BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE MATTER OF:

PARENTS ON BEHALF OF STUDENT,

v.

NATOMAS CHARTER SCHOOL AND YOLO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION.

OAH CASE NUMBER 2026030393

ORDER DETERMINING DUE PROCESS COMPLAINT SUFFICIENT

MARCH 24, 2026

On March 5, 2026, Student filed a Due Process Hearing Request, called a complaint, with the Office of Administrative Hearings, referred to as OAH, naming Natomas Charter School and Yolo County Office of Education. On March 20, 2026, Natomas Charter School filed a Notice of Insufficiency as to the complaint.

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).

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

The issues alleged in Student's complaint are sufficient. The complaint identifies the issues and adequate facts about the problem to permit respondents to respond and participate in a resolution session and mediation.

Natomas Charter School argues that the issues name three respondents and do not sufficiently differentiate which claims are alleged against which party. Student identifies the issues with letters, from A through N, rather than numbers. Prior to listing the issues, Student has an introductory sentence that says, "[d]uring the 2023-2024 school years, the District denied Student a FAPE by repeatedly violating IDEA as outlined below:" Natomas Charter School cites reference to "District" in this sentence as inclusion of a third respondent. It is not. The complaint names only two respondents, Natomas Charter School and Yolo County. This single reference to "District" in the introductory sentence is deemed a ministerial error and does not render the complaint insufficient. Each specific issue pled, from A through N, identifies whether it is pled against Natomas Charter School, Yolo County, or both. The issues are pled sufficiently to put respondents on notice of which allegations are alleged against which respondent.

Natomas Charter School seeks additional facts for each issue, such as specific placement decisions attributable to which respondent, alternative placements that were ignored, listing of which goals were deficient, and how the deficiencies impeded Student's progress. While the list of additional facts Natomas Charter School seeks may be useful in preparing a defense, their omission does not render the issues pled insufficient. Here, the issues pled and their related facts provide respondents an awareness and understanding of the issues forming the basis of the complaint.

ORDER

1. The complaint is sufficient under title 20 United States Code section 1415(b)(7)(A)(ii).
2. All mediation, prehearing conference, and hearing dates in this matter are confirmed.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Joy Redmon

Joy Redmon
Presiding Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings