

## Special Education Parent Liaison

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of the program is to provide support to districts, parents, guardian, educators, and students with disabilities by responding to stakeholder calls and requests for information.
2. **Description of services provided:** The OSPI Special Education Parent & Community Liaison serves as a neutral guide for families, educators, and community members attempting to understand and navigate the special education process, and includes informing parents and others of formal dispute resolution options as appropriate. The Parent and Community Liaison listens to individual concerns and questions regarding both special education and the public education system. The Liaison responds by providing accurate information, seeking out useful resources, and offering the necessary support to resolve issues and improve relationships throughout the public school system. Some of the key functions of this position include:
  - Helping parents, educators, and community members better understand and navigate special education processes and regulations;
  - Helping parents, educators, and community members involved in special education better understand and navigate general education processes and regulations;
  - Providing training workshops and technical assistance to parents, educators, and community members on special education processes and regulations;
  - Creating and maintaining online resources and guidance for parents, educators, and community members on special education processes and regulations;
  - Clarifying the roles of parents, educators, and community members in relation to the delivery of special education services;
  - Advising parents, educators, and community members about communication strategies that support a team approach to a student's educational program;
  - Acting as a neutral facilitator between parents, community organizations, and school districts to help solve problems and improve communication;
  - Acting as a neutral sounding board to explore both formal and informal options for resolving special education related disputes;
  - Working to prevent individual concerns from being overlooked by the general educational system by directing parents and community members to the appropriate general education process, procedures, and resources;
  - Participating in the writing, revising, and implementing the Rules for the Provision of Special Education (WAC Chapter 392-172A) process;
  - Reviewing, analyzing and revising other regulations affecting the state regulations for the provision of special education;
  - Reviewing and analyzing the legal impact of proposed and adopted legislation and court decisions on the provision of special education within Washington;
  - Making policy recommendations to OSPI and other stakeholders based upon common issues and patterns of complaints, if patterns emerge;

- Serving as a liaison/representative to the Puget Sound Educational Service District 121 on behalf of the special education division at OSPI;
- Serving as a resource for disability related information, resources, and referral;
- Serving as a resource for general education requests for information, questions, and referral;
- Supervising the process of approving and maintaining compliance of nonpublic agencies in providing special education services to eligible students on behalf of school districts.

The Special Education Parent and Community Liaison does not advocate on behalf of any one party or provide legal advice. Rather, the Parent and Community Liaison exists to address individual concerns about bureaucratic educational systems and acts to ensure a fair process is available to all involved.

3. **Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:** Schools, parents, guardians, educators with questions or concerns may simply call the Special Educator Division of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

**Beneficiaries in 2017-18 School Year:**

# of School Districts: possibly all districts and charter schools  
 # of Schools: possibly all schools  
 # of Students: possibly all students  
 Other: private schools and community organizations

# of OSPI staff associated with this funding (FTEs): .44  
 # of contractors/other staff associated with this funding: 00

FY 18 Funding: State Appropriation: \$50,000  
 Federal Appropriation: \$100,000 for the biennium  
 Other fund sources: \$0.0  
 TOTAL (FY18) \$100,000

4. Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding? No.
5. State funding history:

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
FY18	\$50,000	\$47,896
FY17	\$50,000	\$50,000
FY16	\$50,000	\$49,381
FY15	\$50,000	\$46,293
FY14	\$50,000	\$47,494
FY13	\$50,000	\$38,638
FY12	\$50,000	\$42,696
FY11	\$50,000	\$43,750
FY10	\$50,000	\$43,763
FY09	\$50,000	\$49,420
FY08	\$50,000	\$45,529

6. Programmatic changes since inception (if any): **None**
7. Evaluations of program/major findings: **None**
8. Major challenges faced by the program: The program does not have the staff or capacity to meet the needs of all constituents.
9. Future opportunities: The success of the program suggests opportunities for future growth in services provided and greater prioritization of engagement efforts statewide.
10. Statutory and/or Budget language:

Budget Proviso: SSB 5883 Section 507(12) - \$50,000 of the general fund--state appropriation for fiscal year 2018 and \$50,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2019, and \$100,000 of the general fund-federal appropriation are provided solely for special education ombudsman program within the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

11. Other relevant information:
12. List of schools/districts receiving assistance: See OSPI [website](#). **Not applicable.**
13. Program Contact Information:  
Mary Ellen Parrish, Program Supervisor  
(360) 725-6075