BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of: PARENT ON BEHALF OF STUDENT, v. SANTA CLARA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION AND EAST SIDE UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT.	OAH Case No. 2017110011 ORDER OF DETERMINATION OF SUFFICIENCY OF DUE PROCESS COMPLAINT

On October 27, 2017, Parent on behalf of Student filed a Due Process Hearing Request[1] with the Office of Administrative Hearings, naming Santa Clara County Office of Education and East Side Union High School District. On November 13, 2017, County Office of Education filed a Notice of Insufficiency as to Student's complaint.

APPLICABLE LAW

The named parties to a due process hearing request have the right to challenge the sufficiency of the complaint. (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 contains: (1) a description of the nature of the problem of the child relating to the proposed initiation or change concerning the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child, or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child; (2) facts relating to the problem; and (3) a proposed resolution of the problem 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

[1] A request for a due process hearing under Education Code section 56502 is the due process complaint notice required under title 20 U.S.C. section 1415(b)(7)(A).

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.)

DISCUSSION

The facts alleged in Student's complaint are sufficient to put District on notice of the issues forming the basis of the complaint. Student's complaint identifies two issues pertaining to Student's individualized education program over several school years. Issue one alleges that District's September 17, 2015 IEP denied Student a free appropriate public education, by failing to meet his needs. Specifically, Student asserts that District failed to provide appropriate goals in 10 areas of identified need, and failed to provide appropriate services in seven areas identified in the complaint. Issue two alleges that District's September 23, 2016 IEP similarly denied him a FAPE. Student alleges that District failed to provide him goals in 13 identified areas, and services in nine areas identified in the complaint. Consequently, the complaint includes adequate related facts about the issues to permit District to respond to the complaint and participate in a resolution session and mediation.

Therefore, Student's statement of the two claims is sufficient.

ORDER

1. The complaint is sufficient under title 20 United States Code section 1415(b)(7)(A)(ii).

2. All mediation, prehearing conference, and hearing dates in this matter are confirmed.

DATE: November 14, 2017

DocuSigned by:
Paul Kamoroff
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PAUL H KAMOROFF
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings