

BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE MATTER OF:
TUSTIN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

v.

PARENTS ON BEHALF OF STUDENT
OAH CASE NUMBER 2024030318

ORDER GRANTING REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE AND
SETTING DATES

MARCH 15, 2024

On March 13, 2024, the parties filed a joint request to continue the due process hearing with the Office of Administrative Hearings, known as OAH. The parties seek a continuance to enable the parties to participate in mediation.

OAH must conduct a due process hearing and issue a decision within 45 days of receiving the due process complaint unless an extension is granted. (34 C.F.R. § 300.515(a); Ed. Code, §§ 56502, subd. (f), 56505, subd. (f)(3).) Resolving the due process hearing quickly is legally required. Hearings may only be continued if "good cause" is established. (Ed. Code, § 56505, subd. (f)(3).) OAH is guided by the

Administrative Procedure Act and the California Rules of Court when ruling on continuance motions. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 1, § 1020; Cal. Rules of Court, rule 3.1332.)

Good cause to continue a hearing may include:

- An essential lay or expert witness is unavailable because of death, illness, or other excusable circumstances;
- A party is unavailable because of death, illness, or other excusable circumstances;
- A party's attorney is unavailable because of death, illness, or other excusable circumstances;
- A new attorney substitutes in, but only if the party establishes that the substitution is required in the interests of justice;
- A new party is added, and the new party has not had a reasonable opportunity to prepare for trial, or other parties have not had a reasonable opportunity to prepare for trial regarding the new party's involvement;
- A party is unable to obtain essential testimony, documents, or other material evidence despite diligent efforts; or
- The case has a significant and unexpected change which makes the case not ready for trial.

Generally, continuances are disfavored. (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 3.1332(c).)

The parties established good cause to continue the due process hearing. Mediation is favored as a means of resolving due process action because it lessens the burden on the parties and upon judicial resources.

The request is granted. All previously scheduled dates are vacated. The new dates are:

MEDIATION will be held on Friday, May 3, 2024, at 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM.

PREHEARING CONFERENCE will be held on Friday, May 24, 2024, at 1:00 PM.

DUE PROCESS HEARING will be held on Tuesday, June 4, 2024, through Thursday, June 6, 2024.

The mediation, prehearing conference, and due process hearing will be held by videoconference or telephone, unless otherwise ordered. The due process hearing will begin at 9:30 AM on all days, and generally end at 3:30 PM, unless otherwise ordered. The hearing will continue day to day, as needed, Mondays and Fridays included, at the discretion of the Administrative Law Judge. Prehearing conference statements and motions are due to OAH no later than three business days before the prehearing conference. Late motions will only be considered if good cause is established for the late filing.

The parties must immediately give potential witnesses the hearing dates, and must subpoena witnesses, if necessary, so they are available to testify. Failing to properly notify or subpoena a witness is not good cause to delay the hearing.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Chris Butchko

Chris Butchko

Administrative Law Judge

Office of Administrative Hearings