BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of:	
PARENT ON BEHALF OF STUDENT,	OAH CASE NO. 2014020915
v.	ORDER OF DETERMINATION OF SUFFICIENCY OF DUE PROCESS COMPLAINT
LODI UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.	

On February 25, 2014, Student filed a Due Process Hearing Request[1] (complaint) naming Lodi Unified School District (District).

On March 4, 2014, District filed a timely Notice of Insufficiency (NOI) 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.[2] 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 (FAPE) 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.[3] These requirements prevent vague and confusing complaints, and promote fairness by providing the

[1] A request for a due process hearing under Education Code section 56502 is the due process complaint notice required under Title 20 United States Code section 1415(b)(7)(A).

[2] 20 U.S.C. § 1415(b) & (c).

[3] 20 U.S.C. § 1415(b)(7)(A)(ii)(III) & (IV).

named parties with sufficient information to know how to prepare for the hearing and how to participate in resolution sessions and mediation.[4]

The complaint provides enough information when it provides "an awareness and understanding of the issues forming the basis of the complaint."[5] 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.[6] Whether the complaint is sufficient is a matter within the sound discretion of the Administrative Law Judge.[7]

DISCUSSION

The alleged facts ascertainable from Student's complaint and its attached exhibits are as follows: Student contends that she requires a hearing aid to access her educational program and obtain a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Student alleges that she had a hearing aid, but it was lost on or about January 13, 2014. Student asked District to replace the hearing aid, but the District declined to do so on grounds that the hearing aid was a durable medical good that District was not required to provide. Student seeks a District-supplied replacement hearing aid.

These allegations are sufficient to put District on notice of the issues forming the basis of the complaint, permit District to respond to the complaint, and participate in a resolution session and mediation. Therefore, Student's complaint is sufficient.

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[4] See, H.R.Rep. No. 108-77, 1st Sess. (2003), p. 115; Sen. Rep. No. 108-185, 1st Sess. (2003), pp. 34-35.

[5] Sen. Rep. No. 108-185, *supra*, at p. 34.

[6] *Alexandra R. v. Brookline School Dist*. (D.N.H., Sept. 10, 2009, No. 06-cv-0215-JL) 2009 WL 2957991 at p.3 [nonpub. opn.]; *Escambia County Board 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, No. 8:04CV2657T24EAJ) 2005 WL 2850076 at p. 3 [nonpub. opn.] ; but cf. *M.S.-G. v. Lenape Regional High School Dist.* (3d Cir. 2009) 306 Fed.Appx. 772, at p. 3 [nonpub. opn.].

[7] Assistance to States for the Education of Children With Disabilities and Preschool Grants for Children With Disabilities, 71 Fed.Reg. 46540-46541, 46699 (Aug. 14, 2006).

ORDER

1. Student's 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: March 06, 2014

/s/

ROBERT MARTIN
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings