BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of: PARENT ON BEHALF OF STUDENT, v. TORRANCE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.	OAH Case No. 2016120826 ORDER DETERMINING DUE PROCESS COMPLAINT SUFFICIENT

On December 15, 2016, Parent on behalf of Student filed a due process hearing request[1] (complaint) with the Office of Administrative Hearings naming Torrance Unified School District. On December 30, 3016, District filed a timely notice of insufficiency. For the reasons discussed below, the complaint is sufficient.

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

Student's complaint alleges that he was eligible for special education services as a student with autism and language impairment, and demonstrated delayed social skills, impulsivity, inattention and other appropriate behaviors. Student's issues raise the following claims: that despite known deficits, from December 2014 through September 2015, District failed to offer an appropriate level of behavior intervention, to implement the level of behavior intervention offered, or to develop appropriate goals in the areas of behavior, social interaction or academics; and that District's individualized education programs of September 25, 2015 and November 30, 2016 failed to offer Student a FAPE in the least restrictive environment, because District did not offer Student an appropriate level of behavior support or provide the level of support offered.

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 the issues and adequate related facts about the problem to permit District to respond to the complaint and participate in a resolution session and mediation. Therefore, Student's statement of 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: January 4, 2017

DocuSigned by:
Alexa Hohensee
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ALEXA J. HOHENSEE
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings