BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE MATTER OF:

PARENTS ON BEHALF OF STUDENT,

v.

CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.

OAH CASE NUMBER 2022060268

ORDER OF DETERMINATION OF SUFFICIENCY OF DUE PROCESS COMPLAINT

JULY 14, 2022

On June 7, 2022, Student filed a Due Process Hearing Request, called a complaint, with the Office of Administrative Hearings, referred to as OAH, naming Capistrano Unified School District. On July 13, 2022, Capistrano Unified filed a Notice of Insufficiency and Motion to Dismiss as to Student's complaint.

OAH does not accept combined motions. Capistrano Unified's Motion to Dismiss will not be considered as part of this determination of sufficiency. Capistrano Unified may renew its motion as a standalone motion.

APPLICABLE LAW

The named parties have the right to challenge the complaint's sufficiency. (20 U.S.C. § 1415(b) & (c).) The party filing the complaint is not entitled to a hearing unless the complaint meets the requirements of title 20 United States Code section 1415(b)(7)(A).

The complaint is deemed sufficient unless a party notifies OAH and the other party in writing within 15 days of receiving the complaint that the party believes the complaint has not met the notice requirements. (20 U.S.C. § 1415(c)(2)(C); Ed. Code, § 56502, subd. (d)(1).)

A complaint is sufficient if it: (1) describes the problem relating to the proposed change regarding the Student's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, or providing the Student a free appropriate public education; (2) includes facts about the problem; and (3) includes a proposed resolution to the extent known and available to the party at the time. (20 U.S.C. § 1415(b)(7)(A)(ii)(III) & (IV).) These requirements prevent vague and confusing complaints, and promote fairness by providing the named parties with sufficient information to know how to prepare for the hearing and how to participate in resolution sessions and mediation. (See H.R.Rep. No. 108-77, 1st Sess. (2003), p. 115; Sen. Rep. No. 108-185, 1st Sess. (2003), pp. 34-35.)

The complaint provides enough information when it provides "an awareness and understanding of the issues forming the basis of the complaint." (Sen. Rep. No. 108-185, *supra*, at p. 34.) The pleading requirements should be liberally construed in light of the broad remedial purposes of the IDEA and the relative informality of the due process hearings it authorizes. (*Alexandra R. ex rel. Burke v. Brookline School Dist.* (D.N.H., Sept. 10, 2009, CIV. 06-CV-0215-JL) 2009 WL 2957991[nonpub. Opn.]; *Escambia County Bd. Of*

Educ. V. Benton (S.D. Ala. 2005) 406 F.Supp.2d 1248, 1259-1260; *Sammons v. Polk County School Bd.* (M.D. Fla., Oct. 28, 2005, 8:04CV2657T24EAJ) 2005 WL 2850076 [nonpub. Opn.]; but cf. *M.S.-G v. Lenape Regional High School Dist. Bd. Of Educ.* (3d Cir. 2009) 306 Fed.Appx. 772, 775 [nonpub. Opn.].) Whether the complaint is sufficient is a matter within the sound discretion of the Administrative Law Judge. (*Assistance to States for the Educ. Of Children with Disabilities & Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities* (Aug. 14, 2006) 71 FR 46,540-46541, 46699.)

DISCUSSION

Student's complaint was filed on June 7, 2022. Capistrano Unified's NOI was dated, filed with OAH, and served on July 13, 2022, which is more than 15 days after it received Student's complaint. District's NOI was not timely filed within. Therefore, Student's complaint is deemed sufficient.

ORDER

1. The complaint is deemed sufficient under title 20 United States Code section 1415(c)(2)(C) and Education Code section 56502, subdivision (d)(1).
2. All prehearing conference and hearing dates in this matter are confirmed.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Tiffany Gilmartin
Tiffany Gilmartin (Jul 15, 2022 09:21 PDT)

Tiffany Gilmartin

Administrative Law Judge

Office of Administrative Hearings