



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

October 5, 2021

MEMORANDUM TO ALL DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

SUBJECT: Policy Statement on Alternative Dispute Resolution

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is committed to maintaining a positive work environment that promotes productivity and individual growth by working to resolve workplace-related issues at the lowest possible level. The Office of Finance and Operations, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Center provides a forum to informally resolve employment disputes before the disputes advance to a formal complaint stage. The ADR process is used to resolve a wide range of workplace disputes, including Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and grievance-related matters, in a cooperative, cost-effective, and timely manner. All employees are strongly encouraged to cooperate and engage in the ADR process. Participation in the ADR process is voluntary for a complainant in an EEO matter. If a complainant in an EEO matter elects to participate in ADR, ED shall provide a management official to participate in the ADR process.

The use of ADR methods encourages participants to cooperate and engage in open and honest dialogue, focus on common interests, and use creative problem-solving methods to arrive at their own resolutions. Most importantly, use of ADR methods can help foster a collaborative organizational culture in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect in support of reaching their full potential and maximizing their contributions to ED's mission.

ED offers an online course, "Leading Beyond Conflict: Prevention and Solutions," in the FedTalent System, which is available to all employees to learn about the ADR process. I encourage each of you to take the training and use the ADR process to help resolve workplace disputes that may arise.

For additional information on the ADR process, please contact the ADR Center by telephone at (202) 245-7520, by e-mail at ADR_center@ed.gov or visit their Web site at <https://connected.ed.gov/fo/Pages/Alternative-Dispute-Resolution-Center.aspx>.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Miguel A. Cardona".

Miguel A. Cardona, Ed.D.