

Texas Dispute Resolution SystemTM

South Plains Alternative Dispute Resolution SystemTM

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JUVENILE ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROGRAMS: ANOTHER OPTION FOR WAYWARD KIDS

Lubbock, Texas—February 21, 2008—Lubbock and the surrounding counties now have another option for resolving problems with juveniles, both in a proactive and reactive manner. The Dispute Resolution Juvenile Program provides an array of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services to professionals who work with juveniles. As part of the Multi-Jurisdictional Juvenile Mediation Program, judges, schools, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, probation officers and others in the community may refer juveniles to mediation as a part of an early intervention program all the way through transition planning after release from a secure facility.

The most common issues that can be mediated and discussed in a mediation session include:

- Conduct Indicating a Need for Supervision (CINS)
- Criminal Activity
- Delinquent Conduct
- Failure to Attend School
- Parenting contributing to Nonattendance
- Preventing Future Offenses
- Protecting the Public or Child
- Running Away from Home
- Other Actions Deemed Appropriate by Referral Source

“We provide mediation and life goal planning for students who need a little extra attention,” says Amanda McDermand, Outreach Manager for the Juvenile Program. “We find a more enduring solution to the problem when the student and other parties sit down and really talk about the issues. There are some things that kids are afraid to talk about, but through the mediation process, we get to the root of the issue and figure out how to solve the problem.”

And that is what Alternative Dispute Resolution is designed to do. “Assisted problem solving is what we do,” says D. Gene Valentini, Director of Dispute Resolution in Lubbock County. At the end of the session, agreements can be made to determine future actions, to discipline the child, to provide intervention, to establish life and educational goals, to provide restitution to a victim, and provide planning for major life transitions.

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Lubbock Independent School District has been involved with ADR since the early 1990s. But this is the first time ADR has been used to resolve the issues that cause truancy and other non-attendance problems. “The program is preventative in nature, in the sense that once a juvenile is in jeopardy, we can schedule the mediation to look at the issues prior to more formal action being taken,” says Valentini. “In these instances, the problem can be isolated and solved before a juvenile may be taken into court.”

“This is an option especially for juveniles who are first-time offenders or maybe those who have gotten off the track a little bit,” says McDermid. “It also allows the kids to choose how to fix the problem, with assistance and input from the other involved parties. If they get to choose the consequences and rules, they are more likely to follow them. And that’s the main goal for us.”

To request more information from us, please contact us today at (806)775-1720 or toll-free at 1-866-329-3522.

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This is a service of the South Plains ADR System™, a part of the Texas Dispute Resolution System™, which provides mediation and other alternative dispute resolution services to Cochran, Crosby, Dickens, Garza, Hockley, Lamb, Lubbock, Terry and Yoakum counties.