**BEFORE THE**
**OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS**
**STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

# IN THE MATTER OF:

# LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT,

**v.**

# PARENT ON BEHALF OF STUDENT.

# OAH CASE NUMBER 2019051020

## ORDER FOLLOWING PREHEARING CONFERENCE

On September 6, 2019, Administrative Law Judge Elsa H. Jones, 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. The prehearing conference will be referred to as a PHC.

Donald Erwin, Attorney at Law, appeared on behalf of Los Angeles Unified School District. There was no appearance by self-represented Parent or Student, who will be referred to collectively as Student. To convene the PHC, the ALJ called Parent, but the call was transferred to voicemail. The ALJ left a voicemail message for Parent, requesting that she contact OAH to participate in the PHC, but she did not do so. The PHC proceeded in Parent's absence. The PHC was recorded. Based upon discussion with Los Angeles Unified, the ALJ issues the following Order:

## HEARING DATES, TIMES, AND LOCATION

### DUE PROCESS HEARING

The hearing will take place on September 16 through September 18, 2019, and shall continue day to day at the discretion of the ALJ. The hearing shall begin at 1:30 PM on September 16, and at 9:00 AM on all other days, unless otherwise ordered.

### HEARING LOCATION

The hearing will be held at the offices of OAH, located at 15350 Sherman Way, Suite 300, Van Nuys, California 91406.

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 was not properly notified of the hearing date or properly subpoenaed, as applicable.

## ISSUES AND PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

The issues at the due process hearing, and proposed resolutions, as alleged in the complaint and clarified during the PHC are:

### ISSUES

1. Were Los Angeles Unified's language and speech assessment and the April 16, 2018, report of the evaluation appropriate, such that Student is not entitled to an independent language and speech evaluation at public expense?

### PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

The resolutions requested by Los Angeles Unified include an order that Los Angeles Unified's language and speech assessment and report were appropriate, and that Student is not entitled to an independent language and speech evaluation at public expense.

## EXHIBITS

### 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. Los Angeles Unified shall use the letter D before the number to identify its exhibits. For example, S-1 means Student's exhibit tab 1 and D-1 means Los Angeles Unified'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 or similar 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.

Los Angeles Unified'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 pursuant to Education Code section 56505, subdivision (e)(7), 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.

## MEET AND CONFER

The parties are encouraged to review and shorten their witness and exhibit lists before the hearing. Evidence will be excluded if it is repetitive, cumulative, or insufficiently probative to justify the time it would take to hear. If both parties have timely served their final witness lists on each other pursuant to Education Code section 56505, subdivision (e)(7), the parties are ordered to meet and confer prior to hearing. The parties shall discuss the availability of witnesses, the order of witnesses and the length of witness testimony. It is suggested that the discussion also include whether the

parties can produce a written stipulation stating basic facts to shorten the length of time needed for the hearing.

## 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 Los Angeles Unified requested the hearing and its case-in-chief shall be presented first.

### 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. Los Angeles Unified 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 throughout the hearing to discuss the witnesses to be presented and the estimated time the testimony each witness is expected to take.

### SCOPE OF WITNESS EXAMINATION

The parties should expect that each witness shall be called to testify only once, except for rebuttal purposes. All parties shall examine each 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 present their case-in-chief.

## TELEPHONIC TESTIMONY

No party has requested 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. The party offering the witness shall provide the witness with a complete set of exhibit binders from all parties before the hearing. The binders must be exact paper copies of all of each party's exhibits. Electronic copies are not acceptable. The party presenting the witness shall ensure the witness testifies from a private location with no other persons present. The party offering telephonic testimony shall ensure that the witness has telephone equipment that allows clear transmission of what the witness is saying, allows the witness' testimony to be clearly recorded, and allows the witness to hear objections and rulings. No witness will be heard by telephone unless all these requirements have been fulfilled.

## ELECTRONIC RECORDINGS

### Audio Recording

A party may request permission to make an audio recording of the hearing. Permission to make an audio recording is subject to the ALJ's discretion and based upon certain conditions. Such requests are routinely granted on the following conditions:

- the OAH recording is the only official recording;
- the party shall turn its recording device on and off at the same time that the ALJ is on and off the record to avoid recording conversations while off the record;
- the recording device will be removed by the party recording during any recess where the party leaves the room;

- operation of any party's recording mechanism will not be allowed to delay the hearing;
- a party's recording may not be used to prepare the testimony of a witness in the hearing;
- the recording shall not be shared with any non-party, possible witness, or through social media;
- the parties shall not use the recording in any subsequent due process hearing;
- the recording is subject to the same confidentiality as the due process hearing; and
- each party shall dispose of its unofficial recording when the time for filing an appeal has passed or, in the event of an appeal, when the time for submission of the record on appeal has passed.

Neither party has made a request to audio record the hearing. 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 PHC 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 placed on the vibrate setting during the hearing unless the ALJ grants permission otherwise. There shall be no texting or tweeting during the hearing unless the ALJ grants permission. There shall be no deadly or dangerous weapons in the hearing room, unless they are being carried by a city, county, state, or federal law enforcement officer on official business. A person lawfully entitled to carry such a weapon who is not a law enforcement officer must have the prior written permission to bring such weapon into the hearing room from the hearing ALJ's Presiding Administrative Law Judge. Under no circumstances shall any law enforcement officer bring a firearm or deadly or dangerous weapon into the hearing room if the officer is present as a party, party representative, or witness, unless prior written permission to bring such weapon into the hearing room has been obtained from the hearing ALJ's Presiding Administrative Law Judge.

No food or drinks other than water will be permitted in the hearing room during the hearing.

## LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

A Spanish language interpreter may be required. If so, OAH will provide the interpreter.

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 OPEN OR 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 and with the provisions of Education Code section 56505, subdivision (e)(7) may result in the exclusion of evidence or other sanctions.

## IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED: September 6, 2019

DocuSigned by:
Elsa H. Jones
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Elsa H. Jones
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings