BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

# IN THE MATTER OF:

# PARENTS ON BEHALF OF STUDENT,

v.

# SIERRA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.

# OAH CASE NUMBER 2026080052

# ORDER DETERMINING DUE PROCESS COMPLAINT SUFFICIENT

AUGUST 11, 2026

On July 31, 2026, Student filed a Due Process Hearing Request, called a complaint, with the Office of Administrative Hearings, referred to as OAH, naming Sierra Unified School District. On August 10, 2026, Sierra 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 facts alleged in Student's complaint are sufficient. Sierra asserts that Student's issues are vague and lack factual context, including relevant dates. However, Student's issue section, as well as the body of the complaint, identifies the issues and adequate facts, including dates, about the issues to permit Sierra to respond and participate in a resolution session and mediation. In addition, Sierra's August 10, 2026, response supports the finding that Student's complaint is sufficient, as the response identifies Student's issues and facts regarding the issues, including dates. Therefore, Student's statement of the eight issues, specifically pled as 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 2(a), 2(b), 2(c), 2(d), and 2(e), is sufficient.

## 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.

*Daniel Senter*

Daniel Senter
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings