

CADRE and JAMS Foundation Present:
Voices from the Field
Interview Clip #1 Transcript – Kacey Gregson

Marshall: Kacey, you oversee Arizona’s Special Education Dispute Resolution System. Are there aspects of the system that you believe especially contribute to the positive outcomes that you get?

Kacey: Yes, I think that all of our systems in their own way contribute to positive outcomes, not only the formal dispute resolution systems that I oversee, but the informal systems that we have in place to assist families and schools in resolving disputes at a more informal level. Our Exceptional Student Services Division is pretty large and we have a group of program specialists who are assigned to each school district and charter school and they do the monitoring activities, but they’re also available for technical assistance for schools and parents. So we have a pretty good system through our reception desk of fielding calls and getting the people to the appropriate specialist to see if that person can facilitate problem solving at a really, at the front end, so that formal dispute resolution isn’t necessary. But another system that I’m really proud of in Arizona is our Parent Information Network. And it, they’re a group of, they’re employees, they’re employees of the Department of Education, and they’re not under dispute resolution, but they are parents of a child with a disability, but they’re also experts in special education. So they’re available to help parents problem solve and self-advocate. So they are so instrumental in resolving so many disputes at the informal level. But then, if necessary, the systems that I oversee are available. And of course, I always believe mediation contributes to positive outcomes, especially when both parties go in with an open mind. But, and I might be alone in this, I believe our state complaint system can lead to positive outcomes in that we are able to effect systems change, in some cases.