

BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

SANTA ROSA CITY SCHOOLS,

v.

STUDENT.

OAH Case No. 2014040994¹

ORDER FOLLOWING PREHEARING
CONFERENCE

On August 29, 2014, a telephonic prehearing conference was held before Administrative Law Judge Adeniyi A. Ayoade, Office of Administrative Hearings. Carl D. Corbin, Attorney at Law, appeared on behalf of the Santa Rosa Unified School District. The ALJ was unsuccessful in reaching Parent and Parent did not participate in the prehearing conference. The PHC was recorded. Based on discussion of the attorney for Santa Rosa, the ALJ issues the following order:

1. **Procedural Matter.** On August 25, 2014, the ALJ continued the prehearing conference to August 29, 2014, despite Santa Rosa's objection to Parent's request to continue the prehearing conference. Based on the ALJ's discussion with the parties on August 25, 2014, and through a written order issued by the ALJ on the same date, both parties were informed that the prehearing conference would be reconvened at 9:00 a.m., on August 29, 2014.

On August 29, 2014, the ALJ initiated telephone calls to both parties in order to hold the continued prehearing conference from August 25, 2014. Between 9:00 a.m. and 9:05 a.m., the ALJ made three telephone calls to three different telephone numbers that Parent had provided to OAH. The ALJ was unable to reach the Parent as telephone numbers were either not working, or were disconnected. At about 9:06 a.m., the ALJ called to inform Mr. Corbin, the attorney for Santa Rosa, of the problem OAH was having in reaching the Parent for the prehearing conference. The ALJ requested that the prehearing conference be continued to 9:20 a.m., in order to allow OAH additional time to reach Parent. In the meantime, Mr. Corbin volunteered to send an email to Parent requesting the Parent immediately call OAH in order to participate in the prehearing conference. At 9:20 a.m., the ALJ attempted to reach Parent again, and called the three telephone numbers earlier dialed. Again, the ALJ was unable to reach Parent due to the same reasons described above.

¹ The OAH Case No. 2014030127 filed by Student was previously consolidated with this matter. Pursuant to Student's request filed with OAH on August 25, 2014, OAH has closed Case No. 2014030127.

At about 9:24 a.m., the ALJ called Mr. Corbin again to discuss the prehearing conference. Mr. Corbin explained that, as he promised, he sent an email message to Parent at about 9:13 a.m., requested that Parent call OAH for the prehearing conference.² Pursuant to Santa Rosa's request, the ALJ agreed to hold the prehearing conference, despite Parent's absence as Parent had been afforded reasonable opportunity to participate in the prehearing conference.³

2. Hearing Dates, Times, and Location. The hearing shall take place on September 9-11, 2014, and shall continue day to day, Monday through Thursday at the discretion of the ALJ until the hearing is concluded. The hearing shall be held at Santa Rosa's offices located at 217 Ridgway Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95401. The hearing shall begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 5:00 p.m. each day, with the exception of September 9 when the hearing shall begin at 9:30 a.m., unless otherwise ordered.

Santa Rosa shall ensure that all facilities used during the hearing are compliant with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and shall ensure that due process hearing location and room are appropriate for the hearing and accessible to all persons. In addition, the room shall meet OAH specifications, and at a minimum shall have separate tables capable of being moved into a courtroom configuration as follows: (1) one table for Student's representatives; (2) one table for Santa Rosa's representatives; (3) one table for the ALJ with a nearby electrical outlet; and (4) one witness table. A room with one large conference table is not suitable. If a suitable location or room is not available for any of the hearing days, Santa Rosa shall immediately notify OAH and the parties and propose a different location. Santa Rosa is encouraged to make fresh water and tissue available in the hearing room at all times.

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.

3. Issues and Proposed Resolutions. The remaining issue at the due process hearing and the requested proposed remedies are as follows:⁴

² No call was received from Parent as of 9:24 a.m., on August 25, 2014.

³ The ALJ recorded the efforts made to reach the Parent on August 25, 2014 for the prehearing conference, and his discussion with Mr. Corbin.

⁴ The issue at the due process hearing is as alleged in Santa Rosa's due process complaint as clarified at the PHC. Any issue(s) that is not listed and/or permitted by this order shall be included only with an amendment to a due process complaint. The amendment shall comply with California Education Code section 56502, subdivision (e). The filing of an

A. *Issue:*

- 1) Is Santa Rosa entitled to complete its triennial assessment of Student pursuant to its March 19, 2014 assessment plan without parental consent?

B. *Proposed Remedy:* As proposed resolution, Santa Rosa requests an order from OAH finding that Santa Rosa is entitled to assess Student without parental pursuant to its March 19, 2014 assessment plan.

4. Timely Disclosure of Witnesses and Exhibits. Education Code section 56505, subdivision (e)(7), provides for disclosure of witnesses and exhibits “at least” five business days prior to the hearing. The OAH’s scheduling order dated May 16, 2014, ordered the production of lists of all witnesses and documents by an earlier date, namely, at least three business days prior to this PHC. As of the date of the PHC, both parties have disclosed their witnesses and exhibits through their respective prehearing conference statements.

5. Exhibits. Exhibits shall be pre-marked and placed in three-ring exhibit binders prior to the hearing. The parties may use numbers or letters to identify exhibits. If numbers are used by both parties, each party shall place the letter “S” or “D” in front of the exhibit to designate if it is a Student or Santa Rosa’s exhibit (for example, 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. 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. Exhibit binders shall be exchanged five business days prior to the hearing in accordance with Education Code section 56505, subdivision (e)(7), unless the parties agree to a later date.

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 good cause is shown as to why it was not previously exchanged. The parties shall be prepared to make such an offer of proof. The ALJ shall determine whether an exhibit is to be admitted into evidence. Only exhibits relevant to the issues previously stated in this order shall be admitted, unless used for impeachment purposes. The fact that an exhibit is placed in an exhibit binder does not guarantee its admission.

6. Witnesses. Each party is responsible for procuring the attendance at hearing of its own witnesses. Each party shall make witnesses under its control reasonably

amended complaint will restart the applicable timelines for a due process hearing. (20 U.S.C. § 1415(c)(2)(E)(ii).)

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, and at the discretion of the ALJ.

As of the day of the PHC, Student has identified and disclosed 14 witnesses, and Santa Rosa has disclosed seven witnesses. The parties are encouraged to meet and confer regarding the schedule and order of witnesses. 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 irrelevant, repetitive, cumulative, or insufficiently probative to justify the time it would take to hear. Parties shall be prepared to make an offer of proof, if asked, as to why a specific witness' testimony is necessary. At the commencement of the hearing, each party shall provide the ALJ with a schedule of witnesses and a time estimate for each witness' direct and cross-examinations.

The parties shall be prepared at the end of each day of hearing to discuss the witnesses to be presented the next day and the time the testimony of each such witness is expected to take. In the case of witnesses who have professional licenses and credentials, it is strongly recommended (but not ordered) that the party calling such witnesses be prepared to present copies of their *curriculum vita* (CV) or resume as exhibits, and exchange them with the other party.

7. Scope of Witness Examination. 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.

8. 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. Such party 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.

9. Motions. Other than as may be included herein, no pretrial motions are pending. 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 prior to or during the prehearing conference of August 29, 2014.

10. Stipulations. Stipulations to pertinent facts, contentions or resolutions are encouraged. Any proposed stipulation shall be submitted to the assigned ALJ in written form if possible.

11. 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 during the hearing unless permission to the contrary is obtained from the ALJ.

12. Special Needs and Accommodations. At present neither party anticipates the need for special accommodation for any witness or party, or for interpreter services.

13. Order of Presentation of Evidence: Santa Rosa filed this matter. Therefore, Santa Rosa shall produce its evidence first. Where Student and Santa Rosa intend to call the same person to testify, each party will examine the witness immediately after the other party, so the witness will only need to be called to the witness stand once.

14. Hearing Closed To the Public. The hearing shall be closed to the public.⁵

15. Settlement. The parties are encouraged to continue working together to reach an agreement before the due process hearing. If the parties believe a mediator may assist them in settlement negotiations, they should submit a request for mediation as soon as possible. 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 BEFORE THE 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 FAX THE SIGNATURE PAGE OF THE SIGNED AGREEMENT OR A LETTER WITHDRAWING THE CASE TO THE OAH AT THE FAXINATION LINE AT 916-376-6319.

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 and the morning of the hearing.

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

⁵ If Parent desires that the hearing be opened to the public, Parents shall immediately notice OAH and Santa Rosa so that Santa Rosa can provide an appropriate room/location for the hearing.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATE: August 29, 2014

/s/

ADENIYI AYOADE
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings