BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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| In the Consolidated Matters of:<br><br>EAST WHITTIER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT,<br><br>v.<br><br>PARENT ON BEHALF OF STUDENT , | OAH Case No. 2017070729 |
| EAST WHITTIER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT,<br><br>v.<br><br>EAST WHITTIER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT. | OAH Case No. 2017060297<br><br>ORDER FOLLOWING PREHEARING CONFERENCE; GRANTING MOTION FOR CONSOLIDATION |

On July 24, 2017, a telephonic prehearing conference was held before Administrative Law Judge Sabrina Kong, Office of Administrative Hearings. Attorney David German appeared on Student's behalf. Attorney Darin Barber appeared on East Whittier City School District's behalf. The PHC was recorded.

Based upon discussion with the parties, the ALJ issues the following order:

1. Hearing Dates, Times, and Location. The hearing shall take place on August 2, 3, 7, and 8, 2017, continuing day to day, Monday through Thursday, at the discretion of the ALJ. The hearing shall take place at District's offices located at 8036 Ocean View Ave., Whittier, CA 90602. The hearing shall begin at 9:30 p.m. on the first day of the hearing, and end at 5:00 p.m., and at 9:00 a.m. all other days, and end at 4:30 p.m., unless otherwise ordered.

As ordered in the scheduling order, District shall provide a facility for the hearing that fully complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794 et seq.), the Unruh Civil Rights Act (Civ. Code, § 51 et seq.), and all laws governing accessibility of government facilities to persons with disabilities. District shall certify that the facilities used for this case comply with the law within two days of the date of this order, or inform OAH if it is unable to comply with this order.

Prior to the beginning of the hearing, District shall assist the ALJ to ensure that the hearing room is configured into a courtroom setting, including (1) a table for Student and his representatives; (2) a table for District's legal representative and special education representative; (3) a table for the witness; and (4) a table for the ALJ, near an electrical outlet. District shall also make reasonable efforts to ensure that drinking water and tissue are available to all parties, witnesses and the ALJ.

The parties shall immediately notify all potential witnesses of the hearing dates, and shall subpoena witnesses if necessary, to ensure that the witnesses will be available to testify. A witness will not be regarded as unavailable for purposes of showing "good cause" to continue the hearing if the witness is not properly notified of the hearing date or properly subpoenaed, as applicable.

*Motion for Consolidation*

At the PHC, District's attorney represented that he intended to file a motion to consolidate the District's case, OAH Case No. 201707072, with the Student's case, OAH Case No. 2017060297. Student's attorney represented that he did not object to the consolidation if the hearing will proceed according to the dates set in Student's case. Both attorneys stipulated for the ALJ rule on the oral motion to consolidate.

Although no statute or regulation specifically provides a standard to be applied in deciding a motion to consolidate special education cases, OAH will generally consolidate matters that involve: a common question of law and/or fact; the same parties; and when consolidation of the matters furthers the interests of judicial economy by saving time or preventing inconsistent rulings. (See Gov. Code, § 11507.3, subd. (a) [administrative proceedings may be consolidated if they involve a common question of law or fact]; Code of Civ. Proc., § 1048, subd. (a) [same applies to civil cases].)

The issues in the Student's and District's case involve a common question of law or fact, the appropriateness of District's free appropriate public education offer for the 2017-2018 school year. Consolidation furthers the interest of judicial economy because the same witnesses will testify in both cases and the same documentary evidence, including the appropriateness of the same IEP offer will be considered. Accordingly, consolidation is granted.

Order regarding consolidation: (a) District's oral motion to consolidate is granted. (b) All dates previously set in District's case, OAH Case No. 2017070729, are vacated. (c) The 45-day timeline for issuance of the decision in the consolidated cases shall be based on the date of the filing of the complaint in District's case, 2017070729, which shall be the primary case, and the parties shall use the consolidated caption for all filings after this date.

2. Issues and Proposed Resolutions. The issues at the due process hearing, and the proposed resolutions, are listed below.

*Student's Issues*:

Did District deny Student a FAPE for the 2017-2018 school year by failing to offer in the Spring 2017: (a) an appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment; (b) appropriate inclusion specialist support to provide appropriate curriculum modification for Student; and (c) an appropriately trained behavioral aide?

Student seeks an order that he be placed in the general education setting with a full-time individual aide from a non-public agency. Student also seeks an order that District provide Student with consultation and supervision services from an inclusion specialist.

*District's Issue*:

Did District offer Student a FAPE for the 2017-2018 school year at the March 20, 2017 and May 31, 2017 IEP team meetings such that District could implement its offer without parental consent?

District seeks an order that it may implement its 2017-2018 offer of FAPE without parental consent.

3. Exhibits. Exhibits shall be pre-marked and placed in three-ring exhibit binders prior to the hearing. The parties shall use numbers to identify exhibits, but shall place the letter "S" or "D" in front of the exhibit to designate if it is a Student or District exhibit (for example, "S-5, S-6, or D-1, D-2"). Each exhibit shall be internally paginated by exhibit, or all of a party's exhibits shall be Bates-stamped. Each exhibit binder shall contain a detailed table of contents. The parties shall serve their evidence binders on each other in compliance with Education Code section 56505, subdivision (e)(7). At the hearing, each party shall supply an exhibit binder containing its exhibits for use by the ALJ, and a second exhibit binder for use by witnesses. The parties may not serve exhibits on OAH prior to the hearing. In the event of duplicate exhibits, the most legible version will be used.

The parties shall exchange resumes or curriculum vitae for each witness who is expected to testify as to their professional credentials.

Except for good cause shown, or unless used solely for rebuttal or impeachment, any exhibit not included in the exhibit lists and not previously exchanged shall not be admitted into evidence at the hearing unless it is supported by written declaration under penalty of perjury, and the ALJ rules that it is admissible.

4. Witnesses. Each party is responsible for procuring the attendance at hearing of its own witnesses. Each party shall make witnesses under its control reasonably available. The parties shall schedule their witnesses to avoid delays in the hearing and to minimize or eliminate the need for calling witnesses out of order. Neither party shall be permitted to call any witnesses not disclosed in the party's prehearing conference statement

except for good cause shown, supported by written declaration under penalty of perjury, and at the discretion of the ALJ.

The parties are ordered to meet and confer by July 26, 2017, as to the schedule of witnesses and present a witness schedule at hearing pursuant to the example below, to coordinate the availability and order of testimony of witnesses, to ensure that there is a witness available to testify at all times during the hearing, and to ensure that the hearing is completed as scheduled.

Example:

The following witnesses will be called to testify on August 2, 2017:

1. Jane Smith at 10:00 a.m.
2. Bob Jones at 11:00 a.m.

The parties are encouraged to review and shorten their witness lists prior to the hearing, bearing in mind that evidence will be excluded if it is repetitive, cumulative, or insufficiently probative to justify the time it would take to hear.

The parties shall attempt to reach agreement on a witness list for the first day of hearing. District shall have witnesses available in case agreement on a witness list is not reached. Prior to the commencement of the due process hearing, the ALJ and the parties will discuss the length of time anticipated for direct and cross-examination of each witness and scheduling issues for individual witnesses, and the ALJ will finalize the witness schedule. Additionally, the parties shall be prepared at the end of each day of hearing to discuss the witnesses to be presented the next day and the time the testimony of each such witness is expected to take.

5. Scope of Witness Examination. Each witness shall be called to testify only once, except for rebuttal purposes, and all parties shall examine the witness on all issues when the witness is first called. After the first direct and cross-examinations, each party shall be limited in examining the witness to only those matters raised in the immediately preceding examination. The order in which the parties present their case in chief shall be subordinate to the need for each witness to appear only once.

6. Telephonic Testimony. Student requested that Dr. Wayne Sailor be allowed to testify by telephone because he lives outside of California. ALJ allowed Dr. Sailor to testify by telephone. Whether a witness may appear by telephone is a matter within the discretion of the ALJ. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 5, § 3082, subd. (g).) Any party seeking to present a witness by telephone shall move in advance for leave to do so, unless the opposing party has stipulated that the witness may appear by telephone. The proponent of the witness shall provide the proposed witness with a complete set of exhibit binders from all parties, containing all of each party's exhibits, prior to the hearing; and shall ensure that the hearing room has sound equipment that allows everyone in the room to hear the witness, and the

witness to hear objections and rulings. No witness will be heard by telephone unless all these requirements have been fulfilled.

7. Timely Disclosure of Witnesses/Exhibits. Education Code section 56505, subdivision (e) (7), provides for disclosure of witnesses and exhibits at least five business days prior to the hearing.

8. Electronic Recording of Hearing.

a. Audio Recording. Student and District moved to audio record the hearing. The parties' request to make an audio recording of the hearing is granted as a courtesy and subject to the following conditions: 1) that OAH's recording is the only official recording; 2) that the recording will be turned on and off at the same time as the ALJ's recording, to avoid recording conversations while off the record; 3) that operation of the party's recording mechanism will not be allowed to delay the hearing; 4) that the recording shall not be played or published for a prospective witness; 5) that the recording shall not be used for any purpose other than assisting in the representation and presentation of this due process hearing; 6) that the parties shall erase, or otherwise destroy, the recording after the hearing and all opportunities for appeal from any decision herein has been exhausted; and 7) that the parties shall not use this recording in any subsequent due process hearing.

b. Video Recording. No party, witness or anyone else present may make any video recording of any part of the proceedings. Any person doing so shall be subject to sanctions.

9. Order of Presentation of Evidence. In an administrative proceeding, the burden of proof is ordinarily on the party requesting the hearing. (*Schaffer v. Weast* (2005) 546 U.S. 49, 56-62 [126 S.Ct. 528, 163 L.Ed.2d 387].) In this matter, Student shall present his case-in-chief first, followed by District.

10. Motions. Student may be filing a motion for stay put. If Student elects to file a motion for stay put, it must be filed by 5:00 p.m. on July 26, 2017. District's response must be filed by 5:00 p.m. on July 27, 2017. No other pretrial motions are pending or contemplated. Any motion filed after this date shall be supported by a declaration under penalty of perjury establishing good cause as to why the motion was not made prior to or during the July 24, 2017 prehearing conference.

11. Compensatory Education/Reimbursement. Any party seeking reimbursement of expenditures shall present admissible evidence of these expenditures, or a stipulation to the amount of expenditures, as part of its case in chief. A party seeking compensatory education should provide evidence regarding the type, amount, duration, and need for any requested compensatory education.

12. Stipulations. Stipulations to pertinent facts, contentions or resolutions are encouraged. Any proposed stipulation shall be submitted to the assigned ALJ in written form.

13. Conduct of Counsel and Hearing Room Decorum. Counsel, all parties, and all witnesses shall conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner at all times. Cellular phones, pagers, recorders, and other noisemaking electronic devices shall be shut off or set to vibrate during the hearing unless permission to the contrary is obtained from the ALJ.

14. Special Needs and Accommodations. None anticipated at the PHC. A party or participant to this case, such as a witness, requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in the mediation or hearing may contact the assigned calendar staff, identified in the scheduling order, at (916) 263-0880, as soon as the need is known. Additional information concerning requests for reasonable accommodation is available on OAH's website at: http://www.dgs.ca.gov/oah/Home/Accommodations.aspx

15. Hearing Closed To the Public.

16. Settlement. The parties are encouraged to continue working together to reach an agreement before the due process hearing. The parties shall inform OAH in writing immediately should they reach a settlement or otherwise resolve the dispute before the scheduled hearing. In addition, if a settlement is reached within five days of the scheduled start of the due process hearing, the parties shall also inform OAH of the settlement by telephone at (916) 263-0880.

IF A FULL AND FINAL WRITTEN SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT IS REACHED AFTER 5:00 P.M. THE DAY PRIOR TO HEARING, THE PARTIES SHALL LEAVE A VOICEMAIL MESSAGE REGARDING THE SETTLEMENT AT (916) 274-6035. THE PARTIES SHOULD ALSO LEAVE CONTACT INFORMATION SUCH AS CELLULAR PHONE NUMBERS OF EACH PARTY OR COUNSEL FOR EACH PARTY. THE PARTIES SHOULD SIMULTANEOUSLY **FAX THE SIGNATURE PAGE OF THE SIGNED AGREEMENT OR A LETTER WITHDRAWING THE CASE TO OAH AT THE FAXINATION LINE at 916-376-6319.**

Dates for hearing will not be cancelled until the letter of withdrawal or signature page of the signed agreement has been received by OAH. If an agreement in principle is reached, the parties should plan to attend the scheduled hearing unless different arrangements have been agreed upon by the assigned ALJ. The assigned ALJ will check for messages the evening prior to the hearing or the morning of the hearing.

If the matter settles subject to board approval, in addition to a signed copy of the signature page of the settlement agreement as noted above, the parties shall submit a request for a status conference and provide the date of the next board meeting. The hearing dates will not be cancelled without this information.

17. Failure to comply with this order may result in the exclusion of evidence or other sanctions.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATE: July 25, 2017

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Sabrina Kong
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SABRINA KONG
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings