BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of: PARENT ON BEHALF OF STUDENT, v. SADDLEBACK VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.	OAH Case No. 2018090473 ORDER FOLLOWING PREHEARING CONFERENCE

On January 14, 2019, a telephonic prehearing conference was held before Administrative Law Judge Chris Butchko, Office of Administrative Hearings. Timothy Adams and Lauren-Ashley Caron, Attorneys at Law, appeared on behalf of Student. S. Daniel Harbottle, Attorney at Law, appeared on behalf of Saddleback Valley Unified School District. The PHC was recorded.

Saddleback Valley filed its response to Student's complaint on September 25, 2018, which permits the hearing to go forward. (*M.C. v. Antelope Valley Unified Sch. Dist.* (9th Cir. 2017) 858 F.3d 1189, 1199-1200.)

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

1. Hearing Dates, Times, and Location. The hearing shall take place on January 23 and 24, 2019, and continue day to day[1] at the discretion of the ALJ. The hearing shall take place at Esperanza Special Education School, located at 25121 Pradera Drive, Mission Viejo, California 92691. The hearing shall begin at 9:30 a.m. the first day of the hearing and at 9:00 a.m. all other days, unless otherwise ordered.

As ordered in the scheduling order, the named local educational agency was to 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. The named local educational agency failed to certify that it would provide a facility for this case that complied with the law. The local educational

[1] At the conference, the parties reported that the hearing would probably take four days to complete and indicated a preference to continue the hearing on Friday, January 25, and Tuesday, January 29, 2019. The scheduling of additional days of hearing will be taken up with the parties on the first day of hearing.

agency shall inform OAH by close of business on Thursday, January 17, 2019, whether it is able to certify that it will provide a facility that complies with the law.

Prior to the beginning of the hearing, Saddleback Valley shall ensure that the hearing room is configured into a courtroom setting and shall have at a minimum (1) a table for Student and his representatives; (2) a table for Saddleback Valley's legal representative and special education representative; (3) a table for the witness; and (4) a table for the ALJ, near an electrical outlet. Saddleback Valley shall provide drinking water and tissue to all parties, witnesses and the ALJ. The same hearing room shall be used for each day of hearing and shall be available at least one hour prior to the commencement of the hearing each day. The hearing room shall be locked following the hearing each night. Saddleback Valley shall ensure that the hearing room and access to it are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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.

2. Issues and Proposed Resolutions. The sole issue at the due process hearing, and the proposed resolutions, is as follows:

1. Did Saddleback Valley's May 31, 2018 individualized education program deny Student a free appropriate public education by failing to:

a. include appropriate goals for Student in speech and language, social/emotional functioning, and gross and fine motor skills;

b. provide appropriate accommodations and modifications to meet Student's needs in speech and language, social/emotional functioning, and gross and fine motor skills;

c. offer appropriate related services for Student's needs in speech and language, social/emotional functioning, and gross and fine motor skills; and

d. offer an appropriate placement for Student which included interventions and individualized strategies to address his academic deficits, including one on one instruction in reading.[2]

[2] The issues were discussed with the parties at hearing, with concerns raised only as to item 1d. Support for the formulation of that issue is found at pages 7-8 of the due process hearing request. (See, *M.C. v. Antelope Valley Unified Sch. Dist.* (9th Cir. 2017) 858 F.3d 1189.)

As remedies, Student seeks: reimbursement to Parents for tuition and travel to the Johnson Academy; reimbursement to Parents for the costs of private occupational therapy and a subscription to a reading program; and prospective funding for placement at a non-public school, including related services and transportation.

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 letters "S" or "D" in front of the exhibit to designate if it is a Student or school district exhibit (for example, "S-1" or "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. Each party shall serve an exhibit binder containing its respective exhibits on the other party 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. To the extent practicable, exhibits in the binders shall be in chronological order.

Excerpts of an audio record of an individualized education program team meeting, if any, must be transcribed and offered as documentary evidence; that portion of the audio record transcribed shall be provided to the opposing party with the transcript to allow an opportunity to verify the accuracy of the transcription. Transcription need not be done by a certified court reporter. Electronic recording of the excerpts of the audio record shall be included with the transcript to allow the ALJ to listen to the recording as well as read the transcript. The parties may also be required to electronically transfer the audio recordings to OAH, at the ALJ's discretion.

The parties shall include, as exhibits, resumes for each witness expected to testify as to their professional credentials. Notwithstanding the requirements of Education Code section 56505, subdivision (e)(7), the parties shall exchange resumes not later than 24 hours before the witness is scheduled to testify.

Saddleback Valley shall include as part of its exhibits the school calendar(s) for the years at issue.

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. Education Code section 56505, subdivision (e)(8), affords each party the right to prohibit the introduction of any evidence at the hearing that has not been disclosed at least five days before the hearing.

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

to the other party. The parties shall schedule their witnesses to avoid delays in the hearing and to minimize or eliminate the need for calling witnesses twice or out of order. Neither party shall be permitted to call any witnesses not disclosed in the party's prehearing conference statement and listed below, except for good cause shown, supported by written declaration under penalty of perjury, and at the discretion of the ALJ. Education Code section 56505, subdivision (e)(8), affords each party the right to prohibit the introduction of any evidence at the hearing that has not been disclosed at least five days before the hearing.

The parties are ordered to meet and confer by 5:00 p.m. on January 18, 2019, as to the schedule of witnesses. The parties shall 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.

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 ALJ has discretion to limit the number of witnesses who testify and the time allowed for witnesses' testimony. Education Code, section 56505.1, subdivision (h), empowers the ALJ presiding at a due process hearing to set a reasonable limit on the length of the hearing after consideration of all of the following: (i) issues to be heard, (ii) complexity of facts to be proven, (iii) ability of the parties or their representatives to present their respective cases, and (iv) estimates of the parties as to the time needed to present their respective cases.

On the first day of hearing before the first witness testifies, the parties shall provide the ALJ with one **joint** detailed hour-by-hour schedule of all witnesses expected to testify at hearing, which list shall also include an estimate of time for each party's direct and cross-examination. Saddleback Valley shall have witnesses available in case agreement on a witness list is not reached. The ALJ will finalize the witness schedule, and will revisit the schedule at the beginning and end of each hearing day. Counsel shall meet and confer each day of hearing to revise the witness schedule as needed.

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. If a party intended to call a witness called first by the other party, that party shall complete their direct examination at the same time as their cross examination. The order in which the parties present their cases in chief shall be subordinate to the need for each witness to appear only once.

6. Telephonic Testimony. 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 physical 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. Electronic copies of the evidence binders will not be permitted. The witness must be on a clear telephone connection, and in a location that ensures the confidentiality of the proceedings. No witness will be heard by telephone unless all these requirements have been fulfilled. Currently, not witnesses are expected to need to testify by telephone.

7. Electronic Recording of Hearing.

a. Audio Recording. Student and Saddleback Valley requested permission to make an audio recording of the hearing. Any party who desires to make such a recording shall do so only on the conditions that: (1) The parties shall turn on and off the recording device at the same time that the ALJ is on and off the record, to avoid recording conversations while off the record; (2) the parties shall not play any part of the recording for a prospective witness; (3) the parties shall not publish or play any part of the recording for any purpose other than assisting in the representation and presentation of this due process hearing; (4) the parties will erase, or otherwise destroy, the recording after the hearing and all opportunities for appeal from any decision herein has been exhausted; and (5) the parties shall not use this recording in any subsequent due process hearing. The recording by OAH is the only official recording; recording of the hearing by a party is not the official record and is permitted as a courtesy. The operation of the party's recording mechanism will not be allowed to delay the 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.

8. 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].) Here, Student is the petitioning party. Accordingly, Student shall present his case-in-chief, followed by Saddleback Valley.

9. Motions. Student's motion to quash subpoenas duces tecum issued by Saddleback Valley were argued by the parties during the PHC. Student's motion was denied as to each subpoena, with a separate order to follow.

No further 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 at least three days prior to the PHC of January 14, 2019.

10. 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.

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

12. 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.

13. Special Needs and Accommodations. 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 https://www.dgs.ca.gov/oah/Home/Accessibility.aspx.

14. Hearing Closed To the Public. At Student's request, the hearing will be closed to the public.

15. Settlement. The parties are encouraged to continue working together to reach an agreement before the due process hearing. Each of the parties shall inform OAH in writing immediately should they reach a settlement or otherwise resolve the dispute before the scheduled hearing, or if the petitioning party withdraws the request for due process. 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, OR THE PETITIONING PARTY WITHDRAWS THE DUE PROCESS HEARING REQUEST, AFTER 3:00 P.M. THE DAY PRIOR TO HEARING, EACH OF THE PARTIES SHALL LEAVE A VOICEMAIL MESSAGE FOR OAH REGARDING THE SETTLEMENT OR WITHDRAWAL AT (916) 274-6035. THE PARTIES SHOULD ALSO LEAVE CONTACT INFORMATION SUCH AS CELLULAR PHONE NUMBERS OF EACH PARTY OR COUNSEL FOR EACH PARTY. IN THE CASE OF SETTLEMENT, THE PARTIES SHOULD SIMULTANEOUSLY **EMAIL THE SIGNATURE PAGE OF THE SIGNED AGREEMENT OR A LETTER WITHDRAWING THE CASE TO THE 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. 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 provide the date of the next board meeting. The hearing dates will not be cancelled without this information. The matter will be dismissed 30 days after the scheduled board meeting, unless the parties request otherwise to OAH in writing.

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

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATE: January 15, 2019

DocuSigned by:
Chris Butchko
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CHRIS BUTCHKO
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings