

A NEW WIND ACROSS THE PRAIRIE

INTRODUCING ...

THE SOUTH DAKOTA NAVIGATOR PROGRAM



2006 SDPC 800-640-4553

www.sdparent.org



The South Dakota Navigator Program

Brought to you by ...

The South Dakota Parent
Connection



Together with the South Dakota
Department of Education
(DOE)
Special Education Programs



2006 SDPC 800-640-4553
www.sdparent.org

Powerful symbol

- This active partnering of the state's special education administration (DOE/OSEP) with the state's parent training & information center (PTI) is symbolic of what we are trying to nurture between individual parents and schools.



Goals, abbreviated

- 1) improve and increase family-school partnership, and
- 2) provide another means of preventing or resolving disagreements at the local level



Justification in IDEA 2004

The new law signed by President Bush in December 2004 includes this added line --
“Parents and schools should be given expanded opportunities to resolve their disagreements in positive and constructive ways.”

In SD, we now have the Navigator Program!

This quote has been credited to Chief Sitting Bull

**"Let us put our minds together and see
what kind of life we can make for our
children."**

***Yes, let us do that!
Navigators can help!***

Regarding the first goal: Components of family-school collaboration

- focusing on the needs of the student
- developing teamwork
- learning from each other
- listening carefully and actively
- building trust and relationship
- defining roles

- More...



More components

- recognizing various communication styles and preferences
- communicating openly (while limiting tangents and unrelated issues)
- developing realistic expectations
- approaching with optimism
- identifying problem areas and working them out
- more.....

And even more components of family-school collaboration:

- celebrating successes
- knowing and following government rules and regulations
- appreciating the various skills and efforts and contributions of all parties
- working to clear up misunderstandings
- taking action for the benefit of the child
- focusing on the needs of the student

EMPOWERMENT

- The motto for the SD Parent Connection is
**“empowering families...
empowering lives”**
- When it comes to empowerment, the trick is not giving power to parents of kids with disabilities and chronic health concerns.
- They have power.
- The trick is to not take it away!

From the Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center in Utah

“As long as there is special education,
there will be disagreements between
school districts and parents regarding
the provision of a free appropriate
public education.” - 1997

How many potential disagreements in our
small state?

NUMBERS IN SD

Source: SD DOE

- **168** public school districts
- That does not count private schools, tribal schools, BIA schools, or specialty schools
- **17,000** students receiving special education or related services



Difficulties between parties

There can be extreme difficulties in communication or teamwork based on one or more parties having:

*lack of information , wrong assumptions,
resentment, personality conflicts,
grudges, prejudice, suspicion,
hurt feelings ,
a history of inaction or of doing damage,
a perceived low level of skill*

Celebrating Success

There can be joyous success based on:

- Use of skills
- Shared effort
- Shared experience
- Surviving crisis together

How parents can have impact

Individual Education Plans: Involved Effective Parents (“IEP-IEP”),

- from the PEAK Parent Center in Colorado, 2001

Throughout the year, parents should:

- Stay involved
- Keep in touch
- Give positive feedback
- Choose battles wisely

Dealing with disagreements

Typical continuum:

- Parent and teacher communicating via calls, notes, e-mail, in person
- Regular parent-teacher conference
- Specially scheduled parent-teacher conference
- Meeting to write an IEP addendum
- Re-convene the IEP committee to review

Further along the continuum

- Request an **advocate** to join a meeting of the IEP team
- File a **written complaint** with the state DOE for them to investigate
- **Mediator** assigned by the state to work with all parties
- Due Process **Hearing** with a hearing officer assigned by the state
- Take the case to civil **court**

Where would a Peer Navigator fit?



Anywhere that it might help to improve the communication and avoid an actual formal dispute.

Especially, between the previous two slides,

CADRE Continuum

Stages I II III IV V

- **Capacity Building & Prevention:** Participant & Stakeholder Training, Stakeholder Council, Collaborative Rulemaking
- **Early Dispute Assistance:** Parent-to-Parent Assistance, Case Manager, Telephone Intermediary
- **Conflict Resolution Options:** Facilitation, Mediation Models, Ombudsperson, Third-Party Opinion / Consultation
- **Procedural Safeguards:** Resolution Session Under IDEA, Mediation Under IDEA, Complaints, Filing Due Process Hearing
- **Legal Review:** Hearing Review, Litigation, Legislation

ISSUES: Some parent complaints filed against districts in 2003-2004 as listed on DOE web-site

SOME JUSTIFICATION FOR HAVING NAVIGATORS TO HELP:

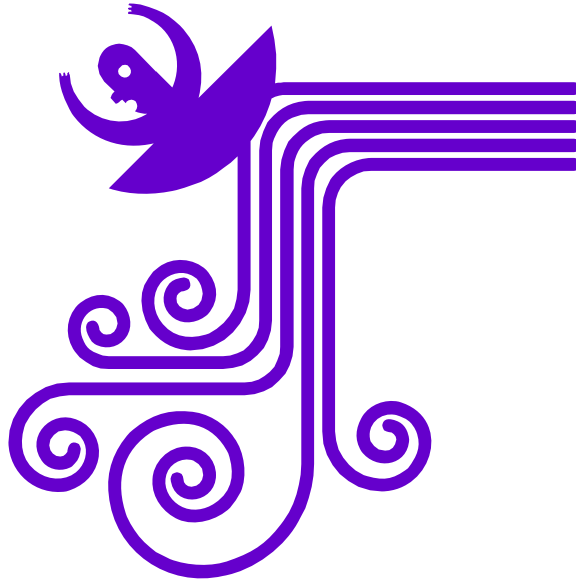
- School did not provide transportation for a week and did not provide an interpreter or note-taker for 6 weeks
- Denied provision of Extended School Year services during the summer
- Improper change in length of student's school day
- IEP document not provided to parent for over 2 months
- Agreed-upon goals "not addressed"
- School held IEP meeting without parent participation
- Staff unaware of responsibilities under IEP
- Despite parent request, student not identified and evaluation not offered

So... Is a navigator needed? Maybe?!



Is a Navigator needed?

What we are trying to prevent:



“Bonk!”

We are trying to prevent the feeling of being unwelcome or unsuccessful



SPEAKING OF A NEW WIND...
IS THIS A LAW OF PHYSICS?

***For every action there is
an equal, and opposite,
government program.***

David Veal

Role of the Peer Navigator

To aid in the special education processes for an individual child

Teaming with a parent or guardian, &

Teaming with a school



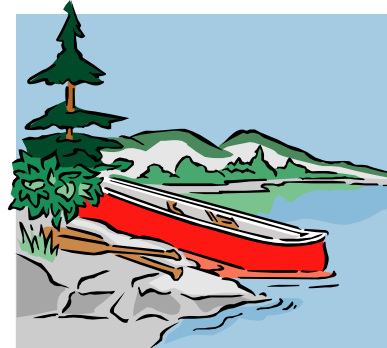
More to prepare through the year for an annual IEP meeting than just to attend one.

The plan is to navigate (not fight) through troubled waters to reach either calm seas or solid ground.

And more....

More on the role of the Peer Navigator

- Not an official mediator
- Nor a parent advocate
- Nor an enforcer for the school district.
- Rather, he or she is an objective party who will assist all who are involved to “navigate” through the educational system.



Courage

A quote from Mary Anne Radmacher:

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying ...

“I will try again tomorrow.”

Imagine that for a student, teacher, parent, administrator, and a Navigator.

When to use a Peer Navigator...



Before there is big trouble, to prevent it

When there is a concern or disagreement involving a parent/guardian and school

Advocacy

When to use an Advocate instead --

- When the parent wants to have a trained professional strictly supporting the child and what he or she needs, debating or presenting to a hearing officer when necessary, rather than playing a neutral role and focusing on enhancing communication.



The field of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

Features that match the Navigator Program

- objective
- confidential
- fair
- voluntary, and
- local



Conduct for Peer Navigators

- Respecting confidentiality
- Positive more than negative
- Flexible more than rigid
- Moving ahead, more than stagnant
- Proactive more than reactive
- Balanced more than one-sided
- ***Guiding, not deciding***

Thoughts on anger

ARISTOTLE:

- Anybody can become angry, that is easy; but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way, that is not within everybody's power, that is not easy.

Thoughts on Anger 2

JAMES THURBER:

Let us not look back in anger

or forward in fear,

but around, in awareness.

From the Conflict Resolution Network of Australia

- There are two people in a kitchen. There is only one orange, and both of them want it. What would you expect as the solution? Compromise is one option. They might cut it in half and each gets half.
- Let's assume that's what they do. One person now goes to the juicer and starts squeezing herself a too-small glass of orange juice. The other, with some difficulty, begins to grate the rind of the orange to flavor a cake.
- Was there another way?
- **Work to identify and communicate the underlying needs!**

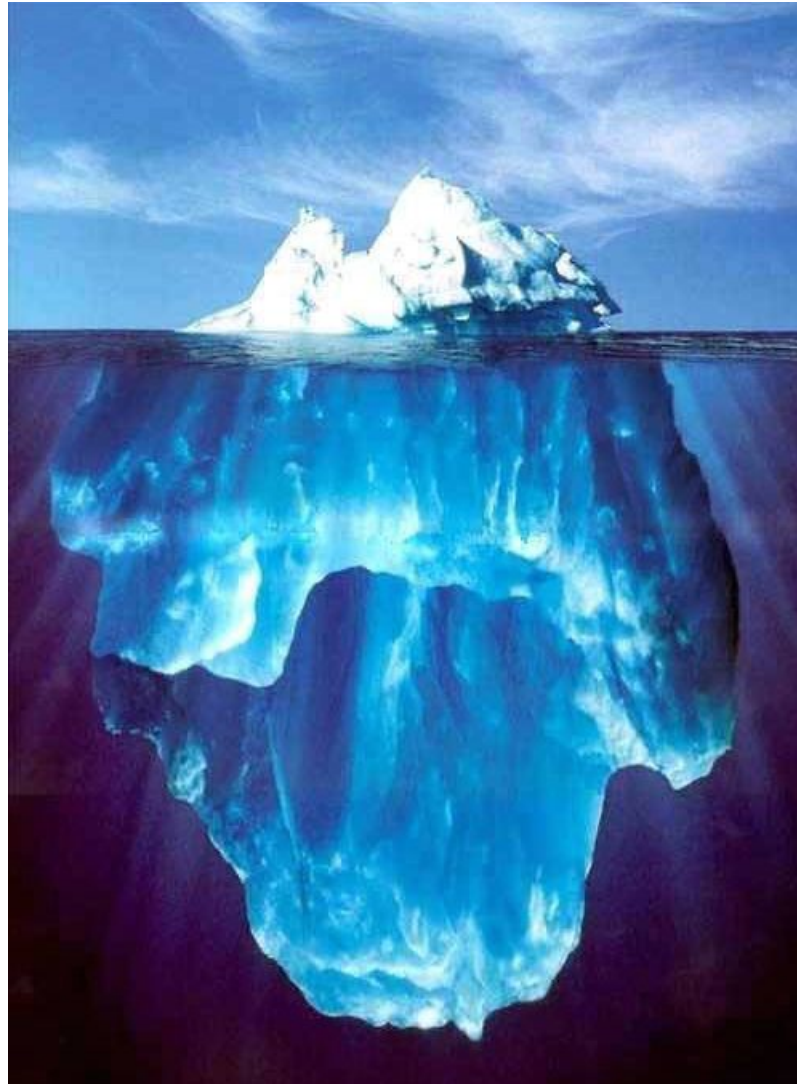


The Presenting Problem

The Position



Consider the entirety -- The interests that are underlying the positions



Motto of the Sioux Falls Soccer Association



nvtech.com



nvtech.com

“Everyone wins a game well-played”

How about: “Everyone wins an IEP well-written!”

Or: “Everyone wins with respectful communication!”

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Negotiation Skills

Five basic principles of negotiation

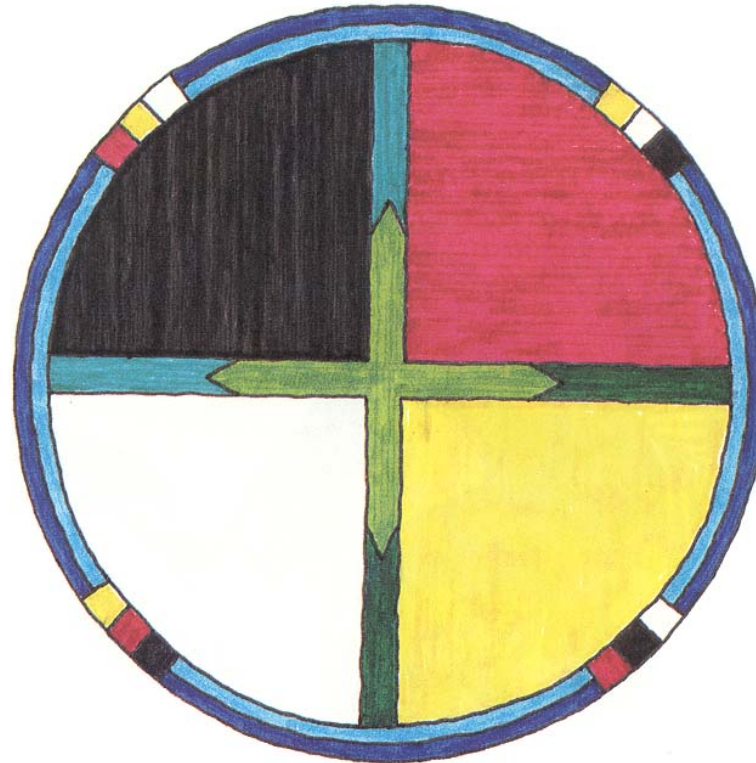
- Be hard on the problem,
and soft on the person
- Focus on needs, not positions
- Emphasize common ground
- Be inventive about options
- Make clear agreements



Circle of Courage

GENEROSITY

INDEPENDENCE



BELONGING

MASTERY

What do we say that we can do?

- Be objective, be neutral
- Facilitate communication
- Be a peer to parent and school personnel
- Seek common ground
- Guiding, not deciding
- Promote respectful communication
- Use Conflict Resolution skills

What do we say that we don't do?

- NOT providing legal advice
- NOT an advocate
- NOT a monitor
- NOT an enforcer
- NOT replacing a member of the IEP team
- NOT liable for quality or legality of IEP

Any troubles or misconceptions?

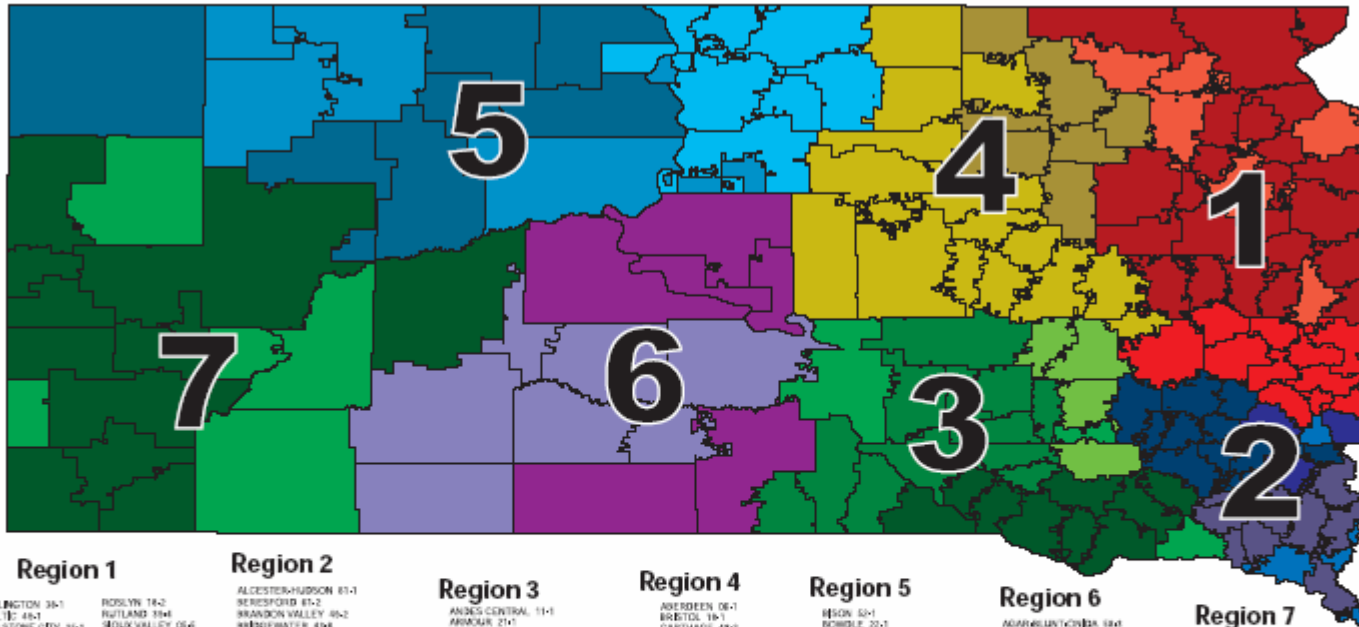
- Schools tend to think we are parent-advocates until they have proof otherwise by seeing us in action
- Teachers and administrators are leery of adding one more person to meetings
- One district asked whether we were there to monitor the IEP, and would there be a written report (no)

Repeating the broad goals

- 1) improve and increase family-school partnership & collaboration, and
- 2) provide another means of preventing or resolving disputes at the local level



11 Peer Navigator Consultants in 7 regions across South Dakota



Region 1

ARLINGTON 36-1
 BATTLE CITY 26-1
 BROOKINGS 06-1
 CASTLEWOOD 28-1
 CHESTER 09-1
 CLARK 10-2
 COLMAN/KAGAN 04-6
 DE SMET 36-2
 BELL RAPIDS 49-6
 DEWINDA 06-8
 DEUEL 15-4
 ELKTON 05-3
 ESTELLINE 29-6
 FARMINGDALE 04-8
 FLORENCE 16-1
 GARRETTSON 48-4
 GARY-DEUEL 25-3
 HANLIN 09-1
 HENRY 14-2
 HOWARD 48-3
 LAKE PRESTON 18-3
 LANFORD 01-6
 MADISON CENTRAL 36-2
 MILBANK 20-4
 OCHSBAUGH/ANDERSON 05-5
 ROSHOLT 04-4

ROSLYN 18-2
 RUTLAND 35-1
 SIOUX VALLEY 05-6
 SIOUXTON 04-2
 SOUTH SHORE 14-3
 SUMMIT 56-5
 TRIMBLE 49-6
 WATERLOO 16-4
 WAUBAY 10-3
 WAWERSY 14-5
 WEBSTER 36-4
 WELLS/LAKE 12-3
 WINDOT 04-7

Region 2

ALCESTER-HUDSON 01-1
 BENSFORD 01-2
 BRANDON VALLEY 06-2
 BRIDGEWATER 49-6
 CANTONIA 49-1
 CANTON 41-1
 CENTERVILLE 00-1
 DAKOTA VALLEY 01-4
 SILK POINT-JEFFERSON 01-7
 SNEY 02-4
 FREEMAN 33-1
 GAYVILLE-ROBIN 01-1
 GREATER HOYT 49-4
 GREATER SCOTT 05-5
 HANSON 00-1
 HARRISBURG 45-2
 HEBLEY 05-2
 HEINE 04-2
 LEONIX 01-6
 MAHON 00-1
 MCCOOK-CENTRAL 00-7
 MONTROSE 49-7
 PRAGER 00-9
 SIOUX FALLS 49-5
 TEA 41-5
 VERMILION 13-1
 VERNON 00-6
 WARDNER 11-2
 WYATT/STUBBS 48-7

Region 3

ANDES CENTRAL 11-1
 ANOKIA 21-1
 ARTEMUS/WATCHEE 05-5
 AVON 04-1
 BOY-HOLMES 04-6
 BOWEN/STEELE/HANFAX 20-5
 BURKE 20-2
 CHAMBERLAIN 01-1
 COLGROVE 04-1
 CORNOCK 21-2
 ETNA 11-1
 GREGG 11-2
 GREGORY 20-6
 HUBBARD 07-2
 MOUND 01-2
 MITCHELL 12-9
 MOUNT SHERIDAN 11-6
 PARKSTON 31-3
 PLANKTON 01-1
 PLATTE 11-4
 SCOTLAND 01-2
 STURGEON 01-2
 TERRY-BELMONT 33-5
 WANDER 11-4
 WESTINGTON SPRINGS 30-2
 WHITE LAKE 01-3
 WOODSOCKET 00-4
 YANKTON 01-1

Region 4

ABERDEEN 08-1
 BERTON 10-1
 CARTHAGE 49-6
 CONDE 06-1
 CROSBY 24-1
 DOLAN 04-7
 ELM VALLEY 05-2
 FAULKTON 04-2
 HITCHCOCK 00-1
 HURON 00-3
 HYDE 31-1
 JEWELL 20-3
 KOCK/LEE 01-3
 LEGA 49-2
 MILLER 20-1
 NORTHWESTERN 00-3
 POLO 23-2
 RUSHD 04-4
 TULARE 00-5
 WARNER 00-6
 WESTINGTON 01-4
 WOLSTEAD 01-5

Region 5

BESON 00-1
 BOWDLE 20-1
 BURKE 04-2
 EAGLE BUTTE 20-1
 EDWARDS CENTRAL 20-5
 EUREKA 44-1
 FAIR 00-3
 GETTYSBURG 01-1
 HARDING COUNTY 31-1
 HERSEY 10-1
 HOVEY 05-2
 JARVIS 00-2
 LEMMON 00-2
 MONTICOMERY 10-1
 MOUNTLAUREL 15-2
 MOUNTAIN 00-3
 NORTHWEST 00-3
 POLLOCK 10-2
 SILEY 00-6
 SNEY 10-3
 TIMBER LAKE 20-3

Region 6

AGAR/BLANTON/BLAIR 00-1
 BEMIST COUNTY 00-1
 HARROLD 00-1
 JONES COUNTY 37-3
 KADONA 35-1
 LYMAN 42-1
 MERRILL 27-2
 PIERCE 12-2
 STANLEY COUNTY 01-1
 TERRY COUNTY 00-1
 WHITE RIVER 47-1
 WINTER 00-1
 WOOD 47-2

Region 7

BELLE FOURCHE 09-1
 CUSTER 10-1
 DOUGLASS 01-1
 EDGEMONT 23-1
 ELK MOUNTAIN 16-2
 HARRON 20-1
 HILL CITY 11-2
 HOT SPRINGS 10-9
 LEAD-BEAGWOOD 40-1
 MEADE 40-1
 NEW UNDERWOOD 01-5
 NEWELL 00-2
 OGLALA 21-4
 RAPID CITY 01-4
 SHANNON COUNTY 00-1
 SPEARFISH 45-2
 WALL 51-5

Last Revision:
 3/26/04

S.D. Education Service Agencies

FIRST STORIES FROM THE FIELD

- Mother referred by school district administrator. Mother feeling her child is not attending the right school to meet his behavioral and academic needs.

MORE EXAMPLES

- Elementary Principal fears for safety of child when father demands discontinuation of counseling services.
- Mother organized a transition-planning meeting when she felt district did not take enough initiative, and she invited a Peer Navigator Consultant.

AND MORE

- Parents angry and worried because their 18 year old son is being moved from one residential placement to another.
- Bright and social 5 year old with medical needs entering kindergarten in fall needs a nurse with him at all times, but in this rural area, nurses are scarce. Mother offered to accompany the child two days a week and the district initially said No.

MORE EARLY EXAMPLES

- Middle school student is not cooperating with the behavior plan that was arranged at the last addendum meeting. The mother feels that the resource room teacher actually sabotages the student's efforts through her comments.

Mother followed up on referral to Navigator Program from SDAS advocate.

Navigator witnessed biting comment of teacher in meeting.

ISSUES THAT GENERATE CALLS

- Child with ODD and OCD attends local school. Mother feels communications from school are inconsistent. Verbally, she hears “she’s doing fine,” while grade reports show failure.
- Mother concerned that her teenage son’s self-esteem is going downhill, and believes school staff are not approaching his special needs in the right way – feels her suggestions are ignored.
- Mother angry that her child’s program has been changed from emphasizing inclusion with support from a one-to-one aide, to being based in a self-contained classroom.

More actual cases

- Mother feels superintendent does not listen to her, that he does not believe the child's diagnosis of ED. Ethics panel found child's teacher of past few years to be unqualified, so changes were made at the district. Navigator arranged a "pre-meeting" prior to the annual IEP meeting to try to separate strong emotions from the process of writing a good document.

Another example

- Father talked to Superintendent after child was moved from Resource Room math class to general ed inclusion, covering same material
- Father reluctantly agreed only to a one-week trial
- School sent home proposed addendum for change of placement out of RR, with signatures of staff and Supt.
- Father feels manipulated, did not sign
- Sup't called the state. DOE said return child to RR
- Navigator involved to try to improve communication techniques of both parent & administrator

Navigator Story

- Mother angry at school, & whole world
- Current issue – tickets for transportation
- Navigator works with the mom
- Navigator attends meeting, calms her
- After meeting, staff ask Navigator how to reduce the mom's outbursts and accusations, which look like mental illness
- Suggestions given for school to initiate frequent positive communications

Navigator Satisfaction

- After three-hour meeting with Navigator present and offering some guidance, including contentious issue of transportation reimbursement, mother exclaimed: “Thank you! That’s the first IEP meeting we have had where we didn’t scream at each other!”

Navigator Success

- Mother of pre-schooler with language delays works out of town and brings child to employer's day care center
- Therefore not getting the offered services of Speech Therapy sessions and pre-school class
- Navigator learned that mother's work schedule allowed for options for early a.m. ST sessions and for class once every 2 weeks.
- IEP addendum meeting and services began

Typical actions

- **Coordinator** receives call, gets some background, explains goals & limitations
- Determines appropriateness for program
- Seeks available appropriate Navigator
- Makes assignment, provides background and contact info
- **Navigator** calls, meets, assists through any number of contacts
- Coordinator & Navigator consult each other

Numbers

- 1 statewide Coordinator, one office
- 11 Peer Navigator Consultants
- 45 served Feb to October '06
- Attended 16 IEPs and one 504 meeting
- Many calls, many miles

- Satisfaction Surveys

Calls and referrals

- Most calls are from parents – 90%
- Some calls from principals & Sp Ed directors
- Also, referrals from Advocacy Services, Child Protection Services, and the specialists at the state Office of Special Education Programs.

Who are these part-time Navigators?

- Retired Principal and parent of adult with autism
- Parent of teen with CP, business owner, former Family Support Worker, Grad of PIP
- Parent, PIP grad, Sp Oly Coach, Restaurant Mgr
- Ms. Wheelchair South Dakota 2002, PIP grad, college student, age 26
- Teacher of Health & PE, SpEd aide, sister of adult with physical disability
- Parent of 2 adults with disability, veteran of due process hearings, veteran of complex school programming successes, an originator of the PTI, works at bank

More on the Peer Navigator Consultants

- Mother of child with Down Syndrome, hospital mental health assessor, licensed family therapist, counselor at specialty school
- Mother of 2 kids with conditions of autism and progression toward deaf/blind
- Mother of adult with orthopedic condition, raising grandchildren, formerly worked as Head Start disability coordinator and for state Systems Change Project
- Transition Specialist for state school for Blind & Visually Impaired, foster parent
- Employee of state's PIRC, the South Dakota Parent Resource Network, parent

Contact information

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