

## **Hillary Tabor – Welcome from OSEP**

**Presented at CADRE's *Fifth National Symposium on Dispute Resolution in Special Education***

***October 26-28, 2011 – Eugene, OR***

**HILLARY TABOR:** I want to thank the folks at CADRE for pulling this conference together. When CADRE first started talking about hosting this symposium, I was quite honestly shocked. We're in a climate where most organizations are tightening their fiscal belts. And CADRE, instead of doing that, they worked extra hours and worked very hard to raise enough money to be able to pull this symposium together so that we could all come here and be able to collaborate and communicate about something that is near and dear to all of us, which is dispute resolution. So I want to thank CADRE for all the extra work that they did. I know the U.S. Department knows that this was something that was well above and beyond what they had to do and what we were able to help them do, so thank you. I want to acknowledge that. As everyone here knows, the dispute resolution options under the IDEA provide very important protections for children and their parents. And while these dispute resolution options are important, they are very difficult to implement effectively, as everyone here can attest. This symposium really does create an excellent opportunity for all of us, people who come from different areas of the field of dispute resolution, special ed, to talk to each other about what is working and what we can do better, how we can learn from each other. So I really hope that you and I, that all of us take this opportunity to get to know people we don't know, meet someone new, meet lots of new people, and learn from their experiences. Because each one of us has a different experience and does have a lot to bring to the table. And the more we communicate with each other and collaborate, the better off we'll be for this weekend -- or for this week. I guess it's the week right now, not the weekend. I know every one of you has a very full plate back home, whether it's in your office or at your house. Some of you may have hearings that you should be overseeing or mediations that you should be working on. Others may have a family that you should be working with or a child who misses their parent. But I want to say thank you to you for taking the time out, because I know that just because you're here doesn't mean that your work stops. I know that it means that you'll do it when you get back. So thank you for taking the time to be here. It really does mean a lot to the U.S. Department of Education, knowing that you guys care enough to be here.