



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


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INTERIM STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 7, 2019

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Dr. Scott M. Koenigsknecht, Deputy Superintendent
P-20 System and Student Transitions 

SUBJECT: Announcement for the Name Change of the Michigan Special Education Mediation Program (MSEMP) to Special Education Mediation Services (SEMS)

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Office of Special Education (OSE) is announcing a name change for its free statewide special education mediation program. The new name, [Special Education Mediation Services \(SEMS\)](#), is an [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) grant funded initiative.

SEMS provides no cost mediation, facilitation and training services that are intended to address disagreements that can sometimes create challenges for parents and school districts. The new name reflects the MDE's commitment to strengthening relationships between families and school districts, and is an important component of the [Top 10 in 10 Strategic Plan](#).

The MDE, OSE has supported the provision of free mediation services to Michigan parents and school districts since 1997. [SEMS](#), formerly known as Michigan Special Education Mediation Program (MSEMP), will continue to provide these services through the Community Dispute Resolution Program, a network of 18 conflict resolution centers across the state.

In December 2017, a toll-free phone number (833-KIDS1ST) was created and marked the beginning of a centralized intake process. An intake coordinator responds to requests for mediation and facilitated special education meetings and provides information about how mediation and facilitation can assist the Michigan special education community. The 2017-18 school year saw an increase in the number of successful mediations and an 80 percent agreement rate.

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The new identity for SEMS bolsters the MDE's goal of strengthening relationships between families and school districts to ensure students with disabilities receive appropriate special education services. This includes a recently unveiled new logo, website and brochure. Please visit their new website at MiKids1st.org.

For questions regarding SEMS, please contact their new mediation assistance hotline at their toll-free number 833-KIDS1ST (833-543-7178). For all other questions related to special education please contact the Special Education Information Line at 888-320-8384 or email mde-ose@michigan.gov.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance