BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE MATTER OF:

PARENT ON BEHALF OF STUDENT,

v.

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.

OAH CASE NUMBER 2019080644

ORDER FOLLOWING PREHEARING CONFERENCE

On September 30, 2019, Administrative Law Judge Brian H. Krikorian, 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. Prehearing conference is referred to as PHC.

Surisa Rivers and Sarah Dawley, Attorneys at Law, appeared on behalf of Student. Erin Frazor and Sophia Cohn, Attorneys at Law, appeared on behalf of Los Angeles Unified School District. The 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 8, 9, and 10 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 OAH's Van Nuys office 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 is not properly notified of the hearing date or properly subpoenaed, as applicable.

ISSUES AND PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

For purposes of this Order, free and appropriate public education will be referred to as FAPE, and independent educational program will be referred to as IEP. 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 Los Angeles Unified deny Student a FAPE when it failed to provide Student:

a. Placement in the least restrictive environment from May 16, 2018 to June 7, 2019; and,
b. Appropriate augmentative and alternative communication services from May 16, 2018 to August 16, 2019?

2. Did Los Angeles Unified deny Student a FAPE when it failed to implement Student's appropriate augmentative and alternative communication services at home during the 2019 Extended School Year?
3. Did Los Angeles Unified's May 30, 2019 IEP deny Student a FAPE by not including appropriate augmentative and alternative communication implementation training for Student, his parents, and teachers?

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

The resolutions requested by Student are set forth fully in the complaint and include offering appropriate augmentative and alternative communication training as a related service of the May 30, 2019 IEP and compensatory education and services from May 16, 2018 to August 16, 2019.

Los Angeles Unified filed its response to Student's complaint as part of its prehearing conference statement on September 25, 2019. (*M.C. v. Antelope Valley Unified School Dist.* (9th Cir. 2017) 858 F.3d 1189, 1199-1200.)

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. NAME shall use the letter D before the number to identify Los Angeles Unified's 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 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 the 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 except for good cause shown, and at the discretion of the ALJ.

The ALJ has the 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. The parties are ordered to meet and confer no later than 5:00 p.m. on October 3, 2019. The parties shall discuss the availability of witnesses, the order of witnesses and the length of witness testimony. The parties should attempt to eliminate duplicate exhibits from their binders. The parties may discuss whether they 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, Student requested the hearing and Student's case-in-chief shall be presented first, followed by Los Angeles Unified.

WITNESS LISTS

The parties shall give the ALJ a joint proposed witness list for the first day of the hearing. The list should include dates and time estimates of the expected testimony. In the event an agreement cannot be reached, each party shall prepare a separate written list. Student 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 a 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.

ELECTRONIC RECORDINGS

Audio Recording

A party may request permission to make an audio recording of the hearing. Student and Los Angeles Unified requested permission to make an audio recording. 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 parties shall turn the 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 the party's recording mechanism will not be allowed to delay the hearing;
- a parties' 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
- the parties shall dispose of the 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.

Student and Los Angeles Unified's requests to audio record the hearing are granted, subject to these conditions.

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. The ALJ reserved any specific evidentiary issues for hearing.

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 AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

A Spanish language interpreter is required. 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 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: September 30, 2019

DocuSigned by:

Brian H. Krikorian
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Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings