

BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE MATTER OF:
PARENT ON BEHALF OF STUDENT,

v.

SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.
OAH CASE NUMBER 2022020020

ORDER DETERMINING DUE PROCESS COMPLAINT
SUFFICIENT

FEBRUARY 8, 2022

On February 1, 2022, Parent, on behalf of Student, filed a Request for Due Process Hearing, called a complaint, with the Office of Administrative Hearings, called OAH, naming San Diego Unified School District. On February 8, 2022, San Diego filed a Notice of Insufficiency as to the complaint.

Parties named in a complaint 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.)

Student's complaint is sufficient. The complaint alleges San Diego failed to provide Student's school bus aide as stated in Student's individualized education program, beginning in November 2021, which caused hardship to Student and Student's

family. While the complaint does not include additional facts to support the alleged problem, the description of the problem itself is sufficient to put San Diego on notice of the basis of the complaint and to allow San Diego to prepare for a resolution session or mediation. The complaint also includes a proposed resolution. Therefore, the complaint satisfies the standards of title 20 United States Code section 1415(c)(2)(C) and Education Code section 56502, subdivision (d)(1). The case will proceed as scheduled.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Tara Doss

Tara Doss

Administrative Law Judge

Office of Administrative Hearings