BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE MATTER OF:

ASPIRE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, OAKLAND,

v.

PARENT ON BEHALF OF STUDENT.

OAH CASE NUMBER 2019091005

ORDER FOLLOWING PREHEARING CONFERENCE

On October 14, 2019, Administrative Law Judge Tiffany Gilmartin Office of Administrative Hearings held a telephonic prehearing conference. The Administrative Law Judge will be referred to as an ALJ. The Office of Administrative Hearings will be referred to as OAH.

Heather Edwards and Anisa Pillai, Attorneys at Law, appeared on behalf of Aspire Public Schools. Mother appeared on behalf of Student. The PHC was recorded. Based upon discussion with the parties, the ALJ issues the following order:

HEARING DATES, TIMES, AND LOCATION

DUE PROCESS HEARING

The hearing will take place on October 22 through October 24, 2019 and continue day to day at the discretion of the ALJ. The hearing shall begin at 9:30 AM on the first day of the hearing and at 9:00 AM on all other days, unless otherwise ordered.

HEARING LOCATION

The hearing will be held at 1001 22nd Avenue, Oakland, CA 94606.

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.

District facilities shall fully comply 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. Districts are required to file written certification with OAH that the facilities District provides comply with these laws.

Aspire Public Schools shall file the required certification with 2 days of this Order and provide facilities that comply with these laws.

Before the beginning of the hearing, Aspire Public Schools shall ensure that the hearing room is configured into a courtroom setting and shall contain:

- a table for Student and his representatives;
- a table for Aspire Public Schools' legal representative and special education representative;
- a table for the witness;
- a table for the ALJ, near an electrical outlet with a chair that adjusts to an appropriate height for typing at the table provided; and

The same hearing room shall be used for each day of hearing and shall be available at least one hour before the beginning of the hearing each day. The hearing room shall be locked following the hearing each night. Aspire Public Schools shall ensure that the hearing room and access to it are in compliance with the all laws governing accessibility of government facilities to persons with disabilities.

ISSUES AND PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

A short recess was taken during the PHC and the Parties met and conferred. Both Parties stipulate the most recent IEP dated May 2, 2019 provides Student a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment with the exception of transportation. The issues at the due process hearing, and proposed resolutions, as alleged in the complaint and clarified by the parties and the ALJ during the prehearing conference are:

ISSUES

1. Did Student demonstrate a lack of need for transportation services such that Aspire Public Schools was not required to provide him transportation services on his May 2, 2019 IEP in order to provide him with a free appropriate public education.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

The resolutions requested by Aspire Public Schools included a finding by OAH that determines Student's May 2, 2019 IEP did not require transportation services in order to provide Student a FAPE and Aspire Public Schools may remove transportation services from the IEP.

BINDERS

Exhibits shall be pre-marked and placed in three-ring binders before the hearing. Exhibit binders shall include a tab for each exhibit. Each binder shall contain a detailed table of contents which clearly identifies the tabs and documents. The ALJ and witnesses must be able to easily turn to exhibit tabs and to turn pages in the binders. Multiple binders may be submitted if necessary.

TAB AND PAGE NUMBERS

The parties shall place a letter followed by a number on each tab to identify each exhibit. Student shall use the letter S before the number to identify Student's exhibits. Aspire Public Schools shall use the letter D before the number to identify Aspire Public School's exhibits. For example, S-1 means Student's exhibit tab 1 and D-1 means Aspire Public School's exhibit tab 1. Each page of each binder shall be numbered consecutively from the first page of the first exhibit to the last page of the last exhibit in the binder. Parties may use a Bates-stamp type system for numbering.

CONTENT

Each exhibit shall consist of one document. Separate documents may not be combined into one exhibit. Emails or letters may be consolidated into one exhibit if they are part of a single chain of messages. Documents offered as evidence to support a request for reimbursement must be separated by vendor and should be internally chronological where possible. Exhibits in the binders should be in chronological order.

Parties should include resumes or curriculum vitae for each witness who is 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.

Aspire Public School's binder shall include a color copy of the school calendar for each school year in question and shall have witnesses available to explain the calendar if necessary.

COPIES OF BINDERS

The parties shall serve copies of their evidence binders on each other. This exchange is required by Education Code section 56505, subdivision (e)(7). Each party shall bring two additional sets of the binders containing their exhibits to the hearing. One set will be used by the ALJ, and the other set will be used by witnesses. The parties may not serve exhibits on OAH before the hearing.

Except for good cause shown, or unless used solely for rebuttal or impeachment, any exhibit not timely exchanged shall not be admitted into evidence at the hearing unless the ALJ rules that it is admissible.

WITNESSES

Parties are responsible for producing their own witnesses unless otherwise ordered by the ALJ. Parties shall make witnesses under their 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 timely disclosed except for good cause shown, and at the discretion of the ALJ.

The ALJ has discretion to limit the number of witnesses who testify and the time allowed for witnesses' testimony. Education Code, section 56505.1, subd. (h), empowers the ALJ to set a reasonable limit on the length of the hearing after consideration of four factors. The first two factors are the issues to be heard and the complexity of facts to be

proven. The second two factors are the ability of the parties or their representatives to present their respective cases and the parties' estimates of the time needed to present their cases.

EVIDENCE PRESENTATION

In an administrative proceeding, the burden of proof is ordinarily on the party requesting the hearing. (*Schaffer v. Weast* (2005) 546 U.S. 49, 62.) In this case Aspire Public Schools requested the hearing, and bears the burden of proof, thus Aspire Public School's case-in-chief shall be presented first, followed by Student.

WITNESS LISTS

The parties shall give the ALJ a joint proposed witness list for the first day of hearing. The list should include dates and time estimates of expected testimony. In the event an agreement cannot be reached, each party shall prepare a separate written list. Aspire Public Schools shall have witnesses available in case there is no agreement. Before the hearing begins, the ALJ and the parties will discuss the length of time anticipated for direct and cross-examination of each witness and scheduling issues for individual witnesses. The ALJ will finalize the witness schedule. Parties shall be prepared at the end of each day to discuss the witnesses to be presented the next day and the estimated time the testimony each witness is expected to take.

SCOPE OF WITNESS EXAMINATION

Each witness shall be called to testify only once, except for rebuttal purposes. All parties shall examine witness on all issues when the witness is first called. Requiring a witness to appear only once takes precedence over the order in which parties presents their case in chief.

TELEPHONIC TESTIMONY

Neither party anticipated any 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 request for leave to do so before the hearing, unless the opposing party has stipulated that the witness may appear by telephone.

ELECTRONIC RECORDINGS

Audio Recording

Neither party has made a request to audio record the hearing to date. Should either party seek to record the hearing, the request shall be made before the hearing.

Video Recording

No party, witness or anyone else may make any video recording of any part of the proceedings. Any person doing so shall be subject to sanctions.

COMPENSATORY EDUCATION OR REIMBURSEMENT

Any party seeking reimbursement for expenditures shall present admissible evidence of these expenditures, or a stipulation to the amount of the expenditures. A party seeking compensatory education should provide evidence regarding the type, amount, duration, and need for any requested compensatory education.

MOTIONS

No prehearing motions are pending or contemplated. Any motion that was not filed three business days before the Prehearing Conference, shall be supported by a

declaration under penalty of perjury establishing good cause why the motion was not timely filed.

STIPULATIONS

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

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, recorders, and other noisemaking electronic devices shall be shut off or set to vibrate during the hearing unless the ALJ grants permission otherwise. No food or drinks other than water will be permitted in the hearing room during the hearing.

LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

A party or participant to this case, such as a witness, requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in a mediation or hearing may contact OAH at (916) 263-0880, or send an email to OAHADA@dgs.ca.gov as soon as the need is known. The e-mail should have "Request for Accommodation" in the Subject Line. Additional information concerning requests for reasonable accommodation is available on OAH's website at: https://www.dgs.ca.gov/OAH/Services/Page-Content/Office-of-Administrative-Hearings-Services-List-Folder/Accommodations-at-OAH.

HEARING CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

The hearing is closed to the public. Special Education hearings are closed to the public unless Student requests the hearing to be open to the public.

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 if 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. 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.

If a full and final written settlement agreement is reached after 4:00 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.

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 before the hearing.

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

The failure to comply with this Order may result in the exclusion of evidence or other sanctions.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED: October 15, 2019

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Tiffany Gilmartin
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Tiffany Gilmartin
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings