

## THE FACILITATOR'S ROLE

A facilitator will develop a collaborative agenda, aid parties in keeping the meeting focused on the student, provide opportunities for teams to resolve conflicts as they arise and support the participation of the team members. Facilitators are neither decision makers nor members of teams. Facilitators assist in generating ground rules, maintaining open communication among team members, clarifying points of agreement and disagreement and maintaining impartiality.

## PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS

An opportunity to evaluate the process will be provided to all parties following the facilitation. The purpose of the participant evaluation is to determine the usefulness of facilitation in resolving educational disputes. No personally identifiable information is shared. Your cooperation in evaluation of the process is appreciated and will be valuable in guiding future efforts.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR REQUESTING AN SFIEP MEETING

1. Fill out the form (located on the FDOE website at [fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/dispute-resolution](http://fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/dispute-resolution)) to request an SFIEP meeting.
2. Send the form to the other party to be completed and signed, or submit it directly to BEESS by email at [SFIEP@fldoe.org](mailto:SFIEP@fldoe.org). The FDOE facilitation coordinator will contact both parties to confirm their willingness to work with a facilitator to develop an IEP.
3. If the parties fill out the form at the same time, the school district will forward the form to BEESS.
4. Once the request form is signed by the parents and school personnel, the school district schedules an IEP meeting at a mutually agreeable time and place and faxes or emails the notice of the meeting and the current IEP to BEESS. The FDOE requires that parties requesting a facilitator do so at least 14 working days before the scheduled date of the IEP meeting to give the FDOE facilitation coordinator time to confirm that both parties agree to use facilitation, locate an available facilitator and gather and share relevant information.
5. For additional information, contact the FDOE by phone at 850-245-0475 or via email at [SFIEP@fldoe.org](mailto:SFIEP@fldoe.org).



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**  
fldoe.org



Florida Department of Education  
(FDOE)  
Bureau of Exceptional Education  
and Student Services (BEESS)

**STATE-FACILITATED  
INDIVIDUAL  
EDUCATIONAL PLAN  
(SFIEP) MEETINGS**



## WHAT IS EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION (ESE) FACILITATION?

Facilitation is a voluntary process through which a trained and impartial third party helps establish a common agenda and keeps a meeting focused and moving forward. Most ESE meetings do not need the services of a facilitator. Generally, facilitation is requested when parents and school personnel are experiencing challenges in communicating or if a meeting is expected to be highly complex or possibly difficult. Any meeting related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) may be facilitated and can be requested by a parent, guardian or a school district representative.

## SFIEP MEETINGS MAY:

- ✓ resolve disagreements concerning identification, evaluation, educational placement and a free appropriate public education for an exceptional student
- ✓ clarify issues causing the disagreement
- ✓ provide those involved with uninterrupted opportunities to present their points of view
- ✓ stimulate mutual problem solving efforts
- ✓ promote positive working relationships between parents and school personnel
- ✓ help parents and school personnel focus on what they have in common the student rather than the issues that divide them

Many school districts have implemented their own forms of local facilitation. Participation in this process of problem solving at the district level is voluntary but strongly encouraged by BEESS.

## FACILITATOR ASSIGNMENTS

BEESS maintains a list of trained and qualified facilitators who are knowledgeable in the laws and regulations of special education and related services, as well as the process of running meetings. Facilitators are independent contractors who are assigned by BEESS on a rotational and geographic basis.

## FACILITATION IS VOLUNTARY

Although either the district or the parent may request facilitation, both parties must agree to participate, as the facilitation process is voluntary. After a request for facilitation is made to BEESS and both parties agree, BEESS will work with the parties to ensure facilitation is held.

**SFIEP MEETINGS CAN OCCUR EITHER FACE-TO-FACE OR VIRTUALLY. PARTICIPANTS ARE ADVISED TO SET ASIDE FOUR TO SIX HOURS FOR THIS PROCESS AND SHOULD PLAN ACCORDINGLY.**

## COST FOR FACILITATION

In Florida, state IEP facilitation is free to all participants and contractors are paid by the FDOE.