

**Office of Administrative Hearings  
Special Education Advisory Committee  
October 11, 2013 Meeting Summary**

**1. Welcome and Introduction**

1a. *Selection of Chair at Each Location:* Special Education Division Presiding Administrative Law Judge (DPALJ) Judith Kopec was selected to chair the Northern California section of the meeting. Presiding Administrative Law Judge (PALJ) Richard Breen was selected to chair the Southern California section. The meeting was conducted via video conference and was also available as a live webcast.

1b. *Selection of Note-taker at Each Location:* Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) Theresa Ravandi (Northern California) and Administrative Law Judge Elsa Jones (Southern California) were designated as the note-takers.

1c. *Introduction of Committee Members and Terms of Committee Members:* Advisory Committee members introduced themselves. The following members were absent in Northern California: Susie Malloy, Kent Rezowalli, and Sam Neustadt. The following members were absent in Southern California: Blanca Siebels, Cole Dalton, Margaret Adams, Zhanna Preston, and Lysa Saltzman. All other members were present. A quorum of members did not attend in Southern California.

This is the beginning of the second year of the term for members who were appointed in Fall 2012. DPALJ Kopec thanked them for their continued participation and encouraged them to reapply in Spring 2014. Newly appointed members need not reapply until Spring 2015.

1d. *Introduction of OAH Staff:* In addition to DPALJ Kopec, Deputy Director Melissa Crowell, PALJ Bob Varma, ALJ Ravandi, and Staff Counsel Nicole Buckoski attended in Sacramento. PALJ Richard Breen and ALJ Elsa Breen attended in Van Nuys.

**2. Introductory Comments and Updates**

2a. *Overview of Advisory Committee Meeting Process and Expectations of Members:* DPALJ Kopec provided an overview of the Committee's process for discussing and voting on agenda items.

The expectations of members were discussed. Each member is expected to fully participate by attending all meetings. If a member is unable to attend, the member should contact DPALJ Kopec or Tim Dean by either telephone or email. A new expectation is that if a member misses two meetings during the course of the member's term, OAH may decide to remove and replace the member. The replacement member may be chosen from the pool of applications that were received the prior Spring and who has the same relationship to special education as the removed member.

2b. *Open Meeting Act:* DPALJ Kopec provided a brief overview of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. Before the meeting, members were provided copies of the Open Meeting Act and *A Handy Guide to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act 2004*, from the California Attorney General's Office, and were encouraged to become familiar with them. Each member is responsible for ensuring he or she complies with the Act. Members were specifically informed of the prohibition against serial meetings under Government Code section 11122.5, subdivision (b).

2c. *Staff Changes at OAH:* ALJ Kara Hatfield and ALJ Laurie Gorsline have joined the Van Nuys office. Karen Thai was appointed the Legal Support Supervisor in Sacramento and supervises all of the case management staff. Poh-Ling Oon joined the Sacramento office as a case manager.

### **3. Hearing and Mediation Processes**

3a. *Electronic Filing of Documents:* This item was proposed by Member Margaret Adams, who was unable to attend the meeting, but requested that the Committee discuss the item without her. Member Adams suggested that OAH accept electronic filings for special education cases as a voluntary or opt-in procedure in lieu of paper or fax filings, similar to what is available for cases in OAH's General Jurisdiction Division. The comments from both members and the public were generally favorable. DPALJ Kopec responded that OAH has developed a procedure to allow filing by email and hopes that it will be available at the beginning of the year.

3b. *Fillable Forms:* OAH is developing forms that can be completed on the OAH website that have some drop-down menus. They cannot be submitted to OAH via the website, but they should be easier to complete and can be printed and submitted.

3c. *Mediation and Hearing Evaluations:* If OAH attempts to send an email with information about the Web-based mediation and hearing evaluations that is returned as undeliverable, OAH will no longer attempt to obtain a correct email address. Anyone who does not receive information about an evaluation may contact the case manager assigned to the case. Everyone was encouraged to submit an evaluation for each mediation and hearing because they are taken seriously and used as learning opportunities, and the data are included in OAH's quarterly reports to the Department of Education, which are available on OAH's website.

3d. *Mediation and Hearing Observations:* The regional office PALJ or DPALJ Kopec may be observing mediations and hearings in order to evaluate the ALJs and Pro Tem ALJs.

3e. *Special Education Video:* OAH is developing a video to provide an overview of the special education dispute resolution process. The video will be aimed at those who do not have representation to provide general information about the process.

### **4. Public Comments**

Members of the public attending the meetings and participating through the webcast provided comments throughout the meeting as each agenda item was discussed. Members of the public attending the meetings participating through the webcast made comments at the conclusion of the substantive agenda items.

### **5. Tentative Date of Next Meeting**

The tentative date for the next meeting is Friday, April 11, 2014.

The meeting was adjourned.