



Communication Options for Families

Options available if you have questions or disagree with a decision of the school

Families and schools have a “built-in” partnership with the child as the focus. This partnership will grow when parents and school staff work together. Disagreements may happen, but working together improves your child’s education.

What can you do if questions or concerns arise?

- If concerns arise, families are encouraged to first talk directly with the people involved as soon as possible. (see District Communication Options for Families)
- First, call to schedule an informal meeting to discuss the situation.
- Then, prepare for the meeting by making a list of concerns and some possible solutions.

What can you do at the meeting?

- Identify student strength and acknowledge what is working
- Identify concerns of families and educators
- Use active listening in order to understand the other person’s perspective
- Ask questions or restate ideas so the team has a clear understanding
- Work together to suggest some possible options to resolve the concerns
- Analyze all of the options to see if you can find areas of agreement
- Discuss what should happen next

What if concerns are not fully resolved at the meeting?

- Request a break or ask the IEP team to meet again to consider including additional team members.
- Call others for suggestions on possible future action (See Communication options for families)

Problem solving at the school level gives families and school districts more collaborative options on outcomes for children.

Next Steps: What can be done if these attempts at solving problems don’t work?

- **Facilitated IEP:** An option for early conflict resolution Wisconsin has chosen to make available to families and schools. A neutral, trained professional helps the IEP team with the IEP process.
- **Mediation:** An option for early conflict resolution available at no cost to families and schools. A mediator helps families and schools work toward resolution on special education conflicts/issues.
 - http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/sped_wsms
- **IDEA State Complaints:** Anyone who believes the school district violated state or federal special education law has a right to file a complaint with DPI. More information at: http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/sped_complain
- **Due Process Hearings:** Parents, adult students, and school districts have the right to request due process hearings for special education disputes. More information at: http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/sped_dueproc

Access to WSPEI Family Engagement Coordinators and the WI Mediation System are provided AT NO COST to parents.

CESA – Cooperative Educational Service Agency

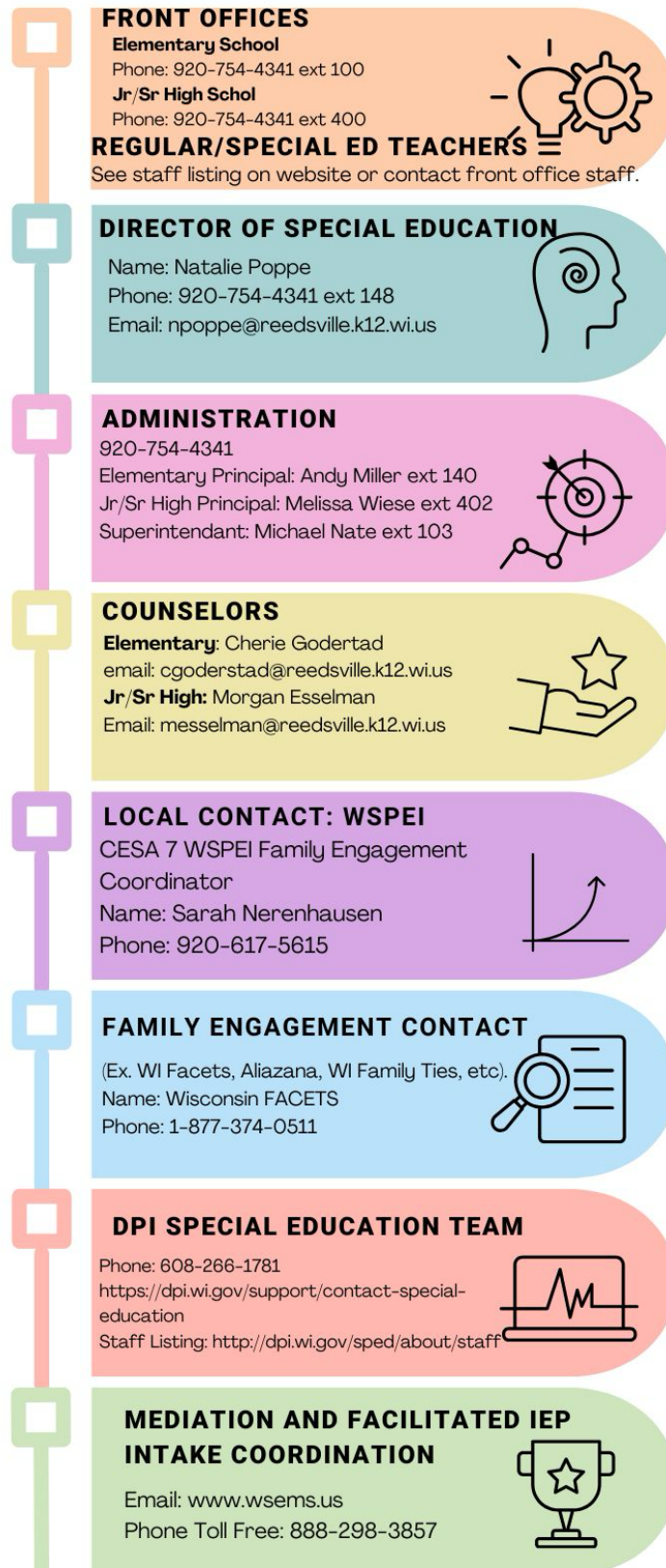
IEP – Individual Education Program

DPI – Department of Public Instruction

WSPEI – Wisconsin Statewide Parent Educator Initiative

WSPEI Information can be found at 1-877-844-4925 www.wspei.org

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Wisconsin statewide parent educator initiative (WSPEI)
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