

Appendix A

June 6, 1997

«Parent»

«Street»

«City», Maine «Zip»

Dear «Parent»,

The 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which were signed by President Clinton on June 4th, include changes in federal policy regarding special education dispute resolution. Additionally, the first regular session of Maine's 118th Legislature considered numerous proposals to amend Maine statutes regarding parent / school communication and conflict resolution.

The Maine Department of Education would like to examine the increasing number of special education disputes between parents and public schools. To better understand the nature of situations where conflict develops, the Department, in cooperation with Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, is conducting a study of the special education due process system for resolving disagreements between parents and schools.

We would like to invite you to participate in this study. Our records indicate that you filed a hearing request during 1996 on behalf of your child, «STUDENT». We believe that you are in a unique position to share your thoughts about the problems or benefits of the hearing process and to help the Department improve the special education conflict resolution process. Your involvement will include a telephone interview and your participation in a meeting with approximately nine other parents who have been involved in the hearing process. The meeting will last about three hours and will be held in «Site» on «Date».

The Department will reimburse you for your travel at 22 cents per mile and reasonable child care costs. Additionally, the Department will provide each family a \$25.00 honorarium for participating in the study.

Mr. Michael Opuda, who is on educational leave from the Department of Education completing his Ph. D. in educational leadership and policy studies at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, will be the principle investigator in this project. Mr. Opuda will use this study to assist the Department to improve our conflict resolution procedures and to complete the dissertation requirements for his degree.

I want to assure you that your participation is completely voluntary and your confidentiality will be protected. No personally identifiable information will be released to any other party. To safeguard your identity, any personally identifiable information will be removed or altered in any reports of this study.

Mr. Opuda will be contacting you in a few weeks to determine your willingness to participate in this project and to interview you. The interview questionnaire has been attached so that you may review the questions prior to the interview. If you have any questions regarding this study, Mr. Opuda will be able to answer them during his telephone interview with you.

I encourage you to participate in this important study for it is only through listening to parents and their concerns that we can truly improve Maine's educational services for all children.

Sincerely,

David Noble Stockford

Director, Special Services

Appendix B

Due Process Interview Case Number 96.____

The following questions help to describe your family. This information will permit a comparison of the families involved in due process with Maine families in general. All information is confidential and will not be personally identifiable. Please answer each question based upon your situation at the time you filed your request for a hearing or complaint investigation.

1. What was your marital status at the time you requested the hearing or complaint investigation?

___Married ___Divorced ___Widowed ___Unmarried

2. How many adults lived in your house? ____

() mother () father () stepmother () stepfather
() grandparent(s) () other (specify) _____

3. How many children lived in your house?

_____Boy(s) ages: _____Girl(s) ages:

4. Were any of the adults living at home employed? () Father () Mother

If so, what type of employment?

Father: _____ Mother: _____

What are your typical work hours?

Father: _____ Mother: _____

5. Were you or your spouse able to take time off from work to attend your child's Pupil Evaluation Team (PET) Meetings?

	Father	Mother
No, unable to take time off from work	()	()
Yes, employer permitted time off with pay	()	()
Yes, employer permitted the use of sick leave	()	()
Yes, employer permitted the use of comp time	()	()
Yes, employer permitted time off without pay	()	()
Yes, not employed or self employed	()	()

6. Residency - In which county did you reside? _____

7. How many years had you lived in the community before your due process request? ____Years

8. If you lived in this community less than one year prior to your request, in which county or state did you reside previously? _____

Appendix B

Due Process Interview Case Number 96.____

9. What was your approximate annual household income at the time you requested the hearing or complaint investigation?

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 - 10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 40,001 - 50,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10,001 - 20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 50,001 - 60,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20,001 - 30,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 60,001 - 70,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30,001 - 40,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 70,001 or more | <input type="checkbox"/> |

10. What is the highest level of formal education completed by you?

- Less than High School G.E.D. High School
- Vocational / Trade School No. of Years ____ Degree: _____
- College No. of Years ____ Degree: _____
- Graduate School No. of Years ____ Degree: _____

11. What is the highest level of formal education completed by your spouse?

- Less than High School G.E.D. High School
- Vocational / Trade School No. of Years ____ Degree: _____
- College No. of Years ____ Degree: _____
- Graduate School No. of Years ____ Degree: _____

12. How did you find out about the hearing or complaint process?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parental rights statement provided by the school | <input type="checkbox"/> The special education director for your district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The school's special education handbook | <input type="checkbox"/> Another parent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your child's teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> The Maine Department of Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A parent advocacy service (please specify): _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ | |

13. Did you receive any assistance with your hearing or complaint investigation request? ____

Yes ____ No

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attorney | <input type="checkbox"/> Another parent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate | <input type="checkbox"/> Maine Department of Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special education director | <input type="checkbox"/> Department of Human Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your child's Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Department of Mental Retardation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: (please specify) _____ | |

Type of Assistance:

Appendix B

Due Process Interview Case Number 96.____

14. Are you able to participate in activities at your child's school?

a. Participate in Pupil Evaluation Team (PET) Meetings?

Always Most of the time Sometimes Rarely Never

b. Attend school events (concerts, sports, open house?)

Always Most of the time Sometimes Rarely Never

c. Attend parent / teacher conferences?

Always Most of the time Sometimes Rarely Never

d. Observe your child's class?

Always Most of the time Sometimes Rarely Never

e. Volunteer at your child's school?

Always Most of the time Sometimes Rarely Never

II. These questions are regarding your child. These questions are necessary to assist in identifying any trends in due process regarding age, placement, type of disability, etc. All questions refer to your child for whom you requested a due process hearing, or complaint investigation.

15. What is your child's date of birth? ____ / ____ / ____

16. What is your child's disability? _____

17. Is your child male or female? Male Female

18. How many years had your child been enrolled in the school prior to your request for a hearing or complaint investigation? ____ Years

19. If your child was enrolled for less than one year in which county or state had your child previously been enrolled? _____

20. Please summarize the disagreement you had with the school which resulted in your request for a hearing or complaint investigation.

21. Were you satisfied with the results of your hearing or complaint investigation? Please explain your response.

Extremely satisfied Moderately satisfied Slightly satisfied Slightly dissatisfied Moderately dissatisfied Extremely dissatisfied

Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

This document is designed to inform you about this research project and seeks your written consent to participate in this research project.

Title of Project: Factors Which Contribute to Parent / School Conflict in Special Education

Investigator: Michael J. Opuda, CAGS, Senior Research Assistant

I. The purpose of this research: You have been selected to participate in this research project as one of a random sample of 72 parents who initiated complaints or hearings with the Maine Department of Education during 1996. This research project will identify factors which contributed to your decision to initiate a complaint investigation or due process hearing against a school system. The information gathered through this research project will assist the Maine Department of Education in the development of policies that contribute to a reduction in parent / school conflict in the provision of special education services.

II. Procedures: You will be interviewed by telephone by the principal investigator and will participate in one of six focus groups held through out the state. A follow - up interview may occur with selected participants to validate the findings of the focus groups.

III. Risks: You will not be exposed to any known risks associated with this research project.

IV. Benefits of this project: You may benefit from this research project by meeting other parents who have experienced similar difficulties with schools and identifying common issues and concerns, thereby reducing feelings of isolation and experiencing a sense of affirmation. No promise or guarantee of benefits (other than the compensation described below in section VI) have been made to encourage you to participate.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality: Your responses to the interview, focus group questions and follow - up interview will be strictly confidential. Only the principle investigator will have knowledge of the individuals who were randomly selected for this research project. No personally identifiable information will be released to any other party. To safeguard your identity, any personally identifiable information will be removed or altered in any reports of this study.

VI. Compensation: The Maine Department of Education will reimburse you for your travel at 22 cents per mile and reasonable child care costs. 1ch family a \$25.00 honorarium for participating in the study. Payment will be processed in a timely fashion by the Department of Education upon completion of the focus groups.

Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects

VII. Freedom to withdraw:

You are free to withdraw at any time from this study without penalty. If you elect to withdraw, you will be compensated for the portion of the time that you participated in the study. You may choose not to answer any questions without penalty.

VIII. Approval of Research: This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and by the Maine Department of Education.

IX. Subject’s responsibilities: I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

A. I have the following responsibilities:

1. to participate in a telephone interview,
2. to participate in a focus group and,
3. to participate, as needed, in a follow - up interview to validate the findings of the focus groups.

B. I understand that the participants in the focus group and the information shared by the participants in the focus group is confidential and may not be disclosed to any other party without the written permission of the participant.

X. Subject’s permission: I have read and understand the informed consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this research project.

If I agree to participate, I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research project or its conduct, I may contact:

Michael Opuda, Principle Investigator (540) 231-5925
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

David Stockford, Director (207) 287-5050
Division of Special Services, Maine Department of Education

Diane Gillespie, Faculty Advisor (540) 231-9713
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Appendix C

Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects

H.T. Hurd, Chair

(540) 231-5281

IRB Research Division, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

I may request a copy of the results of this research project by submitting a written request after January 1, 1998 to:

Michael Opuda

c/o Division of Special Services

Department of Education, SHS #23

Augusta, ME 04333

Appendix D

Focus Group Questions - Hearings

1. Identify at least three things that your school did which created or increased your disagreement with the school and resulted in your hearing request.
2. What are three things the school could have done to decrease the disagreement before you filed your hearing request?
3. Is there anything that you did which created or increased the disagreement which resulted in your hearing request?
4. What are three things you could have done to decrease the disagreement before you filed your hearing request?
5. Why did you select the hearing process instead of the complaint investigation or mediation process?
6. Should other parents use the hearing process to resolve a disagreement with the school? ___ YES ___ NO Provide at least three reasons for your answer.
7. Did you ___ withdraw, ___ mediate, or ___ receive a hearing decision? List at least three reasons you selected this outcome.
8. What were your feelings during the hearing process?
9. What problems or difficulties did you experience with the hearing process?
10. Was the hearing process fair? ___ YES ___ NO Explain your answer.
11. What are three things that the Department of Education could do to improve the hearing process?

Appendix E

Focus Group Questions - Complaints

1. Identify at least three things that your school did which created or increased the disagreement with the school and resulted in your complaint investigation request.
2. What are three things the school could have done to decrease the disagreement before you filed your complaint investigation request?
3. Is there anything that you did which created or increased the disagreement which resulted in your request for a complaint investigation?
4. What are three things you could have done to decrease the disagreement before you filed your complaint investigation request?
5. Why did you select the complaint process instead of the hearing or mediation process?
6. Should other parents use the complaint process to resolve a disagreement with the school?
 YES NO Provide at least three reasons for your answer.
7. Did you withdraw, mediate, receive a complaint decision? List at least three reasons you selected this outcome.
8. What were your feelings during the complaint process?
9. What problems or difficulties did you experience with the complaint process?
10. Was the complaint process fair? YES NO Explain your answer.
11. What are three things that the Department of Education could do to improve the complaint process?

1. (marital) Marital Status:

(1) Married (2) Divorced (3) Widowed (4) Unmarried

2a. (adults) Adults in house: (#)**2b. (adults2)** (1) mother (2) father (3) stepmother (4) stepfather
(5) grandparent(s) (6) other (specify) **2c. (adults3)** (TEXT)**3.** Children in house:**3a. (boys)** # Boy(s) **3b. (boyages)** ages: **3c. (girls)** # Girl(s) **3d. (girlages)** ages:**4a₁. (dadworks)** Father Employed: Y, N **a₂ (Momworks)** Mother Employed: Y, N**4b₁. (dadjob)** Employment type: (TEXT) **4b₂. (momjob)** Employment type: (TEXT)**4c₁. (dadhours)** Work hours: (TEXT) **4c₂. (momhours)** Work hours:(TEXT)**5.** Able to take time off to attend IEP Meetings:**(dadoff)** **(momoff)**

	5a. Father	5b. Mother
(1) No, unable to take time off from work	(1)	(1)
(2) Yes, employer permitted time off with pay	(2)	(2)
(3) Yes, employer permitted the use of sick leave	(3)	(3)
(4) Yes, employer permitted the use of comp time	(4)	(4)
(5) Yes, employer permitted time off without pay	(5)	(5)
(6) Yes, not employed or self employed	(6)	(6)
(7) Other	(7)	(7)

6. (county) County Of Residence: 1 -16 (See Listing)

1. York	5. Kennebec	9. Penobscot	13. Somerset
2. Cumberland	6. Sagadahoc	10. Piscataquis	14. Aroostook
3. Oxford	7. Waldo	11. Hancock	15. Franklin
4. Andro.	8. Knox	12. Washington	16. Lincoln

7. (years) Years Lived In Community Before Request: (#) Years

8. (prior) If in community less than 1 year prior county or state: (TEXT)

9. (income) Annual Household Income:

0 - 10,000	(1)	40,001 - 50,000	(5)
10,001 - 20,000	(2)	50,001 - 60,000	(6)
20,001 - 30,000	(3)	60,001 - 70,000	(7)
30,001 - 40,000	(4)	70,001 or more	(8)

10. (daded) Education -- Father: **(dadpost):** yrs postsecondary ed. **(ddegree):** degree

Less than High School (1)	G.E.D. (2)	High School (3)	
Vocational / Trade School (4)	No. of Years (dadpost)___	Degree: (ddegree)	_____
College (5)	No. of Years ___	Degree: _____	
Graduate School (6)	No. of Years ___	Degree: _____	

11. (momed) Education -- Mother: **(mompost):** yrs postsecondary ed. **(mdegree):** degree

Less than High School (1)	G.E.D. (2)	High School (3)	
Vocational / Trade School (4)	No. of Years (mompost)___	Degree: (mdegree)	_____
College (5)	No. of Years ___	Degree: _____	
Graduate School (6)	No. of Years ___	Degree: _____	

12a. (Findout) Find Out About Process:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 - Parental rights statement | 6 - Maine Department of Ed. |
| 2 - school's special ed. handbook | 7 - Advocacy Agency (specify): 12b. |
| 3 - child's teacher | (advocate) (TEXT) |
| 4 - special education director | 8 - Other (specify): 12c. (other) (TEXT) |
| 5 - Another parent | |

13. (assist) Assistance With Request:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 0 - No | 6 - Maine Department of Education |
| 1 - Attorney | 7 - Department of Human Services |
| 2 - Advocate | 8 - Department of Mental Retardation |
| 3 - Special education director | 9 - Other: (please specify) 13b.(other2) |
| 4 - Your child's Teacher | (TEXT) |
| 5 - Another parent | |

13c. (howassist) Type of Assistance: (TEXT)**14a. (iepmeet)** Participate in Pupil Evaluation Team (PET) Meetings:

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 5 - Always | 4 - Most of the time | 3 - Sometimes | 2 - Rarely | 1 - Never |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|

14b. (events) Attend school events (concerts, sports, open house:)

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 5 - Always | 4 - Most of the time | 3 - Sometimes | 2 - Rarely | 1 - Never |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|

14c. (ptconfer) Attend parent / teacher conferences:

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 5 - Always | 4 - Most of the time | 3 - Sometimes | 2 - Rarely | 1 - Never |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|

14d. (observe) Observe your child's class:

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 5 - Always | 4 - Most of the time | 3 - Sometimes | 2 - Rarely | 1 - Never |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|

14e. (volunter) Volunteer at your child's school:

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 5 - Always | 4 - Most of the time | 3 - Sometimes | 2 - Rarely | 1 - Never |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|

15. (dob) Date Of Birth: ___ / ___ / ___**16. (disable)** Disability: (TEXT)**17. (gender)** Child's Gender: (Y) Male (X) Female**18. (enrolled)** Years Enrolled Prior To Request: (#) Years

19. (prevenrl) If Less Than One Year Previously Enrolled: (TEXT)

20. (disput) Summary Of Disagreement: (TEXT)

21a. (satisfac) Satisfied With Results:.

6 Extremely satisfied	5 Moderately satisfied	4 Slightly satisfied	3 Slightly dissatisfied	2 Moderately dissatisfied	1 Extremely dissatisfied
------------------------------	-------------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------------	---------------------------------

21b (Comment) Explanation Of Satisfaction: (TEXT)