

Abruptly Ending an IEP Meeting: You Be the Judge

(a brief summary of an article in LRP's Team Trainer)

In California, parents of a student diagnosed with ADHD attended a team meeting. The parent secured the services of an advocate who participated in the initial portion of the Team meeting via telephone as he travelled to the meeting location. The district discussed the student's progress and services, considered the parent's input, and accepted the parent's proposed changes to the IEP goals.

However, once the advocate arrived at the meeting, he insisted that the child be placed in the private placement where the child's younger sibling was a student. The advocate and the parent refused to discuss any other options.

The Team chair, believing the meeting was no longer productive, abruptly ended the meeting without making a placement offer. A day later, the district proposed to reconvene the Team within two weeks. The parent filed for a due process hearing, indicating that the district denied her right to parental participation.

Does prematurely ending a Team meeting impede a parent's meaningful participation?

The Hearing Officer ruled that the parent had the opportunity to discuss her concerns and the district had, in fact, given the parent's concerns proper consideration. The meeting was terminated only when the parent and advocate effectively ended the possibility of further discussion. According to the HO, the fact that the district disagreed with the advocate's and parent's view that a specific private placement was the only appropriate option for the child, it did not mean that the district engaged in predetermination or denied the parent meaningful participation.

