

June, 2009

Dear Stakeholders,

This letter is to update you on our recent activities and projects at WSEMS. As you know, you are an integral and important part of the Wisconsin Special Education Mediation System (WSEMS) design and implementation. As you know, we rely on your input to the system to continue to provide the best dispute resolution services possible.

We are sending this quick overview of the 08-09 grant year that includes some new information:

- Two trend reports written by Dr. Linda Samuel using the data collected on participant satisfaction surveys.
- Mediation and an IEP facilitation reports showing the number of cases and their outcomes for this grant year. If you would like more detailed statistics, please contact Jane Burns.

The system implemented the budget cuts to the IEP facilitation process limiting the time the facilitator spends with the parties to three hours. The parties have expressed overall satisfaction with this change – statistics from the participant reporting forms show a high satisfaction with adequate use of the time by the facilitators. Our level of funding for next year's grant will stay the same for facilitation and mediation.

Wisconsin is one of four states chosen by the Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE) for their exemplary dispute resolution systems. Representatives from these four states were invited to participate in a process to create models and guidelines for states related to dispute resolution processes, systems, and outcomes over the next two years.

We produced a new information manual for language and deaf and hard of hearing interpreters. The manual includes an explanation of the mediation process, two glossaries (one of dispute resolution terms and one of special education terms), as well as an administrative outline. This manual is available on our website at [www.wsems.us](http://www.wsems.us)

For the 2009-10 grant application, we will be including the goal of a five-day training to add mediators to the roster. We have identified several gaps in the diversity of the roster, due to mediators retiring, passing away, or becoming inactive. We will be accepting applications from all mediators but our needs are for mediators who are bi-lingual (including sign language), minority, and from the northern to central part of the state.

We need your help to identify potential mediators. Please refer people you feel would be good candidates to Jane Burns. The application will be available on our website in late summer to early fall.

Finally, we would like to remind you that we are always looking for training opportunities to share information about WSEMS. We would appreciate invitations to speak at your meetings, conferences, etc. We do not charge for our outreach presentations - they are part of our DPI grant objectives. We are able to provide a variety of presentations related to how schools and parents may access the WSEMS and obtain mediation, IEP facilitation and resolution process services; as well as such presentations as "What Can Educators & Parents Do to More Effectively Manage Conflict at Earlier Stages?"

Please feel free to contact any of us if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Nissan Bar-Lev, WSEMS partner  
Jan Serak, WSEMS partner  
Nina Meierding, WSEMS partner  
Jane Burns, System Administrator and Intake Coordinator  
Nelsinia Ramos, Latino Outreach Coordinator