BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE MATTER OF:

PARENTS ON BEHALF OF STUDENT

v.

SAUGUS UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

OAH CASE NUMBER 2025060318

ORDER FOLLOWING PREHEARING CONFERENCE ON NON-EXPEDITED ISSUES GRANTING REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE

On August 11, 2025, Administrative Law Judge Chris Butchko, Office of Administrative Hearings held a telephonic prehearing conference. The Administrative Law Judge will be referred to as an ALJ. The prehearing conference will be referred to as a PHC. Parent appeared on behalf of Student. Sundee Johnson, Attorney at Law, appeared on behalf of Saugus Union School District. The PHC was recorded. Based upon discussion with the parties, the ALJ issues the following order:

HEARING DATES, TIMES, AND LOCATION

At the start of the PHC, the parties jointly requested to continue the prehearing conference and due process hearing so that a mediation could be held.

The motion was made orally and not filed three days before the PHC. Good cause existed for not filing the motion three days before this PHC as the self-represented Parent and Saugus had not discussed mediating the case prior to the PHC. The motion was jointly made and entails only a brief continuance of the hearing.

A due process hearing must be conducted and a decision rendered within 45 days of receipt of the due process notice unless an extension is granted for good cause. (34 C.F.R. § 300.515(a) & (c) (2006); Ed. Code, §§ 56502, subd. (f), 56505, subd. (f)(3); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 1, § 1020.) As a result, continuances are disfavored. Good cause may include the unavailability of a party, counsel, or an essential witness due to death, illness or other excusable circumstances; substitution of an attorney when the substitution is required in the interests of justice; a party's excused inability to obtain essential testimony or other material evidence despite diligent efforts; or another significant, unanticipated change in the status of the case as a result of which the case is not ready for hearing. (Ed. Code, § 56505, subd. (f)(3); Cal. Rules of Court, rule 3.1332(c).) OAH considers all relevant facts and circumstances, including the proximity of the hearing date; previous continuances or delays; the length of continuance requested; the availability of other means to address the problem giving rise to the request; prejudice to a party or witness as a result of a continuance; the impact of granting a continuance on other pending hearings; whether trial counsel is engaged in another trial; whether the parties have stipulated to a continuance; whether the interests of justice are served by the continuance or imposing conditions on the continuance; and any other relevant fact or circumstance. (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 3.1332(d).)

The request for continuance is granted for good cause. Mediation can result in resolution of the matter without hearing and thereby conserve the resources of the

parties and the judiciary. All previously scheduled dates are vacated. The case shall proceed as follows:

MEDIATION DATE is Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM.

MEDIATION will occur via telephone or videoconference.

PREHEARING CONFERENCE will be held on Friday, August 29, 2025, at 10:00 AM.

All other prehearing matters shall be addressed at the resumption of the prehearing conference on August 29, 2025. All prehearing motions must be filed three business days before the PHC.

DUE PROCESS HEARING will be held Tuesday, September 9, 2025, through Thursday, September 11, 2025.

The hearing will be conducted via telephone or videoconference and shall begin at 9:30 AM and end at 3:30 PM on all days, unless otherwise ordered. The hearing shall continue day to day at the discretion of 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.

SETTLEMENT

The parties shall immediately inform OAH in writing if they reach a settlement or otherwise resolve the dispute before the scheduled hearing. If the parties reach a settlement 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 PM the day before the 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. At the same time, the parties should send the signature page of the signed agreement or a letter withdrawing the case to OAH at https://www.applications.dgs.ca.gov/oah/oahsftweb.

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.

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

FAILURE TO COMPLY

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

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Chris Butchko

Chris Butchko
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings