

Special Education Ombudsman

Exceptionality Dispute Resolution

What is a Special Education Ombudsman?

An Ombudsman is a person who serves as a designated neutral party, who advocates for a fair process, and provides confidential, informal assistance and support to parents, guardians, advocates, educators, and students with disabilities. The LDOE Special Education Ombudsman serves as a resource to parents in non-legal special education matters.

- The Ombudsman does not disclose personal information, discussions, and interactions.
- The Ombudsman does not take a side on the issues and serves as an advocate for a fair process.

The LDOE Special Education Ombudsman position was created in November 2023 to:

- Provide information and support to parents of students with disabilities to help them understand and navigate the special education process.
- Promote collaboration and positive communication between parents and school division personnel in addressing special education issues.
- Assist parents in developing strategies and informal options to address issues and concerns.
- Provide information and resources on available options for dispute resolution, such as IEP facilitations, mediation, informal and formal state complaints, and due process hearings when collaboration efforts fail.
- Identify, track, monitor, and report to the LDOE leadership on suspected systemic patterns of concerns that emerge from constituent contacts regarding special education services in local school divisions to aid in addressing noncompliance with special education laws and regulations.

Contact the Special Education Ombudsman

The LDOE is committed to assisting parents and school districts in their efforts to resolve exceptionality related disagreements in the least adversarial manner possible. Therefore, the LDOE strongly encourages parents, their advocates and attorneys, or other concerned individuals to first contact their local special education director or supervisor before utilizing any of the state-level exceptionality dispute resolution options.

There is no formal process or documentation required to access the services of the Ombudsman.

Contact the LDOE Special Education Ombudsman at:
Email: DisputeResolution.DOE@la.gov
Phone: 1-877-453-2721, Option 2