BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of: PARENT ON BEHALF OF STUDENT, v. VISTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.	OAH Case No. 2019020664 ORDER FOLLOWING PREHEARING CONFERENCE

On May 17, 2019, a telephonic prehearing conference was held before Administrative Law Judge Linda Johnson, Office of Administrative Hearings. Attorney Meagan Nunez appeared on behalf of Student. Attorneys Tiffany Santos and Joshua Walden appeared on behalf of Vista Unified School District. 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 May 29, and 30, 2019,[1] and continuing as needed at the discretion of the ALJ. The hearing shall take place at Vista Unified School District, 1234 Arcadia Avenue, Vista, California 92084. 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.

State and federal law require a local education agency to respond to a due process complaint within 10 days of receiving the complaint. (Ed. Code, § 56502, subd. (d)(2)(A); 20 U.S.C. § 1415(c)(2)(B)(i)(I); 34 C.F.R. § 300.508.); *M.C. v. Antelope Valley Unified Sch. Dist.* (9th Cir. 2017) 858 F.3d 1189, 1199-1200.) Vista filed its response to Student's complaint on March 1, 2019, which permits the hearing to go forward.

The named local educational agency 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. The named local educational agency certified that the facilities used for this case comply with the law. The local educational agency shall inform OAH within two days of the date of this order if it is unable to comply with this order.

[1] On the first day of hearing, when the parties have their final witness lists, the ALJ will set the final hearing schedule. The parties should be prepared to attend consecutive hearing days. The parties anticipate needing three days to complete the hearing.

Prior to the beginning of the hearing, Vista 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 Vista's legal representative and special education representative; (3) a table for the witness; and (4) a table for the ALJ, near an electrical outlet. Vista 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. Vista 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 issues at the due process hearing, and the proposed resolutions, are listed below.

Issues[2]:

(1) Did Vista substantively deny Student a free appropriate public education during the 2018-2019 school year by:

(a) Failing to find Student eligible for special education; and

(b) Failing to provide Student with the services and supports necessary to meet his unique needs or reasonably calculated to provide him with a FAPE in the areas of specialized academic instruction and educationally related mental health?

(2) Did Vista procedurally deny Student a FAPE during the 2018-2019 school year by preventing Parents from participating in Student's education by:

(a) Failing to hold an individualized education program team meeting before moving forward with expulsion proceedings, thus engaging in predetermination;

(b) Failing to conduct a legally adequate evaluation in the area of psychoeducation; and

[2] The issues have been rephrased and reorganized for clarity. The ALJ has authority to redefine a party's issues, so long as no substantive changes are made. (*J.W. v. Fresno Unified School Dist.* (9th Cir. 2010) 626 F.3d 431, 442-443.)

(c) Failing to conduct a legally adequate evaluation in the area of speech and language?

Proposed Resolutions:

(1) Student seeks an order that Vista provide him with an individualized education program with an appropriate educational program and transportation. Student also seeks compensatory education in the area of educationally related mental health.

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 Vista 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.

If the parties intend to rely on IEPs, the parties shall attach all pages of the IEP(s), including copies of all actual signatures on the IEP(s) and any typewritten or handwritten notes or comments, if any, written on the IEP(s). Excerpts of an audio record of an IEP team meeting, if any, should, in addition to the audio record offered, be transcribed and offered as documentary evidence. That portion of the audio record transcribed shall be provided to the opposing party along with the transcript to allow an opportunity to verify the accuracy of the transcription. Transcriptions need not be prepared by a certified court reporter.

Vista shall include in its exhibits, the school calendar(s) for each school year (including extended school year) 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.

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 shall meet and confer by **5:00 p.m. on May 21, 2019**, regarding the schedule of witnesses for the hearing. The parties are 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. The parties shall discuss a time estimate for the length of each witness' direct and cross examination testimony, and identify those witnesses the party no longer intends to call.

On the first day of hearing, before the first witness testifies, the parties shall provide the ALJ with one detailed hour-by-hour schedule of all witnesses expected to testify at the hearing. The list shall also include an estimate of time for each party's direct and cross-examination. The ALJ has discretion to revise the witness schedule, as needed to maintain the flow and efficiency of the hearing. The parties shall be prepared at the end of each day of hearing to discuss the witnesses appearing on the next day and the time the testimony of each such witness is expected to take.

Vista shall also provide a meeting room for Student's representatives to be available a half hour prior to the start of the hearing, during hearing breaks, and during the lunch break.

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.

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 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 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. Electronic Recording of Hearing.

a. Audio Recording. The parties' motion to make an audio recording of the hearing for personal use only is granted, subject to the following conditions: (1) no part of the recording shall be published or disseminated for any purpose other than to assist in the presentation of the party's case; (2) that OAH's recording is the only official recording; (3)

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; and (4) that 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 Vista.

9. Motions. Aside from Student's motion to quash Vista's subpoena, which will be addressed in a separate order, no 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 three business days prior to PHC of May 17, 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 writing.

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 Open to the Public. At the request of Student, the hearing will be open to the public.

15. 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 EMAIL 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. The assigned ALJ will check for messages the evening prior to the hearing or the morning of the hearing.

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

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATE: May 17, 2019

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Linda Johnson
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LINDA JOHNSON
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings