

## WHAT is mediation?

A communication process to help people

- talk openly about their conflict or disagreement,
- explore solutions,
- reach a workable agreement together.

## WHO leads the mediation session?

Mediators are

- trained facilitators experienced in dispute resolution,
- affiliated with the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County,
- not MCPS employees,
- independent, with no vested interest in the outcome of the mediation,
- able to provide services in multiple languages and for the hearing impaired.

## WHY should I choose mediation?

- It has a record of creating a win-win situation for all sides.
- It is helpful in resolving relatively small problems as well as more difficult, long-term issues.
- It works!

## HOW can I get started?

- Call the Dispute Resolution Program at the Employee Assistance Program at 240-314-1041 to get the mediation process started.
- Only one participant needs to call.
- All information is confidential.

The **Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County (CRCMC)** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing high-quality dispute prevention, resolution, and education to individuals and community organizations.

Mediation services are free of charge to Montgomery County residents.

[www.crcmc.org](http://www.crcmc.org)

### Dispute Resolution: Making Our Respect Compact Real

- Resolving differences
- Enhancing collaboration
- Supporting our coworkers
- Promoting civility
- Encouraging creativity
- Communicating openly
- Team building through trust

This document is available in an alternate format, upon request, under the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*, by contacting the Department of Public Information and Web Services at 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 112, Rockville, MD 20850, or by telephone at 301-279-3391 or via the Maryland Relay at 1-800-735-2258.

Individuals who request (need) sign language interpretation or cued speech transliteration in communicating with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) may contact Interpreting Services in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program at 301-517-5539.

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*Mediation can make  
all the difference...*



# DISPUTE Resolution

*A unique partnership among...*

- Montgomery County Public Schools
- Montgomery County Education Association
- Montgomery County Association of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel
- Service Employees International Union Local 500
- Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Conflict is a natural part of life.** It can happen with neighbors, family, or work colleagues. In MCPS, conflicts can occur between two or more employees, an employee and a supervisor, or two supervisors. Most of these conflicts are minor and can be handled by the individuals involved. But sometimes employees and managers need additional help to resolve conflicts and build mutual respect and cooperation. That's when mediation can make all the difference.

The MCPS Dispute Resolution Program provides a no-cost mediation process for all employees. Created by a unique partnership among MCPS, its three unions (Montgomery County Education Association, Montgomery County Association of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel, and Service Employees International Union Local 500), and the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County, our mediation program is administered by the MCPS Employee Assistance Program.

It is available to all MCPS employees as part of the school system's commitment to support the development of a strong, effective workforce. The program is appropriate for most workplace disputes between employees. Any two (or more) MCPS employees who wish to resolve a workplace dispute in a collaborative way may request mediation.

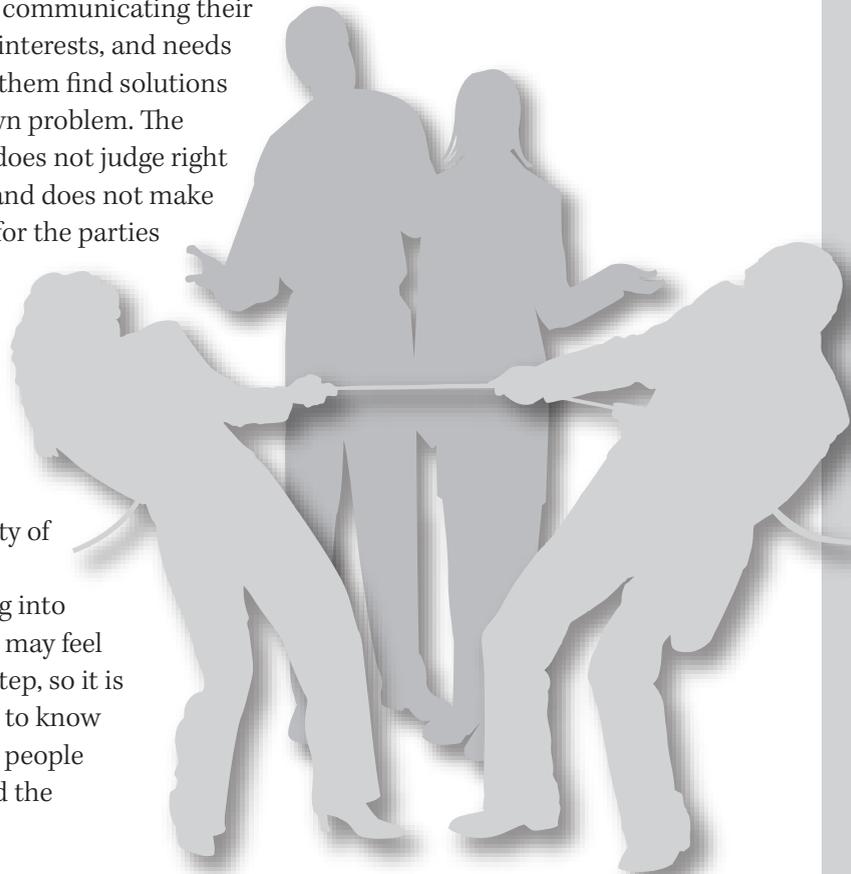
Mediation is a free, voluntary, and confidential process in which a neutral third person (the mediator) assists individuals on all sides with communicating their concerns, interests, and needs and helps them find solutions to their own problem. The mediator does not judge right or wrong and does not make decisions for the parties involved. Mediation has been used successfully in a wide variety of conflicts.

Entering into mediation may feel like a big step, so it is important to know that many people have found the

process to be very helpful in resolving relatively small problems, as well as more difficult, long-term issues.

If you have questions that are not answered in this brochure, call the Dispute Resolution Program at the Employee Assistance Program, 240-314-1041.

A video with more information about the Dispute Resolution Program is on the MCPS Web site at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/respect/mediation.shtm](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/respect/mediation.shtm).



## **Here are answers to frequently asked questions about mediation and the Dispute Resolution Program.**

### **Q. What kinds of disputes are addressed?**

**A.** Mediation is appropriate for a wide variety of workplace-related issues and disputes. For example, mediation can help two people who share work space do so fairly and respectfully or help people with different ideas about how to complete a shared project work together effectively as a team. Other examples might be mediating office temperature, noise levels, or personality conflicts. Mediation can be appropriate for situations in which an employee feels unfairly treated by a supervisor or in which a supervisor feels disrespected by an employee.

### **Q. What can I expect if I decide to call the Dispute Resolution Program for assistance?**

**A.** A staff member of the MCPS Employee Assistance Program will listen to your concern in confidence, determine if the dispute meets program guidelines for mediation, collect your contact information, and, with your permission, forward information to the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County. The Conflict Resolution Center will contact the individuals involved and set up mediation if both parties agree to mediate.

### **Q. What is involved in the actual mediation?**

**A.** No two mediations are exactly alike. Most mediations take place in one session that lasts about two hours. Sometimes a second session is needed. During the session, a trained mediator works with the participants to—

- set ground rules
- gather information
- identify issues
- develop and evaluate options for settlement
- reach agreement
- decide on next steps

### **Q. When are the sessions scheduled?**

**A.** The sessions are scheduled at the convenience of the participants. Release time from work can be provided if necessary.

### **Q. How can I make sure that my privacy is protected?**

**A.** The program is confidential. Neither the program administrator, Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County staff, nor mediators will disclose any information gathered in the process (except as required by law in cases of child abuse, elder abuse, and credible threats of harm to self and others).