

September 7, 2011

**MEMORANDUM TO ALL DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES**

**SUBJECT:** Policy Statement on Alternative Dispute Resolution

The Department of Education (ED) is very committed to maintaining a positive work environment that promotes productivity and individual growth by working to resolve workplace-related issues at the lowest possible level. The Office of Management, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Center provides a forum to informally resolve employment disputes, before the dispute advances to a formal complaint stage. The alternative dispute resolution process, primarily mediation, is used to resolve a wide range of workplace disputes, including Equal Employment Opportunity and other grievance-related matters in a cooperative, cost-effective, and timely manner.

The use of alternative dispute resolution methods encourages participants to cooperate and have open and honest dialogue, focus on common interests, and use creative problem-solving methods to arrive at their own resolutions. Most importantly, use of alternative dispute resolution methods can help to foster a collaborative organizational culture in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect in support of reaching their full potential and maximizing their contributions to ED's mission.

For additional information on the alternative dispute resolution process, please contact the ADR Center by telephone at (202) 219-0955, or by e-mail at [ADR\\_Center@ed.gov](mailto:ADR_Center@ed.gov).

I encourage each of you to learn more about the alternative dispute resolution process, and I am hopeful that you will use the process to help resolve workplace disputes.

/s/

Arne Duncan