

SPARC Virtual Mediation

Special Education Partnership for the Amicable Resolution of Conflict (SPARC)

Frequently Asked Questions

In response to the COVID 19 health and safety regulations, SPARC will be offering virtual special education mediation through video conferencing. The following outlines what to expect when participating in a SPARC virtual mediation session.

How will the meeting be conducted?

Virtual mediations will be conducted over Zoom video conferencing. Instructions for using Zoom can be found at the end of this document.

Despite our best efforts, technology may fail to operate properly. If that happens, please take the following steps:

- Log out of Zoom and log back in. This often re-establishes the connection.
- Call the mediator immediately to let them know you are having trouble.

In the event of further technical difficulties with Zoom, the mediation will be converted to a phone conference. If a conference call is not feasible, the mediation will be canceled and rescheduled as soon as possible.

How do I prepare for virtual mediation?

Prior to mediation, participants should set up and test their devices for Zoom video conferencing (see instructions below) and find a quiet, private space with adequate lighting for the meeting. If participants are unfamiliar with using Zoom, we will offer a practice Zoom video conference to familiarize them with the software.

Participants must also read and electronically sign the “Agreement to Mediate” document via DocuSign, an easy-to-use electronic signature program. This document includes updated language about confidentiality in video conferencing.

- Please note that only the people listed on the Mediation Notice are able to participate in mediation. All other people must not be able to see or hear the confidential mediation session. Should other people enter the mediation space, the mediation will pause until the call is private again.
- Video, audio, or screen recording of any kind is not permitted.

What if an agreement is reached?

Should an agreement be reached through mediation, parties will be able to review and edit the document with the mediator and sign the document using DocuSign. A copy of the signed agreement will be emailed to all signing parties.

What happens at the end of mediation?

At the end of the mediation session, all participants including the mediators, will rip up any notes taken during the session. No documents or records will be saved, with the exception of the mediation agreement, which will be sent to the participants via email to electronically sign and keep for their records.

About SPARC Services

The Special Education Partnership for the Amicable Resolution of Conflict (SPARC) is a statewide special education dispute-resolution program that supports families and schools to work collaboratively to address the educational needs of exceptional children.

To learn more about SPARC services, visit

<https://www.bidenschool.udel.edu/ipa/serving-delaware/crp/sparc>.



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Zoom Instructions

Zoom is a simple and easy-to-use video conferencing program that can be accessed from your computer, smartphone or tablet. You will need:

- A computer, smartphone or tablet with a camera and microphone
- Access to the internet connection

Helpful Tips

- Be in a quiet, private space.
- Have a strong internet connection.
- Use headphones or earbuds with a built-in microphone.
- Mute your audio unless you are speaking to prevent unintentional background noise from disrupting the conversation.
- It is important that you attempt to login to the Zoom meeting in advance of the mediation to work out any technical issues.

Getting Started

If you are using a laptop or desktop computer, you have the option to download the Zoom application, or view from a web browser.

- When opening Zoom from a web browser, features are limited, and you will only be able to see who is currently speaking rather than everyone who is on the call.
- If you are using your smartphone or tablet, you will need to download the Zoom app in order to access the video conferencing features.
- Download Zoom on your computer, smartphone, or tablet using one of the following links:
 - Windows & Mac: <http://zoom.us/download>
 - Download the Zoom Client for Meetings
 - iOS: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/id546505307>
 - Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=us.zoom.videomeetings>

Joining a Meeting

To join a Zoom meeting, you need the unique link to the Zoom meeting room. You can access this from your computer, smartphone or tablet.

1. From Windows & Mac:

- Click the link to the Zoom room posted in the email.
 - If you downloaded Zoom, you will be prompted to Launch Meeting Room.
 - If you haven't downloaded Zoom yet, you will be prompted to download the Zoom application to access full video conferencing features.
 - Once downloaded, click the link of the zoom room again
- Or launch the Zoom application from your browser.
 - The option "Join from your browser" will appear
 - You will be prompted to enter your name
 - Click "Join" to be taken into the meeting
 - Note: Joining from a web browser restricts some features. You will only be able to see who is speaking instead of seeing all participants at once.

2. From iOS and Android smartphone or tablet:

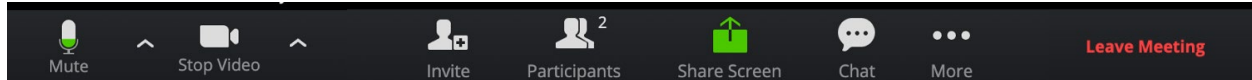
- Click the link to the Zoom room posted in the email.
- You will be connected to the room with the Zoom app.
 - If you haven't downloaded Zoom, you will need to download the app and then click the link to the room again.

During the Meeting

Once you have entered the meeting room, you will need to check your audio and video. You can turn these features on and off using the Zoom Menu Bar.

The Zoom Menu Bar (on a computer)

On a computer, the Zoom menu bar appears at the bottom of the Zoom window once the meeting begins. If you don't see the menu bar, move your mouse slightly and the bar will appear. The bar disappears after a few seconds when in full-screen mode.



With the Zoom Menu Bar you are able to do the following during mediation:

1. Mute/unmute your audio. You can also test or select your audio input here by clicking the up arrow next to the microphone icon.
2. Start/stop your video. You can also test or select your video input here by clicking the up arrow next to the video camera icon.
3. View a list of participants
4. Share your desktop (everything you have open) or select a specific application to share (e.g., Microsoft Word)
5. Send a message to all participants
6. Leave the video meeting

Troubleshooting

For more information on troubleshooting and a list of frequently asked questions, visit <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206175806-Frequently-Asked-Questions>