BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE MATTER OF:

PARENTS ON BEHALF OF STUDENT,

v.

LUCIA MAR UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.

OAH CASE NUMBER 2026080169

ORDER GRANTING REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE AND SETTING SECOND MEDIATION, PREHEARING CONFERENCE AND HEARING

OCTOBER 23, 2026

On October 21, 2026, the parties filed a joint request for a second mediation and to continue the due process hearing with the Office of Administrative Hearings, called OAH. The parties contend the hearing should be continued because they need more time before the hearing to participate in a second mediation, which the parties believe may result in a settlement.

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' desire to participate in a second mediation constitutes good cause for a second mediation. The parties are actively seeking input from third parties

regarding settlement terms being negotiated and anticipate such receive that input after the currently scheduled November hearing dates. Therefore, the parties established good cause for a second mediation and to continue the due process hearing. Because of the age of this case and the parties due diligence in prosecuting the matter, the length of the continuance requested is reasonable.

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

MEDIATION will be held on December 14, 2026, at 1:30 PM to 5:00 PM.

PREHEARING CONFERENCE will be held on January 22, 2027, at 1:00 PM.

DUE PROCESS HEARING will be held on February 2, 2027, through February 4, 2027.

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.

Christine Arden

Christine Arden
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings