

# 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 local contacts – ex: your child’s teachers, principal, other school administrators)
- ◇ 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 in the meeting?

- ◇ Identify student strengths 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 in the meeting?

- ◇ Request a break or ask the IEP team to meet again and consider including additional team members.
- ◇ Call others for suggestions on possible future action (see Communication Options for Families chart).

*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. <http://www.wsems.us/iep-facilitation>
- ◇ **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://www.wsems.us/mediation>
- ◇ **IDEA State Complaints:** Anyone who believes a school district violated state or federal special education law has the right to file a complaint with DPI. More information at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/dispute-resolution/complain>
- ◇ **Due Process Hearings:** Parents, adult students, and schools districts have the right to request due process hearings for special education disputes. More information at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/dispute-resolution/due-process>

*Access to WSPEI Family Engagement Coordinators and the WI Mediation System are provided at no cost to parents.*

CESA – Cooperative Educational Service Agency  
DPI – Department of Public Instruction

IEP – Individualized Education Program  
WSPEI – Wisconsin Statewide Parent Educator Initiative

Developed by WSPEI, 2011

WSPEI information can be found at: [www.wspei.org](http://www.wspei.org)

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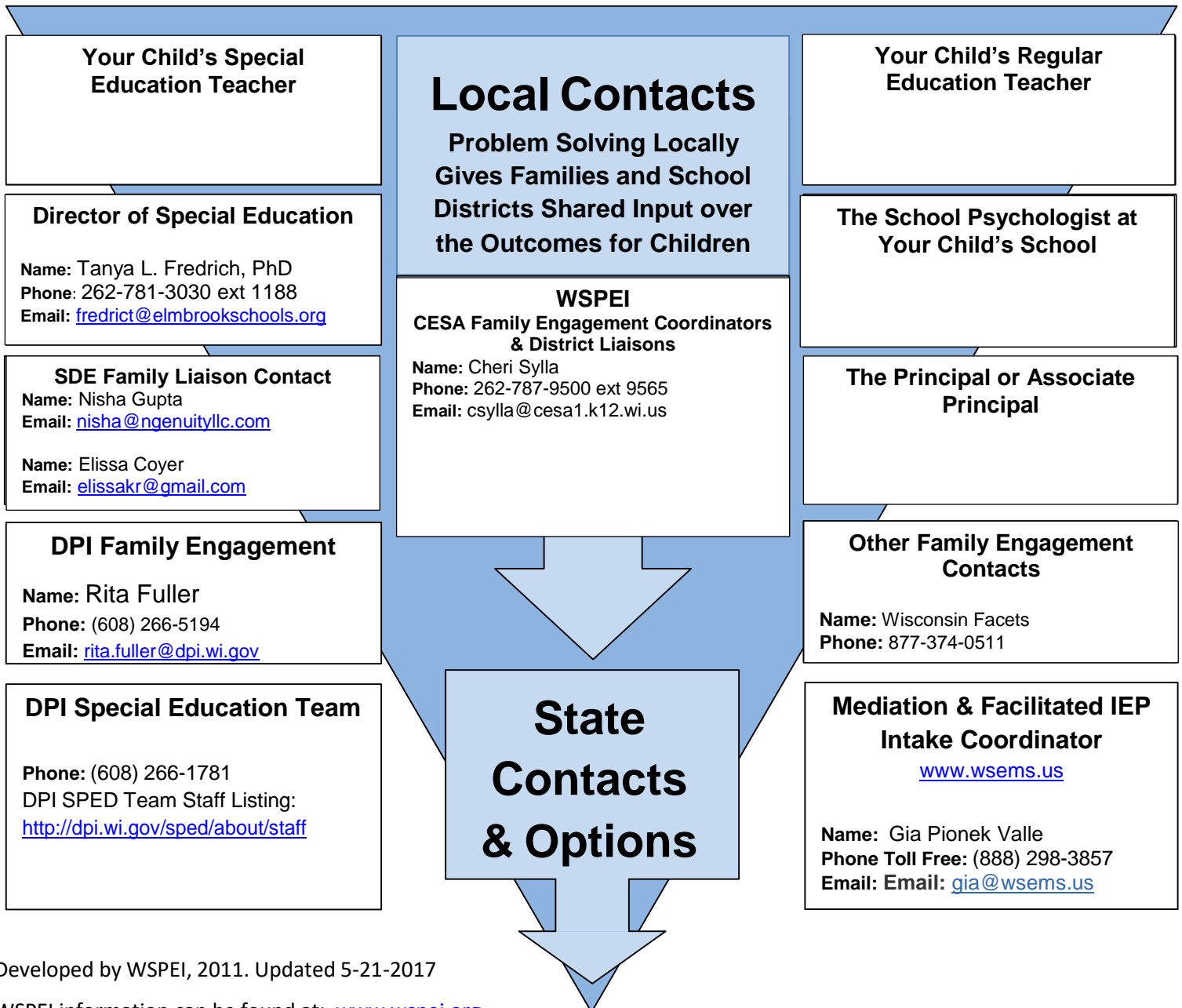
School District:

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*Student Name*

## Who Can I Talk To?



Developed by WSPEI, 2011. Updated 5-21-2017

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