



## Due Process Complaints

**Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education**  
**October 2024**

### Process Description

A due process complaint is submitted to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Office of Special Education (OSE) by mail, fax, or email. If the due process complaint contains all the required information, it is assigned a case number and forwarded to the Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules (MOAHR). MOAHR assigns an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) who determines whether a complaint is sufficient and is considered properly filed. For any complaint that involves a child with an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential Office of Early Education (MiLEAP) is notified by OSE to ensure coordination and involvement of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C staff in the process.

### Due Process Filed by the Parent

When the complaint is filed by the parent, the district and parent have 15 days (7 days if expedited) to hold a resolution session and work toward an agreement.

- If the dispute is resolved and an agreement is reached, the parties can request for the hearing to be withdrawn, and the case will be closed.
- If the resolution session is waived or an agreement is not reached, the ALJ will schedule a pre-hearing conference.
- Both district and parent can agree to waive the resolution session.
- Special Education Mediation Services (SEMS) is a state approved mediation service and can provide a neutral facilitator for a resolution session.

Mediation can be held at any time up to the due process hearing. Mediation is a no-cost problem-solving process that is used to resolve a dispute and is led by a trained, neutral, third party.

## The Due Process Hearing, Decision and Order

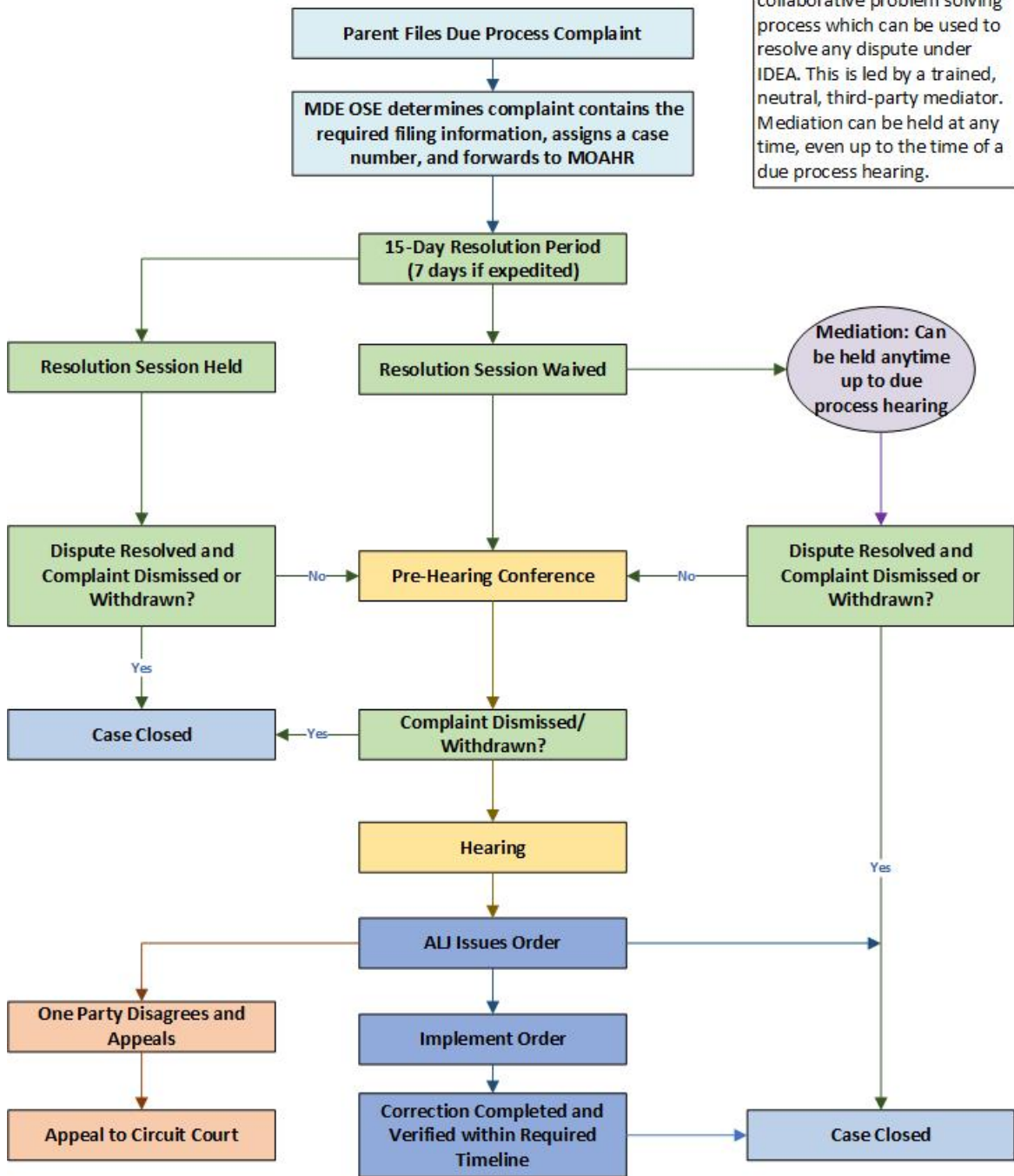
During the pre-hearing conference, which is a hearing to clarify the issues and determine dates for the actual due process hearing, the parties will exchange witness lists and proposed exhibits.

At the due process hearing, both parties will be heard, and a written decision will be made by the ALJ.

- If the case is dismissed or withdrawn, the case will be closed.
- If the ALJ issues a written decision, the decision can be ordered with or without corrective action.
  - If corrective action is ordered, the corrective action must be completed within one year from the date the final order is issued or the deadline ordered by the ALJ. OSE will monitor the progress of the corrective action until correction has been made and all corrective action activities are complete. When the corrective action is complete, the case will be closed.
- If either party disagrees with the written decision, the party can appeal to a higher authority.

# Special Education Due Process Procedure

**Mediation** is a no-cost collaborative problem solving process which can be used to resolve any dispute under IDEA. This is led by a trained, neutral, third-party mediator. Mediation can be held at any time, even up to the time of a due process hearing.



Questions?

Contact the Information Line at 888.320.8384 or mde-ose@michigan.gov

## Relevant Terms

**ALJ** - Administrative Law Judge means any person assigned by the hearing system to preside over and hear a contested case or other matter assigned, including, but not limited to, tribunal member, hearing officer, presiding officer, referee, and magistrate.

**Appeal** – A proceeding undertaken to have a decision reconsidered by a higher authority.

**Case Dismissed** – The due process complaint is removed from the court’s docket by the ALJ and closed.

**Case Withdrawn** – The due process complaint is removed from the court’s docket by the ALJ or complainant.

**Corrective Action** – If an ALJ issues a corrective action, proof of compliance must be provided to OSE.

**Expedited Hearing** - An expedited due process hearing is a hearing involving a due process complaint regarding a disciplinary matter, which is subject to shorter timelines than a due process hearing conducted pursuant to 34 CFR 300.507 through 34 CFR 300.516.

**Final Decision** – A written decision which includes:

- Procedural History (date filed, dates of correspondence, hearing dates)
- Witness List (Individuals who testified at the hearing)
- Exhibit List (student transcripts, student attendance records, Individual Education Plan (IEP)/IFSP)
- Issues (an issue in dispute between parent and district that ALJ addressed in hearing)
- Applicable Law (identify relevant IDEA regulations and MARSE rules)
- Findings of Fact (facts based on information presented. Can be documents, testimony, and admitted exhibits)
- Conclusions of Law (applying regulations, rules, and case law to the particular facts of the case. Provides a Summary of Conclusions)
- Order (decision-based on the above information)
- Information about how to appeal the decision

**Hearing** – A hearing to address the issues in the dispute where both parties will be heard, and a decision will be made by the ALJ. When the case is dismissed or withdrawn, the case will be closed. When a written decision is issued, the decision can include orders with or without corrective action.

**MARSE** – Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education

**MDE OSE** – Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education

**Mediation** – Mediation is a no-cost, collaborative, problem-solving process that can be used to resolve any dispute under IDEA. Mediation is led by a trained, neutral, third-party mediator. Mediation can be held at any time, even up to the time of a due process hearing.

**MOAHR** – Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules

**Pre-hearing Conference** – A hearing to clarify the issues in the complaint and determine dates for the actual due process hearing, the parties will exchange witness lists and proposed exhibits.

**Resolution Session** - A resolution meeting is held when a parent files a due process complaint requesting a hearing against a school district. The district is required to contact the parent to schedule a resolution meeting. The purpose of the resolution meeting is to provide the parent and the district an opportunity to discuss the parent's complaint and to reach a prompt and early resolution of the dispute without going to a hearing.

## Questions?

Contact the Information Line at 888-320-8384 or [MDE-OSE@michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-OSE@michigan.gov).