Institute for Public Administration’s

Conflict Resolution Program (CRP)

YEAR IN REVIEW FOR 2003

PROJECTS

Delaware Department of Education Individualized Education Program (IEP) Facilitation Training for School Districts

CRP designed a four-stage training program for school district personnel that focused on how to run more effective and productive IEP meetings.

Stages
1. Participate in a seven-hour training on basic IEP facilitation skills.
2. Observe two IEP meetings within their school district and gather evaluation data from the meeting.
3. Co-facilitate two IEP meetings with a CRP staff member and collect meeting evaluations at the end of the meeting.
4. Attend seven-hour training on advanced IEP facilitation skills.

This training was offered twice in 2003. The Delaware Department of Education hopes this new program will result in schools having a resource person within their district who may be called upon at the first sign of difficulty. The ultimate goal is for the IEP team to resolve potential problems at the lowest possible level.

Delaware Health and Social Services Health Fund Advisory Committee

CRP staff designed and facilitated a strategic planning meeting for the Delaware Health and Social Services Health Fund Advisory Committee. This group distributes funds awarded to the state of Delaware through the tobacco settlement.

Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence

CRP staff designed and delivered a one-day workshop on techniques and skills of good communication.
Special Education Partnership for the Amicable Resolution of Conflict (SPARC) Mediation

SPARC services are funded through the Delaware Department of Education in compliance with the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandate. CRP staff provides comprehensive mediation project management thru a multifaceted nine-step process.

• Contact parents and school personnel interested in mediation.
• Track each case from initiation to conclusion.
• Conduct an intake with all parties.
• Maintain a current roster of mediators.
• Conduct evaluations and investigations for cases participating in or not accepting mediation services.
• Design and distributing SPARC marketing materials.
• Provide mediation services to parents and schools for disputes revolving around special education.
• Submit an end-of-the-year report to Delaware Department of Education.
• Participate in local and national trainings and conferences in order to maintain an up-to-date understanding of national legislation and current practices.

At the conclusion of any mediation, each mediation participant is asked to complete an evaluation. These evaluations confirm that most mediation participants are satisfied with the results of the mediation. Most participants said that they would contact CRP again to request mediation services. Participants also indicated that SPARC mediators effectively conducted themselves as “neutral third parties” by allowing all participants to speak and resolve their own issues. This project is ongoing.

Delaware Department of Education Strategic Planning

Framework for Action: Partnering to Promote Emotional Wellness in Young Children

The Delaware Department of Education convened a statewide group of service providers and stakeholders interested in improving the emotional wellness of young children. CRP was hired to design a strategic-planning process for this group and facilitate planning meetings and focus groups so as to have the needed background to create a plan for action. Forty-five people, representing 21 groups, participated in the planning meetings. Once the plan was drafted, CRP conducted focus groups throughout the state to acquire additional plan input. The feedback gained from the focus groups was then incorporated into a draft, and a final plan was unveiled in May 2003.

Delaware Department of Education Individualized Education Program (IEP) Facilitation

CRP provides IEP facilitation services to parents and schools who are involved in special education and experience difficulty functioning as an effective team. First, CRP conducts phone interviews with pertinent parties to understand the issues from each party’s point
of view and works with the parties to prepare meeting logistics. Second, CRP facilitates each meeting and encourages consensus-building between members in order to complete an IEP that represents the best school experience for the student. Participants are asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire at the end of the meeting. This is an ongoing project that began in 2003.

**Delaware Department of Education Head Start Collaboration Project**

CRP staff designed and facilitated a needs assessment, through focus group, of the Head Start Collaboration Project involving the following state agencies.

- Department of Education
- Delaware Health and Social Services
- University of Delaware
- Child Welfare
- Head Start
- Foster Grandparents
- Delaware State University
- First State Community Action Program

Results of the needs assessment were compiled into a report for the Head Start Collaboration Project chairperson.

**Delaware State Personnel Office Management Development Institute**

CRP provides day-long workshops on conflict resolution skills in the workplace for the State Personnel Office. This training is part of the state’s Management Development Institute.

**Appoquinimink School District**

CRP designed and delivered a one-day training for select school-district employees on how to facilitate an effective IEP meeting. This training covered the IDEA legislation, meeting assessment tools, problems the group has faced during IEP meetings, pre-meeting and meeting preparation, meeting roles and qualities, and difficult group dynamics. The day-long training used lecture, small- and large-group work, and role plays to encourage continuous participation.

**Colonial School District**

CRP designed and delivered a one-day training for the district’s school psychologists and education diagnosticians on how to facilitate an effective IEP meeting. This training covered the IDEA legislation, meeting assessment tools, problems the group has faced during IEP meetings, pre-meeting and meeting preparation, meeting roles and difficult group dynamics. The day-long training used lecture and small- and large-group work to encourage continuous participation.
PRESENTATIONS, CONFERENCES, AND WORKSHOPS

Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence

CRP presented at a regional annual retreat on domestic violence on May 5, 2003, at the Atlantic Sands Hotel and Conference Center at Rehoboth Beach, Del. The first session gave an overview of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) entitled “Got Conflict?” The second session covered the five conflict-resolution styles and communication titled “Almost Everything You Need to Know About Conflict Management Styles.” The sessions were well received, and attendance at each was more than 40 people.

2003 Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers’ Northeast Regional Conference

A CRP staff member created and presented “Realistic Ways to Build Collaboration in IEP Meetings” to the employees of Parent Information Centers. Northeast attendees include persons from Maine to Maryland on the east coast, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Siberian Academy for Public Administration Intermediation in Labor Relations Resolution Conference

A CRP staff member wrote and presented a paper titled “Appropriate Dispute Resolution Methods Used by Public Authorities in the USA” and taught a one-day master class in dispute resolution at the Intermediation in Labor Relations Resolutions conference in Novosibirsk, Russia.

Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence

CRP designed and delivered a presentation to Delaware and New Jersey advocates working to reduce domestic violence. “An Overview of Dispute Resolution – Choices for Becoming A Better Advocate” was presented to more than 50 advocates, program directors, and practitioners in the field of domestic violence reduction.

Association for Conflict Resolution Conference

CRP attended the 2003 ACR national conference held in Orlando, Fla. The conference focused on ADR field advancements, policy and standard changes, skill-building resources, and networking opportunities.

LRP Conference

A CRP staff member participated in this annual special-education-law conference. The purpose of the conference was to keep participants abreast of issues facing the disability
community, current legal decisions, and how students, parents, and school districts are impacted.

**State Personnel Workshops**

CRP participated in continuing-education courses offered through the State Personnel Training office. The trainings were titled “Emotional Intelligence” and “DISC Personal Profile and Behavior Styles.” The workshops were a skill-enhancement activity for CRP staff and provided the basis for CRP to design a workshop series that conforms to the training standards of the State Personnel Office.

**UNIVERSITY COURSES TAUGHT**

**Conflict Resolution Skills – UAPP 667-011**

CRP designed and taught a one-credit *Introduction to Conflict Resolution Skills* course for the University of Delaware’s Master of Public Administration program.

**Conflict Resolution and Classroom Management – EDUC 702**

CRP designed and taught a two-credit *Conflict Resolution and Classroom Management* course for the University of Delaware’s Alternative Routes to Certification Program, located in the College of Human Services, Education and Public Policy.

**COLLABORATIONS WITHIN IPA**

**IPA Self-Study Follow-Up Retreat**

CRP designed and facilitated a one-day department meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to provide staff the opportunity to review suggestions made in the self-study report and begin creating a strategic plan to implement suggested changes.

**Academy for Excellence in Local Government Leadership**

CRP created and delivered a presentation on the use of mediation in community-oriented policing for the Delaware State Police.

**The Future of School Siting, Design and Construction in Delaware**


CRP participated in the research, design, and facilitation of a two-day summit on the future of school siting, design and construction in Delaware. To encourage creativity and
participation from all in attendance, presentations were given, small-group work was arranged, and large-group discussion was encouraged. Topics included land-use planning, future school possibilities, and considerations that included such issues as: the nature of education in the 21st century; how school sizing and siting affects our quality of life; the current Certificate of Necessity process; the state’s strategies and the new Land Use Planning Act process for school planning; and data-based forecasts for 2003-2013 enrollment. Participants included state and local government officials, school teachers and superintendents, school boards members, architect and building firms, and others that work with the state or a school district on new school construction projects.

A CRP staff member published a report, “The Future of School Siting, Design and Construction in Delaware: Report and Recommendations,” that compiled all of the information received over the two-day facilitated summit.

**Two-day Retreat for the Institute of Public Administration’s Graduate and Undergraduate Research Assistants**

CRP organized and designed a retreat that served as an introduction to IPA for graduate students and as a venue for disseminating information on what to expect as a research assistant at the Institute for Public Administration. This event will be repeated in August 2004.

**COLLABORATIONS WITHIN UD**

**Center for Disabilities Studies**

CRP designed and facilitated a one-day strategic planning session for 32 members of the Center for Disability Studies Advisory Council.

**Consumer Studies Department**

CRP is assisting the department faculty with organizational development services. This is an ongoing project.

**Center for Disabilities Studies**

A CRP staff member was invited to become a member of the Family Support Program/After School Program for Inclusion Committee. CRP will be utilized as a resource in the area of conflict resolution to assist persons with and without disabilities who use resources in community centers. CRP will provide trainings, workshops, and individual consultation. This is an ongoing project.
Center for Disabilities Studies

CRP designed and delivered a one-day retreat for six Head Start Programs throughout the state of Delaware.

Chemical Engineering

CRP organized and performed a one-day staff retreat for the University of Delaware’s Department of Chemical Engineering Department staff. CRP Staff administered a pre-retreat survey to determine how to tailor the training to the staff’s needs.

CHEP College Council

Anna Hunter was voted by the CHEP professional staff to serve a two-year term on the CHEP College Council. This College Council was established to advise the Dean on matters affecting the general welfare of the College. The Dean consults, when appropriate, with the College Council on the following matters: strategic planning, allocation of resources, research issues, program evaluation, College organization, and other similar topics having significant effects on the College community.

The United Alumni of Urban Affairs

Anna Hunter was voted onto the United Alumni of Urban Affairs (UAUA) committee. UAUA brings alumni of the school's degree programs together to foster a continuing relationship among graduates, current students, and the School. UAUA works to enhance communication among alumni, support their professional growth, and augment School efforts to provide educational and professional development opportunities for students.

University of Delaware Professional Grievance Hearing Board

Kathy Wian is serving the second year of a two-year appointment. Fran Haug-Fletcher was voted to join the Board for a two-year term starting January 2004.

STATEWIDE COLLABORATIONS

Alternative Dispute Resolution Directory
www.ipa.udel.edu/crp/adr

CRP, in collaboration with the Delaware Bar Association and the Delaware Federation for Dispute Resolution, revised the second annual statewide ADR directory. This directory is now available on the CRP website and is updated on a continual basis by CRP.
STUDENTS

CRP funded two research assistants in 2003. Research Assistants conduct research and assist with project management, design and preparation of workshops, and report writing. They participate “in the field” by assisting the professional staff with meeting facilitation and trainings.

TRAININGS CONDUCTED BY STUDENTS

AmeriCorps – VISTA Program

CRP Research Assistants designed and facilitated an Introduction to Basic Conflict Resolution Skills workshop. More than 20 Vista workers attended the half-day workshop. CRP Research Assistant administered a pre-workshop survey to determine how to tailor the training to the program’s needs.

Hodgson VoTech High School

CRP Research Assistants designed and facilitated an Introduction to Basic Conflict Resolution Skills session for select ninth-grade students. The session included information on styles of communication and conflict.

AmeriCorps – Public Allies Program

CRP Research Assistants, with the assistance from CRP staff, designed and facilitated a half-day team-building-skills workshop.

PUBLICATIONS

Synergy
www.ipa.udel.edu/crp/synergy

Synergy is a quarterly online resource dedicated to creating an ongoing forum on alternative dispute resolution. It was launched in January 2003. Each issue contains a feature story, a Research Matters section that discusses interesting research findings in the field of conflict resolution and public administration, a Short Articles section that contains brief articles on current events, an ADR in Action section that features an organization working in the conflict resolution field, a Group Exercises and Icebreakers section that explains an exercise that CRP has found successful, an Above the Bar section that briefly states what legislative action and initiatives are currently occurring across the United States, and a Mark Your Calendar section that tells readers about upcoming
regional events, training, and conferences. Upon request, this publication is available in hard-copy format.

**Summit**

www.ipa.udel.edu/intranet/summit

Summit is a bi-monthly newsletter that began in the spring of 2003 and is written by a member of the CRP staff. It is an internal communications piece that highlights current opportunities in the Institute for Public Administration (IPA), including events, awards, and research. The newsletter’s goal is to enhance inter-office communication. Starting in the spring of 2004, IPA will distribute this newsletter to clients and other University of Delaware departments.