Second Issues Involved
Issue Two Prevailing Party
Third Issues Involved
Issue Three Prevailing Party
Fourth Issues Involved
Issue Four Prevailing Party
Corrective Action(s) Information
Corrective Action 1
Follow-up date – Action 1
Date of Projected Completion
Date Corrective Action 1 completed
Corrective Action 2
Follow-up date – Action 2
Date of Projected Completion
Date Corrective Action 2 completed
Corrective Action 3
Follow-up date – Action 3

Date of Projected Completion
Date Corrective Action 3 completed
Corrective Action 4
Follow-up date – Action 4
Date of Projected Completion
Date Corrective Action 4 completed
Outcome
Consumer Satisfaction First Attempt (Mail or Phone)
Consumer Satisfaction Second Attempt (Mail or Phone)
Consumer Satisfaction Third Attempt (Mail or Phone)
Consumer Satisfaction Results

Table 4. Variables used to document the Complaints process.

Student's SSN, ID#, or Case Number
Date Complaint Received
Held in Abeyance
60 Day Deadline Date
Time extension Date
Deadline Date for Additional Information from Complainant
Date LEA Notified
Date LEA to Respond
Date LEA Response Received
Findings

Date Written Decision Sent Complainant
Initiation of Enforcement Procedures
Enforcement Notes

Table 5. Variables used to document the Mediation process

Student's SSN, ID#, or Case Number
Mediation Request Type
Mediation Status
Parent/Parties Offered Mediation by SEA
Parents/Parties Accept/Reject Mediation
Date Parent Accept/Reject. <u>If accept, date signed agreement to Mediation</u>
LEA/Parties Accept/Reject Mediation
Date LEA/Agency Accept/Reject. <u>If accept, date signed agreement to Mediation</u>
Meeting to Encourage Mediation
Mediator Assigned or Selected by SEA
Date Mediator Selected
Parties Notified of Mediator Appointment
Request Another Mediator
Alternate Mediator
Parties Notified of Alt. Mediator Appointment
First Mediation Date
<u>Attendees of First Meeting</u>
<u>Length of First Meeting</u>
Second Mediation Date

<u>Attendees of Second Meeting</u>
<u>Length of Second Meeting</u>
Third Mediation Date
<u>Attendees of Third Meeting</u>
<u>Length of Second Meeting</u>
First Mediation Cancelled
Second Mediation Cancelled
Third Mediation Cancelled
Receipt of Decision <u>Written Agreement</u>
Written Mediation Agreement
Mediation Signed
Date Agreement Mailed to Parties

Table 6. Variables used to document Due Process Hearings.

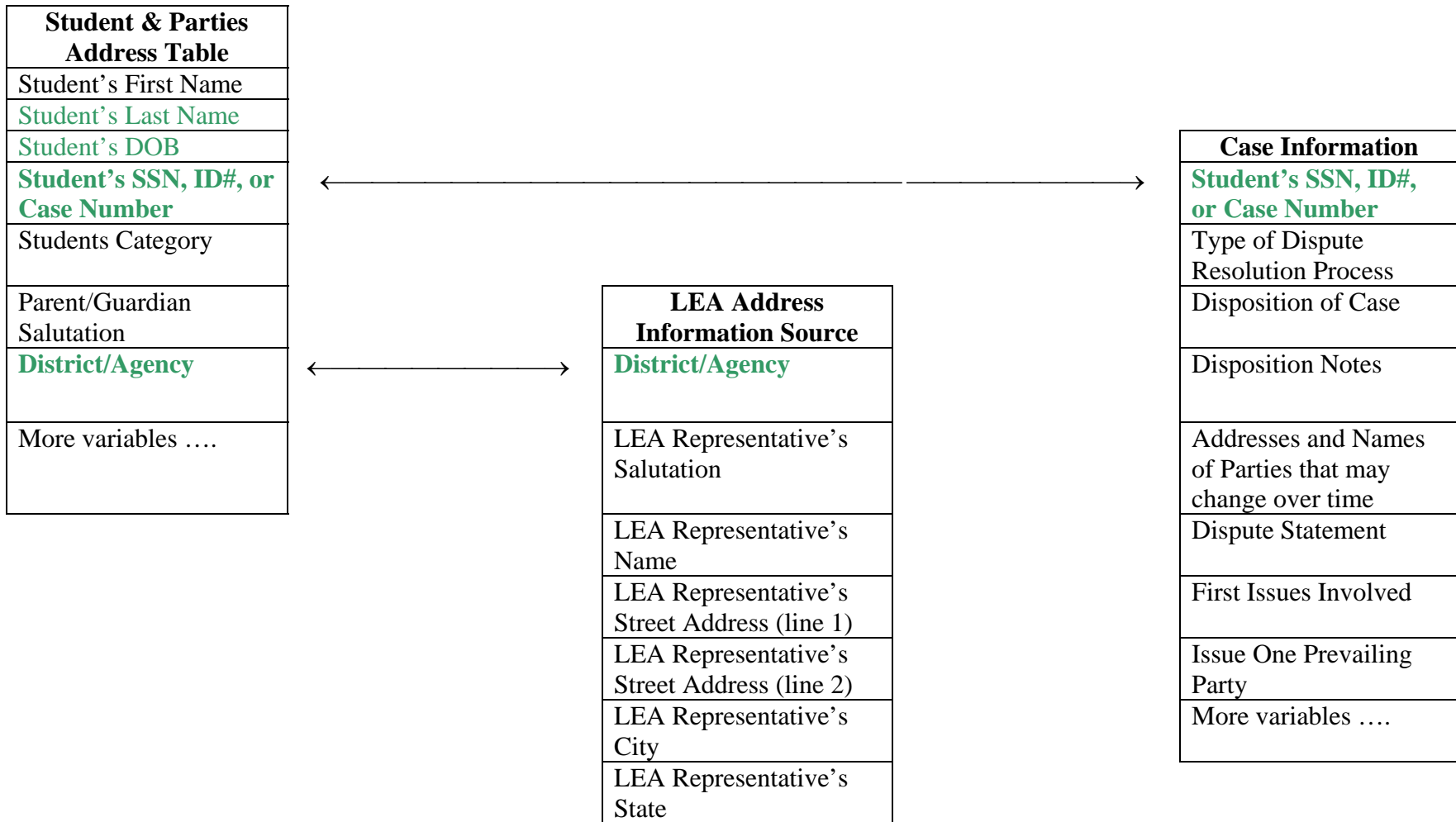
Student's SSN, ID#, or Case Number
Representative's Salutation
Representative's Name
Representative's Street Address (line 1)
Representative's Street Address (line 2)
Representative's City
Representative's State
Representative's Zip Code
Representative's Telephone
Representative's Fax Number
Initiation of Enforcement Procedures

Enforcement Notes
Hearing Request Filed
Procedural Safeguards Statement Provided Including Free/low-cost Sources of Advise
Hearing Officer Assigned
Parties Notified of Hearing Officer Appointment
Request Another Hearing Officer
Alternate Hearing Officer Selected
Parties Notified of Alt. Hearing Officer Appointment
Alternate Hearing Officer Assigned
Hearing Extension Granted
Pre-hearing Conference Scheduled
Pre-hearing Held
Disclosure Date Established
Hearing Date(s) Scheduled
First Continuance Requested
First Continuance Granted
First New Hearing Date(s) Scheduled
Second Continuance Requested
Second Continuance Granted
Second New Hearing Date(s) Scheduled
Third Continuance Requested
Third Continuance Granted
Third New Hearing Date(s) Scheduled
Fourth Continuance Requested
Fourth Continuance Granted
Fourth New Hearing Date(s) Scheduled
Hearing Held

Decision Issued
Findings of Fact & Decision
Date Decision Mailed to Parties
Clarification of Decision Requested
Clarification Issued
Clarification Denied
Clarification
Facts to SAP
SEA Appeal Received
SEA Extension Granted
SEA Decision
SEA Decision
SEA Decision Sent To Parties
Administrative Record Received
Appealed to Court
Reasons Appealed to Court
Parties Prevailing in Court Appeal

Several possible database structures have been discussed. One of the easiest relational databases to design and implement is illustrated below (Display 1). The linked variables are show by arrows. Please note that all of the variables have not been recorded in the Display. The illustration was designed only to provide an overview of the database structure and its linkages.

Display 1. Structure for a simple dispute resolution relational database.



LEA Representative's Zip Code
LEA Representative's Telephone
LEA Representative's Fax Number
More variables

Database Variables

Table 7 was designed to provide further definition of the variables and some indication of the purpose for gathering them. Some of the variables can be automatically loaded from other databases or tables, and some can be automatically calculated. Each SEA and/or contractor(s) will have its own procedures used to provide the dispute resolution processes. The uniqueness of each system will need to be considered while developing the dispute resolution database. The list of data elements below can be used as a starting point from which data elements can be eliminated and added as needed. We have included some optional variables as the end of the table that some SEAs may want to use with their dispute resolution database.

Table 7. MASTER DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEM VARIABLES

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
Student's First Name	Text	All	Identify Subject of Dispute Resolution Activity and linking to other databases.
Student's Last Name	Text	All	Identify Subject of Dispute Resolution Activity and linking to other databases.
Student's DOB	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Identify Subject of Dispute Resolution Activity and linking to other databases.
Student's SSN, ID#, or Case Number	nnn-nn-nnnn	All	Identification and linking to other databases.
Students Category	Number or Alpha code	All	Identify disability involved:1=MR, 2=SLD, 3=Autism, 4= EC, 5=DD, 6=disputed...X=unknown
Parent/Guardian Salutation	Text	All	Options such as Mr. and Mrs.; Mr.; Mrs; Dr.; etc. used to print letters.
Parent/Guardian Name	Text	All	Use to identify student's parent/guardian and communicate with them.
Parent/Guardian Street Address (line 1)	Text	All	Use to identify student's parent/guardian and communicate with them.
Parent/Guardian Street Address (line 2)	Text	All	Use to identify student's parent/guardian and communicate with them.
Parent/Guardian City	Text	All	Use to identify student's parent/guardian and communicate with them.
Parent/Guardian State	USPS 2 Letter Abbreviation	All	Use to identify student's parent/guardian and communicate with them.
Parent/Guardian Zip	Number	All	Use to identify student's parent/guardian and communicate with them.

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
Code			
Parent/Guardian Telephone	Number	All	Use to identify student's parent/guardian and communicate with them.
Parent/Guardian Fax Number	Number	All	Use to identify student's parent/guardian and communicate with them.
Complainant Salutation	Text	All	Options such as Mr. and Mrs.; Mr.; Mrs.; Dr.; Gentlemen; etc. used to print letters.
Complainant Name	Text	All	Use to identify person (other than parent) or entity bringing dispute and communicate with them.
Complainant Street Address (line 1)	Text	All	Use to communicate with identify person (other than parent) or entity bringing dispute.
Complainant Street Address (Line 2)	Text	All	Use to communicate with identify person (other than parent) or entity bringing dispute.
Complainant City	Text	All	Use to communicate with identify person (other than parent) or entity bringing dispute.
Complainant State	USPS 2 Letter Abbreviation	All	Use to communicate with identify person (other than parent) or entity bringing dispute.
Complainant Zip Code	Number	All	Use to identify person (other than parent) or entity bringing dispute.
Complainant Telephone	Number	All	Use to communicate with identify person (other than parent) or entity bringing dispute.
Complainant Fax Number	Number	All	Use to communicate with identify person (other than parent) or entity bringing dispute.
Representative's Salutation	Text	Due Process	Options such as Mr. and Mrs.; Mr.; Mrs.; Dr.; Gentlemen; etc. used to print letters.
Representative's	Text	Due Process	Use to identify student's counsel/representative and communicate with

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
Name			them.
Representative's Street Address (line 1)	Text	Due Process	Use to identify student's counsel/representative and communicate with them.
Representative's Street Address (line 2)	Text	Due Process	Use to identify student's counsel/representative and communicate with them.
Representative's City	Text	Due Process	Use to identify student's counsel/representative and communicate with them.
Representative's State	USPS 2 Letter Abbreviation	Due Process	Use to identify student's counsel/representative and communicate with them.
Representative's Zip Code	Number	Due Process	Use to identify student's counsel/representative and communicate with them.
Representative's Telephone	Number	Due Process	Use to identify student's counsel/representative and communicate with them.
Representative's Fax Number	Number	Due Process	Use to identify student's counsel/representative and communicate with them.
District/Agency	Text	All	Identification of LEA or Other Agency involved. <u>Additional codes can be used to identify schools/building within districts.</u>
LEA Representative's Salutation	Text	All	Options such as Mr. and Mrs.; Mr.; Mrs.; Dr.; Gentlemen; etc. used to print letters.
LEA Representative's Name	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Representative and communicate with them.
LEA Representative's Street Address (line 1)	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Representative and communicate with them.
LEA Representative's Street Address (line 2)	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Representative and communicate with them.

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
LEA Representative's City	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Representative and communicate with them.
LEA Representative's State	USPS 2 Letter Abbreviation	All	Use to identify LEA Representative and communicate with them.
LEA Representative's Zip Code	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Representative and communicate with them.
LEA Representative's Telephone	Number	All	Use to identify LEA Representative and communicate with them.
LEA Representative's Fax Number	Number	All	Use to identify LEA Representative and communicate with them.
LEA Superintendent Salutation	Text	All	Options such as Mr. and Mrs.; Mr.; Mrs.; Dr.; Gentlemen; etc. used to print letters.
LEA Superintendent's Name	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Superintendent and communicate with them.
LEA Superintendent's Street Address (line 1)	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Superintendent and communicate with them.
LEA Superintendent's Street Address (line 2)	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Superintendent and communicate with them.
LEA Superintendent's City	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Superintendent and communicate with them.
LEA Superintendent's State	USPS 2 Letter Abbreviation	All	Use to identify LEA Representative and communicate with them.
LEA Superintendent's Zip Code	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Superintendent and communicate with them.
LEA Superintendent's	Number	All	Use to identify LEA Superintendent and communicate with them.

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
Telephone			
LEA Superintendent's Fax Number	Number	All	Use to identify LEA Superintendent and communicate with them.
LEA Sp. Ed. Director 's Salutation	Text	All	Options such as Mr. and Mrs.; Mr.; Mrs.; Dr.; Gentlemen; etc. used to print letters.
LEA Sp. Ed. Director 's Name	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Sp. Ed. Director and communicate with them.
LEA Sp. Ed. Director 's Street Address (line 1)	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Sp. Ed. Director and communicate with them.
LEA Sp. Ed. Director's Street Address (line 2)	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Sp. Ed. Director and communicate with them.
LEA Sp. Ed. Director's City	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Sp. Ed. Director and communicate with them.
LEA Sp. Ed. Director's State	USPS 2 Letter Abbreviation	All	Use to identify LEA Sp. Ed. Director and communicate with them.
LEA Sp. Ed. Director's Zip Code	Text	All	Use to identify LEA Sp. Ed. Director and communicate with them.
LEA Sp. Ed. Director's Telephone	Number	All	Use to identify LEA Sp. Ed. Director and communicate with them.
LEA Sp. Ed. Director's Fax Number	Number	All	Use to identify LEA Sp. Ed. Director and communicate with them.
Systemic Dispute	Text	Complaint & Due	Identify systemic cases filed for several individuals.

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
Party		Process	
Type of Dispute Resolution Process	Number or Alpha code	All	Identify if Complaint (1), Mediation (2) or Due Process (3). <u>Codes can be expanded to identify specific types of ADR (Mediation independent of Due Process or tied to a Due Process Hearing request). Additional codes can eliminate need for Mediation Request Type field below.</u> Variable used for identifying fields that need to be completed and sorting for analysis.
Disposition of Case	Number or Alpha code	All	Field to identify status of case: 1=open, 2=withdrawn, 3=resolved, 4=dismissed,5=mediation agreement, 6=decision, 7=decision appealed, 8=held in abeyance, 9=re-filed, 10 refused to mediate, 11mediation without agreement, 12=closed, etc.
Disposition Notes	Text	All	Place to record significant features of the case that are not captured by above field.
Case archived	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Case no longer appears on active tracking system.
Dispute Statement	Text	All	Text of Dispute statement (DOC, pdf file, etc.) Allegation(s) and/or Violations(s)
First Issues Involved	Number or Alpha code	All	FAPE=1, Evaluation=2, Identification=3, Placement=4, other=5 with specification. Best placed in Database as individual variables allowing more than one to be checked per case. Used in evaluating program and identifying training needs. May use LRP categories and subcategories. <u>Mediation issues can be obtained from the mediation agreement.</u>
Issue One Prevailing Party	Number	<u>AHComplaint & Due Process Hearing</u>	Use to find areas of mediation -training needed or respond to concerns regarding mediation ADR.
Second Issues	Number or	All	FAPE=1, Evaluation=2, Identification=3, Placement=4, other=5 with

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
Involved	Alpha code		specification. Best placed in Database as individual variables allowing more than one to be checked per case. Used in evaluating program and identifying training needs. . May use LRP categories and subcategories. Mediation issues can be obtained from the mediation agreement.
Issue Two Prevailing Party	Number	AHComplaint & Due Process Hearing	Use to find areas of mediation -training needed or respond to concerns regarding mediation ADR.
Third Issues Involved	Number or Alpha code	All	FAPE=1, Evaluation=2, Identification=3, Placement=4, other=5 with specification. Best placed in Database as individual variables allowing more than one to be checked per case. Used in evaluating program and identifying training needs. . May use LRP categories and subcategories. Mediation issues can be obtained from the mediation agreement.
Issue Three Prevailing Party	Number	AHComplaint & Due Process Hearing	Use to find areas of mediation -training needed or respond to concerns regarding mediation ADR.
Fourth Issues Involved	Number or Alpha code	All	FAPE=1, Evaluation=2, Identification=3, Placement=4, other=5 with specification. Best placed in Database as individual variables allowing more than one to be checked per case. Used in evaluating program and identifying training needs. May use LRP categories and subcategories. Mediation issues can be obtained from the mediation agreement.
Issue Four Prevailing Party	Number	AHComplaint & Due Process Hearing	Use to find areas of mediation -training needed or respond to concerns regarding mediation ADR.
Corrective Action(s) Information	Text - Memo	All	This field used to capture information about corrective actions not found in other fields below.

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
Corrective Action 1	Text	All	Use to insure follow-up and plan completion
Follow-up date – Action 1	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Describe the corrective action required and the disposition of the corrective actions(s).
Date of Projected Completion	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Use to insure follow-up and plan completion
Date Corrective Action 1 completed	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Use to insure follow-up and plan completion
Corrective Action 2	Text	All	Use to insure follow-up and plan completion
Follow-up date – Action 2	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Describe the corrective action required and the disposition of the corrective actions(s).
Date of Projected Completion	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Use to insure follow-up and plan completion
Date Corrective Action 2 completed	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Use to insure follow-up and plan completion
Corrective Action 3	Text	All	Use to insure follow-up and plan completion
Follow-up date – Action 3	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Describe the corrective action required and the disposition of the corrective actions(s).
Date of Projected Completion	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Use to insure follow-up and plan completion
Date Corrective Action 3 completed	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Use to insure follow-up and plan completion
Corrective Action 4	Text	All	Use to insure follow-up and plan completion
Follow-up date – Action 4	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Describe the corrective action required and the disposition of the corrective actions(s).
Date of Projected	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Use to insure follow-up and plan completion

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
Completion	mm/dd/yy)		
Date Corrective Action 4 completed	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Use to insure follow-up and plan completion
Outcome	Text	All	Description of actions taken that resolved the dispute and caused case to be closed.
Consumer Satisfaction First Attempt (Mail or Phone)	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Documentation of attempts to obtain consumer feedback.
Consumer Satisfaction Second Attempt (Mail or Phone)	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Documentation of attempts to obtain consumer feedback.
Consumer Satisfaction Third Attempt (Mail or Phone)	Date(mm/dd/yy)	All	Documentation of attempts to obtain consumer feedback.
Consumer Satisfaction Results	Text - Memo	All (Now, used mostly with mediation)	Results of Satisfaction Questionnaire to use for evaluation of the effectiveness of Dispute Resolution Process processes, etc. May want to place results in another table and link using student id. If so, use this field only to indicate if a response has been obtained.
Initiation of Enforcement Procedures	Date (mm/dd/yy)	Due process & Complaints	Use in rare cases when a district refuses to implement the decision of a hearing officer or implement a corrective action plan.
Enforcement Notes	Text	Due process & Complaints	Place to record significant features of the enforcement that are not captured by above field.
Date Complaint Received	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Complaint	Use to determine dates by which other activities must be completed.

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
Held in Abeyance	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Complaint	Due process filed – complaint held in abeyance pending hearing officer’s decision.
60 Day Deadline Date	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Complaint	Time limit under which minimum procedures must be completed.
Time extension Date	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Complaint	Time limit extension for exceptional circumstances.
Deadline Date for Additional Information from Complainant	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Complaint	Deadline date by which additional supporting information (orally or written) must be submitted by complainant.
Date LEA notified	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Complaint	Help to develop complaint procedure timeline.
Date LEA to respond	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Complaint	Use to provide complaint timeline.
Date LEA response received	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Complaint	Track timeliness.
Findings	Text - Memo	Complaint	Use to determine disposition of case and store written decision.
Date written decision sent Complainant	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Complaint	Use to document complainant was sent written decision that addresses each allegation in the complaint.
Mediation Request Type	Number	Mediation	Mediation Request Independent=1; Mediation linked to DPH request=2; <u>Re-mediation due to implementation problems =3, etc. -</u>
Mediation Status	Number or Alpha code	Mediation	Mediation Advisable =1; Mediation Inadvisable =2; Proceeding to DPH=3; Local Level Resolution =4, etc.
Parent /Parties offered mediation by SEA	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Mediation	Use to determine dates by which other activities should be completed.

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
Parents/Parties Accept/Reject Mediation	Number or Alpha code	Mediation	SEA uses data to pinpoint areas of mediation training needed or respond to concerns regarding mediation. Accept mediation = 1; Reject mediation =2. Determine status of mediation offer.
Date Parent Accept/Reject. <u>If accept, date signed agreement to Mediation</u>	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Mediation	Use to determine when notified of decision or if decision still pending.
LEA/Parties Accept/Reject Mediation	Number or Alpha code	Mediation	SEA uses data to pinpoint areas of mediation training needed or respond to concerns regarding mediation. Accept mediation = 1; Reject mediation =2. Determine status of mediation offer.
Date LEA/Agency Accept/Reject. <u>If accept, date signed agreement to Mediation</u>	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Mediation	Use to determine when notified of decision or if decision still pending.
Meeting to encourage mediation	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Mediation	Date if event occurred – 00/00/0000 if not.
Mediator Assigned or Selected by SEA	Text or code for mediator	Mediation	Name of mediator assigned or selected. More than one mediator can be entered in this field.
Date Mediator Selected	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Mediation	Date Selected
Parties Notified of	Date(Mediation	Identify that letter send to parties identifying mediator selected.

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
Mediator appointment	mm/dd/yy)		
Request another mediator	Text	Mediation	Identify who request replacement including mediator recusing self.
Alternate Mediator	Text	Mediation	Identify that letter send to parties naming alternative mediator replacing first mediator.
Parties Notified of Alt. Mediator appointment	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Mediation	Identify that letter send to parties identifying alternative mediator selected.
First Mediation date	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Mediation	Date mediation scheduled and held.
<u>Attendees of First Meeting</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Mediation</u>	<u>Names and positions of those attending. Used to evaluate group composition and its relationship to success.</u>
<u>Length of First Meeting</u>	<u>Hours/Minutes</u>	<u>Mediation</u>	<u>Length of meeting in hours and minutes. Used to determine level of effort and correlate with success.</u>
Second Mediation date	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Mediation	Date mediation scheduled and held.
<u>Attendees of Second Meeting</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Mediation</u>	<u>Names and positions of those attending. Used to evaluate group composition and its relationship to success.</u>
<u>Length of Second Meeting</u>	<u>Hours/Minutes</u>	<u>Mediation</u>	<u>Length of meeting in hours and minutes. Used to determine level of effort and correlate with success.</u>
Third Mediation date	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Mediation	Date mediation scheduled and held.
<u>Attendees of Third Meeting</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Mediation</u>	<u>Names and positions of those attending. Used to evaluate group composition and its relationship to success.</u>
<u>Length of Third Meeting</u>	<u>Hours/Minutes</u>	<u>Mediation</u>	<u>Length of meeting in hours and minutes. Used to determine level of effort</u>

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
<u>Meeting</u>			<u>and correlate with success.</u>
First Mediation Cancelled.	Number or Text	Mediation	Reason Mediation was cancelled.
Second Mediation Cancelled.	Number or Text	Mediation	Reason Mediation was cancelled.
Third Mediation Cancelled.	Number or Text	Mediation	Reason Mediation was cancelled.
Receipt of Decision <u>Written Agreement</u>	Date	Mediation	Use to record date SEA received decision and check timeliness.
Written mediation Agreement	Text - Memo	Mediation	Use to determine disposition of case and store written decision as DOC, pfd, etc.
Mediation Signed	Date(mm/dd/y y)	Mediation	Date agreement reached and formalized by signature.
Date Agreement Mailed to Parties	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Mediation	Date used to determine timeliness.
Hearing Request filed	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Date used to determine timeline for other activities.
Procedural Safeguards Statement provided including Free/low-cost Sources of advise.	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Date Federal requirement met.
Hearing Officer Assigned	Text	Due Process	Name of Hearing Officer
Parties Notified of Hearing Officer	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Identify that letter send to parties identifying hearing officer selected.

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
appointment			
Request another Hearing Officer.	Text	Due Process	Identifies who request replacement including hearing officer recusing self.
Alternate Hearing Officer selected	Text	Due Process	Name of Alternative Hearing Officer
Parties Notified of Alt. Hearing Officer appointment	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Identify that letter send to parties naming alternative hearing officer replacing first hearing officer.
Alternate Hearing Officer Assigned	Text	Due Process	Name of Hearing Officer
Hearing Extension granted	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	New date for when hearing is scheduled
Pre-hearing Conference scheduled	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Notification of pre-hearing date
Pre-hearing held	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	To track case progress and timeliness
Disclosure Date established	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	To track case progress and timeliness
Hearing Date(s) scheduled	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Date 45 days or less after filing. Use Text fields formatted to allow up to 4 dates.
First Continuance Requested	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	To track case progress and timeliness
First Continuance Granted	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	To track case progress and timeliness
First New Hearing	Date(Due Process	Use Text fields formatted to allow up to 4 dates that are sequential and non-

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
Date(s) Scheduled	mm/dd/yy)		sequential.
Second Continuance Requested	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	To track case progress and timeliness
Second Continuance Granted	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	To track case progress and timeliness
Second New Hearing Date(s) Scheduled	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Use Text fields formatted to allow up to 4 dates that are sequential and non-sequential.
Third Continuance Requested	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	To track case progress and timeliness
Third Continuance Granted	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	To track case progress and timeliness
Third New Hearing Date(s) Scheduled	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Use Text fields formatted to allow up to 4 dates that are sequential and non-sequential.
Fourth Continuance Requested	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	To track case progress and timeliness
Fourth Continuance Granted	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	To track case progress and timeliness
Fourth New Hearing Date(s) Scheduled	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Use Text fields formatted to allow up to 4 dates that are sequential and non-sequential.
Hearing Held	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	To track case progress and timeliness
Decision issued	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	To track case progress and timeliness
Findings of Fact & Decision	Text - Memo	Due Process	Text of findings of fact decision. DOC, PDF, etc files

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
Date Decision Mailed to Parties	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Date used to determine timeliness.
Clarification of decision requested	Text - Memo	Due Process	Text of clarifications received. DOC, PDF, etc files
Clarification issued	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	To track case progress and timeliness
Clarification denied	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	To track case progress and timeliness
Clarification	Memo	Due Process	Text of clarification received. DOC, PDF, etc. files.
Facts to SAP	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Date State Advisor Panel sent findings of fact and decision.
SEA appeal received	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Parties appealing decision to SEA
SEA Extension granted	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Date of new hearing
SEA Decision	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	30 days after appeal received
SEA Decision	Text – Memo	Due Process	Decision captured in DOC, pdf, etc files
SEA decision sent to parties	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Date when parties were give the decision in writing.
Administrative record Received	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Administrative record received by SEA for preparation of court record.
Appealed to Court	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Date appealed. Used to evaluate effectiveness of Dispute Resolution Procedures
Reasons Appealed to	Text	Due Process	Issues Involved. Used to evaluate effectiveness of Dispute Resolution

VARIABLE	SUGGESTED FORMAT	DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEMS USING VARIABLE	DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF VARIABLE
Court			Procedures
Parties Prevailing in Court Appeal	Text	Due Process	Use to evaluate effectiveness of Dispute Resolution Procedures.
OPTIONAL	DATA	ELEMENTS	
Who initiated mediation?	Text	Mediation	SEA use data to pinpoint areas of mediation training needed or respond to concerns regarding mediation.
Was a Due Process or Citizen Complaint withdrawn due to a successful mediation	Yes/No	Mediation	Helps SEA show positive aspects of mediation. Also give Due Process or Citizen Complaint case no.
Did Attorney(s) Attend mediation?	Number	Mediation	To help evaluate policy of attorney attendance.
Confidential Pledge	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Mediation	Date confidential pledge signed by all parties. This may be included in the mediation agreement.
Request Form Provided (?)	Date(mm/dd/yy)	Due Process	Date Federal requirement met.

Database Applications

There are a wide variety of uses for the Dispute Resolution Database. The system can generate letters, provide alert notices, track the progress of individual cases, provide information to answer inquiries, be used to analyze the effectiveness of procedures, etc. Below are lists of applications that Dispute Resolution Databases can be developed to provide.

A number of letters can be generated by the system. For complaints they can include:

- Complaint notification letters
- Submittal of additional information notification
- Findings of the complaint
- Closure or status of case
- Corrective Action(s) correspondence

Letters for mediation can include:

- The offer of the mediation process and its advantages
- Parties Notified of Mediator appointment
- Time and place for mediation to occur
- Changes in time and place
- Distribution of mediation agreement
- Corrective Action(s) correspondence
- Mailing Consumer Satisfaction Questionnaires

Letters for Due Process Hearing can include:

- Notification of Hearing Request
- Provide Procedural Safeguards Statement including Free/low-cost Sources of advise
- Parties Notified of Hearing Officer appointment or change
- Notification of Hearing Extension
- Date of Pre-hearing Conference and last disclosure date
- Notification of Hearing Date(s)

- Distribution of Findings of Fact & Decision
- Clarification of decision distributed
- Corrective Action(s) correspondence
- Facts to SAP and other SEA divisions when needed

Most of the SEA systems have been designed to track Dispute Resolution procedures to insure, among other things, that activities occur in a timely manner. Both state and federal requirements can have time limitations within which certain activities and milestone must be completed. Below is a list of some of the timeline features that the system can monitor and alerts users regarding nearing milestones.

- Follow-up dates
- Dates of Projected Completions
- Date for Consumer Satisfaction Survey
- 60-day Deadline Date for Complaints
- Deadline Date for Additional Information from Complainant
- Date LEA to respond
- First Mediation date
- Pre-hearing Conference
- Hearing Date(s)
- New Hearing Date(s)
- Date for Decision

The dispute resolution databases are used to answer many questions, including the number of cases filed, the number closed, etc. In addition, many management questions can be answered by using the database. Below is a list of some of the frequently asked questions:

- What is the status of the XXXX vs. XXX case?
- When was the XXX vs. XXX mediation completed.
- What issues are present in complaints, mediation, due process filings?
- What cases are still open?
- What percentage of the cases were not completed on time last year?

- How many cases did of _____ did we have last year?
- Are they any open cases that require immediate attention?

Analysis of various issues can be conducted using the dispute resolution databases. Below is a list of some of the analyses that may be conducted using the database:

- The number of complaint cases that become due process hearings within 12, 18 and 24 months.
- The issues most likely to be involved in a case that moves from complaints to a due process hearing.
- The percentage of cases that move from mediation to due process within 12, 18 and 24 months.
- Issues involved in cases that mediation is most likely to resolve.
- Characteristics of cases mediation is least likely to resolve.
- Characteristic of cases that the complaints process is least likely to resolve.
- Percent of cases filed as complaints, mediation and due process during the year.
- Percent of Mediation cases resolved that were not linked to due process and the percent resolved that were originally linked to due process requests.
- Percent of due process hearings skipping complaints and mediation.
- Effectiveness of dispute resolution personnel as measured by consumer satisfaction and cases continuing on through the systems.
- Weak points in complaints and mediation process as determined by cases being unresolved.
- Areas training needed to overcome the weak points.

The above lists only comprise some of the uses that SEAs will have for their dispute resolution database. With each SEA's uniqueness other questions will arise and other procedures will be evaluated. The dispute resolution database as discussed here can be a valuable tool in evaluating the success of policy, procedures, training, service vendors, etc. Don't run the office without one.