

Overcoming Stats:

Empowering Youth Voice In Best Interest Determination Meetings



Changing Educational Outcomes for Unhoused Students



Audio by: Yury Peralta

Today's Workshop Plan

Review ESSA & Definitions:



BID Process:



Guiding Principles of BID:

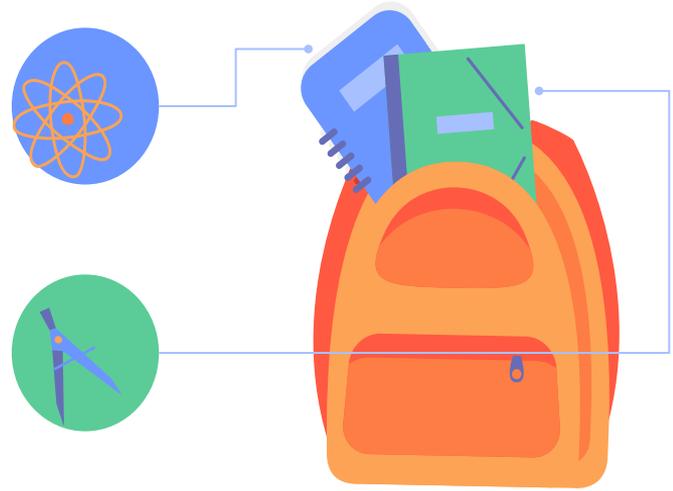


BIDS In Action: Scenario Work



01

Review MV, ESSA & Definitions



McKinney-Vento Act (MV) At A Glance

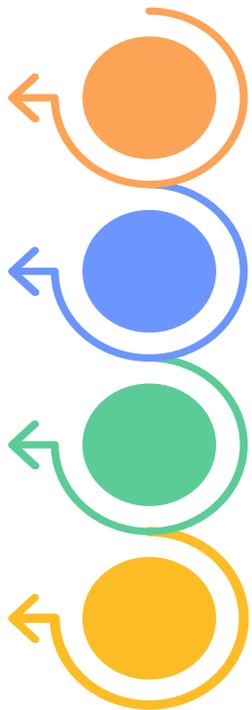


Ronald Reagan signs landmark homelessness Act authored by Reps. McKinney & Vento.

★ [Read full text of law.](#)

- Federal law originally authorized in 1987 - Last reauthorized in 2015 by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
 - Defines & protects homeless student rights to enroll, attend & succeed in public schools operated by Local Education Agency (LEA).
 - Supersedes state or local law or practice conflict.
 - Requires a homeless education liaison & specifies their legal responsibilities.
 - Provides schools federal funding to support services for unhoused students.

McKinney-Vento Act Defines Homelessness for LEA's



Broader Definition

Children or youth “who lack a **fixed**, **regular**, & **adequate** nighttime residence.

No Age Limit

Generally applies to students 21 and under consistent to public education services

No Time Limit

Depends on living situation, case-by-case

No Minimum Income Requirement

Fixed

Not easily moved.

If student is in a residence that is fixed, that means the home is not moving or in a car.



Regular

Staying at the same place every night.

If student is in residence that is regular, they are not hopping from home to home on daily, weekly or monthly basis



Adequate

Living conditions provide basic needs such as running water, electricity, heat, & safe living conditions without overcrowding.

No bed, heat, water, & electricity.



Why School Stability is Important?

On Average, a youth experiencing homelessness can change schools four to five times a year.

76%

of students in homelessness have school stability

Vs. Non-MV 90.3%

17.2%

of MV students dropout of school

Vs. Non-MV 7.2%

When a homeless student moves school placement often, they may experience:



Socio-emotional trauma



4 - 6 months of academic progress loss



suffer disruption in valuable ed. services



behavioral challenge that can escalate with multiple school changes



lower test scores and overall academic performance



Difficulty adjusting to different curricula, expectations, friends, & teachers

ESSA X Transportation

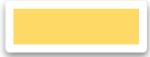
Ensures educational stability for unhoused students



- ★ Establishes specific educational rights for unhoused students
 - Requires ongoing identification of housing status
 - School of origin
 - Under ESSA, School of Origin is by default the child's best interest.
 - Best Interest Determination
 - Transportation
 - Requires Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to develop & implement written procedures to provide, arrange, and fund transport to SOO
 - Immediate Enrollment
 - If it is determined by the Educational Rights Holder (ERH) to waive SOO right, the child must immediately enroll in the new school.

McKinney- Vento: School of Origin

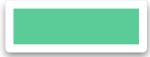
By default, unhoused students can remain in their school origin



The school that the student attended when they were permanently housed or in which they were last enrolled



Student can attend their SOO the entire time they are experiencing homelessness and until the end of any academic year in which they become permanently housed



If a student experiences homelessness in between academic years, the student can continue attending SOO for the following school year

The Importance:

- ★ Students experience much higher levels of residential and school instability than their peers
- ★ School of residence may not be the best option to meet a student's overall needs

Immediate Enrollment (SOR)

If transfer is found in the child's best interest, they are entitled to immediate enrollment to school of residence or at another SOO. It is the school located within that residence bounds of where the student actually lives at.



- Regardless of
 - Contact with Juvenile justice court, probationary status, and /or arrest
 - Fee or items owed
 - Not having required documents such as school records, immunizations, proof residency, or any required documents
 - Missed enrollment / application deadlines
 - History of absences
- Enroll, attend classes and participate fully in all school activities while school gathers necessary documentation

02

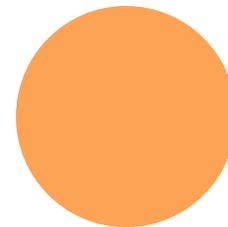
BID Process

Who, What, Where, Why, &
How's





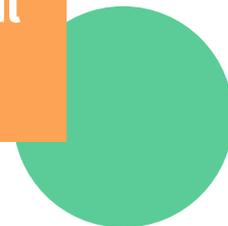
When should a **BID** take place?



Every time there is a significant change in housing outside of SOO district which present some challenges.

Though there is not a specific timeline for making a best interest determination, the determination should be made as quickly as possible to prevent educational disruptions for the child

LEA must ensure that the child remains in their school of origin until this determination is made.



Why is having a **BID MEETING** important?

Collaboration.

School of residence (SOR) can initiate a conversation with child welfare agency & SOO to ensure that the student's rights are protected.

Keeping ERH involved.

It is an opportunity to ensure the ERH is fully aware of the process & making the ultimate decision

Focused Discussion of School Placement Options.-

Weigh to see which one would yield the best chance of success.

SOO vs. SOR for Convenience

Explore the options & INTENTIONS behind new enrollments.

Creates a documented plan.

It is a legal right for the child to attend SOO. This demonstrates that full discussion took place before to child's SOO right is waived & enrolled into another school.

Youth Voice Focused

It's critical to spotlight the youth's insight, concerns, frustrations, and wishes. Consider their voice with a trauma-informed approach.

There are many more benefits to ensuring that a BID takes place.



BID Team Members

Ed Rights Holder

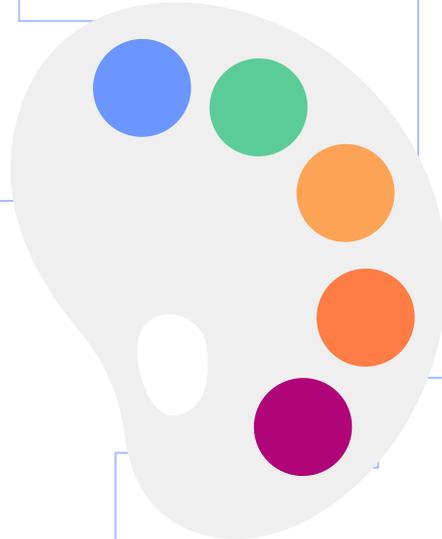
- ★ Provides input on the student
- ★ Makes the final decision whether or not to waive the student's right to SOO

District Liaison (SOO)

- ★ Coordinates & convenes the meeting
- ★ Provides feedback on student
- ★ Maintains & distributes documentations

Youth

- ★ Communicates school of preference



Other Care Team Members

- ★ Special Ed Teachers, Counselor, school Psychologist, Ed Specialist, or other outside agencies / advocates

District Liaison (SOR)

- ★ Identifies students as McKinney Vento, during enrollment
- ★ Initiates conversation with the SOO if student is requesting to return

Beware!

If the family has a social worker involved, **do not** invite them to this unless the family approves.

Youth Voice

About Me

Youth Voice is one of the most overlooked components of a Best Interest Determination Meeting. The role of the student is provide their insight and wishes regarding their school placement

If the student is unable to attend, utilize the My Voice Matters Worksheet.

Questions

- “What school do you want to attend and why?”
- “Are you involved in any extracurricular activities?”
- “How do you feel about staying/changing schools?”

My Interests



Youth Voice

A best practice is to ensure the student understands what the Best Interest Determination (BID) Meeting is and its purpose to find their best interest.

- ★ Always let the student know that a decision is not a 100% guarantee
- ★ Ask the student if they would like to be present.
 - If so, encourage the student to write out their wishes to share at the meeting. If not, ask the student if they would like to pick someone to read their answers to the group.
- ★ Avoid using lengthy sentences and sophisticated vocabulary..
- ★ Do not assume a student's answer. Ask the students questions and clarify their answers if you are unsure.
- ★ Feel free to come up with other questions that are relevant to the student's situation.



Facilitating Youth Voice



NAME: _____

DATE: _____

We are here to help find the best interest for your school placement. This means we want to make sure we have all the important information about you and your needs.

- What do you like about your current school?

- Is there anything that worries you about your school?

- How do you feel about moving schools?

- Was there a school you used to go to that you really liked? What about it did you like?

**Speaking up and voicing out, can be very scary thing for youth.
Set them up for success!**

- ★ Allow the youth to voice their opinion besides verbalized words
 - Be creative in the way you capture and spotlight the youth's voice.
- ★ Set a comfortable environment
 - Have fidget toys available.
 - Offer water.
 - Allow the youth to take breaks from the meeting.
 - You can even set up a code word!
 - Always highlight strengths and avoid embarrassing the youth
 - E.g. head lice preventing enrollment

Educational Liaison - SOO

The role of the educational liaison is strictly advisory with respect to placement decision & determination of the school of origin.

- ★ The educational liaison's authority does not supersede an educational rights holder regardless of how the educational rights were granted
- ★ Before making a recommendation to transfer the child from SOO, educational liaison must ensure that the ERH & child receive an explanation of the recommendation and it serves the best interest of the child
 - It is critical to have complete transparency before the meeting
- ★ If the educational rights holder transfer the child,
 - Ensure & facilitate the proper education placement, enrollment in school, and un-enrollment of school of origin.
 - Facilitation the transferring of credits, records, and grades between schools.

Guidelines to Other Key Members

★ Education Liaison (SOR)

- If a child is transferred, they can ensure the child is identified at enrollment by alerting front office.
- Initiate a conversation with the SOO, if student is requesting to return to SOO.

★ Teachers/Special Education Staff

- IEP, 504, and any other special accommodations
- It will also ensure student receives the appropriate services at the receiving school.

★ Child Welfare Worker

- A social may be involved in the families case. **DO NOT INVITE WITHOUT FAMILY'S APPROVAL**
- Under no circumstances, may the families case plan come up during this meeting. Keep it strictly about the child's educational placement.
- They do not have the authority to make a school placement decision. Reach out to ERH before making any changes to a child's enrollment.

★ Attorney/Therapists/Advocates/Caretakers

- Families may have outsourced services. Ask the family if it would benefit inviting any of these individuals.
- They are very important to communicate the specific needs of the child and report on the child's level of connectedness to their SOO campus.

Where Can A BID Take Place?

There is no specific place that outlines within ESSA. What we recommend is the following:



- **In-Person**
 - School or District office space
- **Online Video Platform**
 - Google, Skype, Zoom, Etc
 - Ensure that all parties, especially the ed right holder, has the necessary apps & updates to attend
- **On the phone**
 - Ensure all parties hear one another
 - Strong connection

Before & During the BID Meeting



Preparations

- ★ Decide who will facilitate the meeting. It is strongly recommended that a liaison facilitates the discussion.
- ★ Create an agenda! List all important topics/ concerns.
- ★ Ensure all attendees have the date, time, & location of the meeting.
- ★ Ensure everyone, especially the ERH is aware of the purpose of the meeting.
 - What is their take?
 - Utilize guiding questions.



Duration

- ★ Stay focused on the purpose of the meeting
 - Utilize the agenda + Opener
- ★ Ensure everyone is maintaining a positive and productive meeting atmosphere.
- ★ Ensure that important details are documented this can be later sent out to all parties

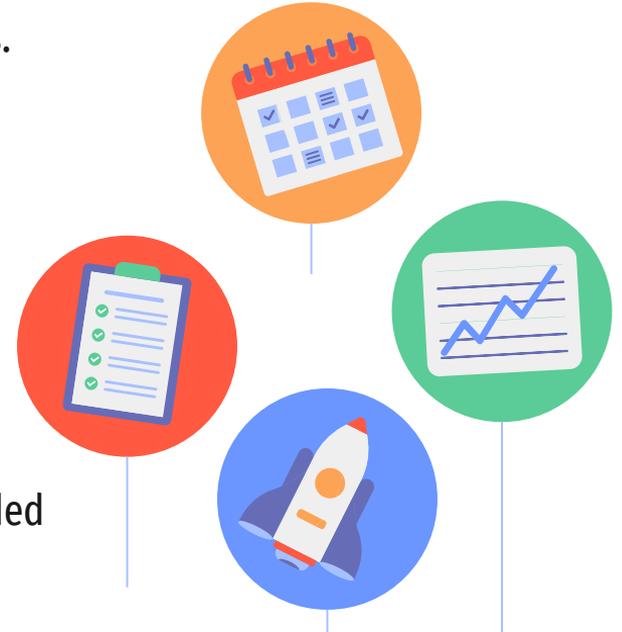
Best Practice Tip: Place a copy in child's school file.

After the BID Meeting



Follow-Up Plan

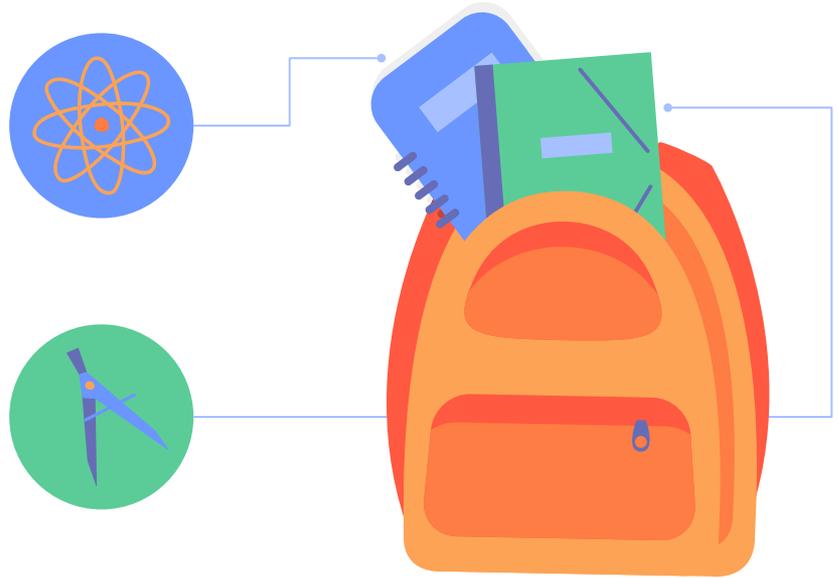
- ★ Ensure that the outcomes of the meeting is emailed to all parties.
 - ERH
 - Liaisons
 - Child
- ★ Ensure all parties understand their tasks
 - Necessary records are transferred.
 - IEPs, 504s, immunizations, etc.
- ★ Follow-up - VERY Important
 - Several days, several weeks, 6 months, annual and/or needed
 - Document BID onto your



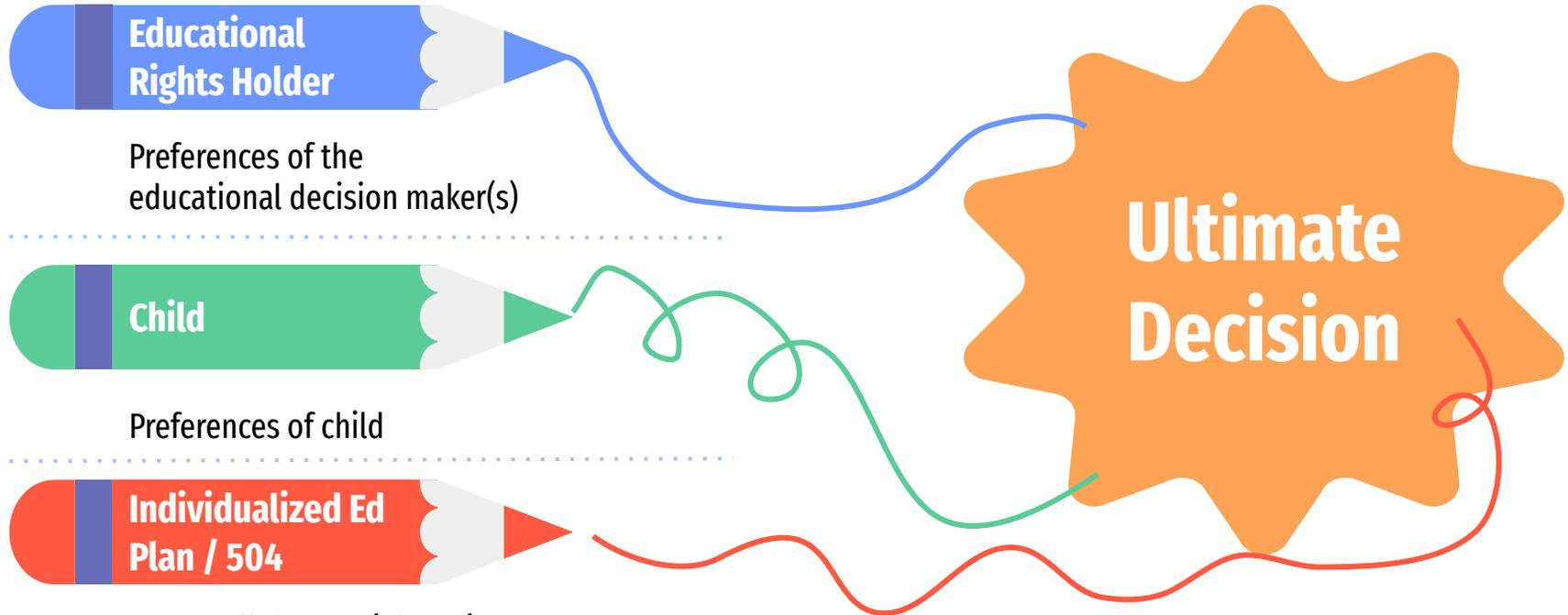
03

BID Process

How to Run it Effectively & Efficiently



Best Interest Determination - Focus Factors



**Educational
Rights Holder**

Preferences of the
educational decision maker(s)

Child

Preferences of child

**Individualized Ed
Plan / 504**

Ensure all the special services &
accommodations and related aid are available
in the 'new' school other than the SOO

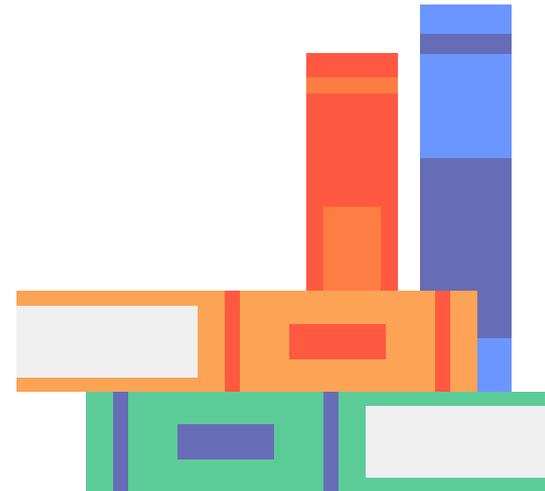
**Ultimate
Decision**

**Remember: A MV student has the right to attend SOO
regardless of current home residence that academic year.**

Additional Factors to Consider

- ★ The child's attachment to the school, including meaningful relationships with staff & peers
- ★ Placement of the student's siblings
- ★ Influence of the school climate.
- ★ Length of commute on child, based on child's developmental stage
- ★ Extracurricular activities the student is involved in.
- ★ Timing of transfer
 - End of a school semester or school year?
- ★ Timing / History of school transfer (s) and its impact on the student
 - How many changes have occurred since?

Click [here](#) to gain full access to additional considerations. 🍏



Questions for Consideration for a BID

“Does the child have an IEP?”

“How does the commute affect the child

“How is the current school serving the students needs and interests??”

“What is the housing plan?”

“How well is the child performing academically?”

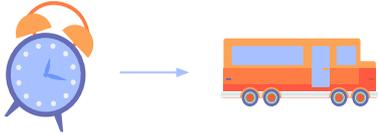
“Is the student’s new living arrangement to be short or long term?”

“How connected is the child to the school? Any siblings”

“How many schools has the student attended over the past years? How have past school transfers impacted the student ”

How is housing placement impacted by school selection?

Transportation Protocols



**Remember
transportation is a
collaborative
effort!**

- ★ Immediately submit the request for transportation to the school of origin. Have this information beforehand. The ERH & the team will have a close estimate of the transportation distance & time.
 - There's no limit on time and distance to school of origin. However, every BID should be unique to the child's situation.
 - An example of Kern County Transportation Protocol.
- ★ Parents may be able to receive gas cards or similar mileage reimbursements.
- ★ If the child has an IEP that has transportation written into it, ensure it is adhered to.



an actual school bus in Japan!

Cost of transportation
should **NOT** be
considered when
determining a student's
best interest!
— ESSA

De-escalation Techniques

★ De-Escalation is used to deal with past hurt, take action in the present, and move toward a future solution. 🍎 It is a good strategy to use before someone gets angry, or when someone is just starting to get upset.

- **Keep it Short & Simple.** Be concise & consistent in the goals and information provided during the meeting.
- **Stay Calm.** Ensure that you do not take anything personal and remain calm & professional even in a heightened discussion.
- **Identify Wants & Feelings.** Listen to what they are saying and not HOW they are communicating their feelings & thoughts.
- **Move Towards a Resolution.** Remind everyone the purpose of the meeting is to come to an agreement that is in the best interest of the child.
- **Take a Break.** Meetings can be long, especially if there are many factors to consider. Ensure this is established at the beginning of the meeting to avoid any interruption.

04

BIDs in Action

Let's Practice our Learning
Scenario Work



School of Origin

Henry is a second grader and attends Noble Elementary School (Bakersfield City School District). His little brother, Joshie, is in TK attending the same school. They are living in two separate motels. Henry lives within BCSD limits with his dad & SOR is Hill Elementary. Joshie lives within BCSD limits with his mom, but SOR is Harris Elementary School. Henry and Joshie's mother holds educational rights. Their mother wants the brothers to continue attending Noble Elementary School together and is requesting transportation daily.

- ★ **What would be your next steps?**
- ★ **Who should be involved in this conversation?**
- ★ **What would be the plan for each child?**



School of Origin

Ari is a first grader enrolled at Longfellow Elementary, her school of origin. Her commute is 1 hour every day. Her mom reported that Ari was arriving home very late and would lose her appetite in order to sleep. Ari's mom, who also holds educational rights, wants to keep her daughter at school of origin. Ari and her mom is currently residing at a homeless shelter.

- ★ **What would be your next steps?**
- ★ **Who should be involved in this conversation?**
- ★ **What would be the plan for the child?**



05

Final Thoughts

Important Highlights +
Reminders + Q&A's



Special Reminders

- ★ No BIDs are the same - CASE by CASE
- ★ DHS/CW/CPS cannot determine SOO vs SOR.
- ★ No one CANNOT transfer the child to SOR, unless they hold educational rights.
- ★ Conversations with students' SOO should start once they arrive on campus (SOR) . Train front office staff & set up enrollment protocols.
- ★ Discipline can be considered, but a BIDs cannot be based upon disciplinary concerns to deny SOO.
- ★ SOO: create a responsive follow-up when a student leaves and when student returns.
- ★ Utilize the De-Escalation skill set.



Dispute Resolution Process

- ★ What happens when the parties don't agree?
- ★ If there is a dispute about the SOO , the student has the right to remain at the SOO until the dispute is resolved
- ★ Dispute would either
 - Go through the district dispute process
 - Or a dispute can be filed through the Uniform Complaint Procedure Act (UCP) at the SOO 🍎
- ★ Once the dispute has been completed, a written explanation must be provided to all parties.



Check out www.kern.org/hip

Need more individual coaching on incorporating student voice into your Best Interest Determination Meetings?

Email: fosteredcoordinator@kern.org

