

CADRE and JAMS Foundation Present:
Voices from the Field
Interview Clip #2 Transcript – Tracy Gershwin Mueller

Marshall: Tracy, you're one of the foremost researchers in special education dispute resolution in the country. From your research, are there things that you've learned that you believe really can contribute to more effective practice?

Tracy: Absolutely. I feel that our field is just starting to jump into understanding what appropriate dispute resolution can look like and understanding that there's more than formal complaints, mediation and due process. We're seeing that there's options that are prevention, which is wonderful. Looking at having systems in place where you have an ombudsman or case person manager, where you can actually develop systems where you do parent education and training, where you do teacher education and support to see that there truly is some prevention before we get to this big issue of conflict. I'm seeing some trends in systems change and looking and acknowledging leadership and the role that leadership can have in really setting up a solid system and one of the most important things I think I'm seeing is that there needs to be a system in place, we need to have several strategies that we've got available, we know how to do. We've trained personnel in how to handle it so that when there is conflict that might be brewing or might be at a full-fledged level, we have an avenue to go to. So I'm starting to, to jump into what are some of the specific things that we can do and some of those are parent education, teacher education. I think IEP facilitation is incredibly promising; we need to get more data on that to show what it needs to look like. But I think the CADRE Continuum does an excellent job of showing that there are many different options that are available way before you get to that due process level and that there's hope for districts and local level agencies to look into those, plan, strategically plan, use their leadership and adopt them in a way that has integrity so we have that fidelity piece and we can use it for a better change.