

## Dispute Resolution Process Comparison

|  | AEA Mediation  | State Level Mediation<br><i>No request for hearing</i>   | Mediation<br><i>Request for hearing</i>  | Due Process Hearing  | Complaint   |
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| <b>What are the main features in this option?</b>          | Voluntary process, impartial AEA person trained in mediation, resolve issues at the earliest level | Voluntary process, impartial state assigned person trained in mediation, less formal than a hearing, legally binding agreement | Voluntary process, impartial state-assigned person trained in mediation, less formal than a hearing, legally binding agreement, timelines enforced | Formal event, attorneys typically involved, occurs after mediation and a resolution meeting have been offered, timelines enforced, resembles going to court, administrative law judge makes a decision | Written complaint by parent to state when a perceived violation of special education rules has occurred, investigated by the State, timelines enforced, corrective action plan required within one year if violation is proven. |
| <b>Why choose this option?</b>                             | Resolves issues at earliest level with AEA help.   | Resolves issues early with state assigned mediator, goal is a legally binding agreement  | Resolves issues prior to going to hearing, specified timelines, attorneys are often used, goal is a legally binding agreement                      | Alleged violations occurred within past 2 years. When mediation is not successful and resolution cannot be reached, final decision is made by an administrative law judge                              | Alleged violations occurred within past 1 year and an investigation is desired with the possibility of a corrective plan  |
| <b>What are the timelines once a process begins?</b>       | No specific timeline to complete   | No specific timeline to complete   | 30 day resolution period, followed by a 45 day period to complete a hearing and get decision   | 45 days from the end of the resolution session - unless specific extensions to the timeline are granted  | 60 days from receipt of the complaint unless extended for unusual circumstances   |
| <b>Who makes the decision?</b>                             | Parent and school district, both parties must agree to the solution in writing.                    | Parent and school district/AEA, all parties must agree to the solution in writing, decisions are legally binding.              | Parent and school district/AEA, all parties must agree to the solution in writing, decisions are legally binding.                                  | Administrative Law Judge   | Iowa Department of Education  |
| <b>If I disagree with the outcome, what else can I do?</b> | Request a mediation, request a hearing or file a complaint.  | Request a hearing (mediation included) or file a complaint.  | Go to hearing.   | Appeal the decision in state or federal court.   | Request a hearing (mediation included) or appeal to state court.  |