

BEFORE THE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of:

PARENTS ON BEHALF OF STUDENT,

v.

ROSS VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT.

OAH Case No. 2014020175

ORDER FOLLOWING PREHEARING
CONFERENCE

On May 9, 2014, a telephonic prehearing conference (PHC) was held before Administrative Law Judge Peter Paul Castillo, Office of Administrative Hearings. Brett Smith Allen, Attorney at Law, appeared on behalf of Student. Emily E. Sugrue, Attorney at Law, appeared on behalf of Ross Valley School District. The PHC was recorded.

Based on discussion with the parties, the ALJ issues the following order:

1. Hearing Dates, Times, and Location. The hearing shall take place on May 19 through 22, 2014. The hearing shall begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 5:00 p.m., except for May 19, 2014, when the hearing shall begin at 1:30 p.m., unless otherwise ordered. The hearing shall take place at the District's offices, located at 110 Shaw Drive, San Anselmo, California 95661.¹

The parties shall immediately notify all potential witnesses of the hearing dates, and shall subpoena witnesses if necessary, to ensure that the witnesses will be available to testify. A witness will not be regarded as unavailable for purposes of showing "good cause" to continue the hearing if the witness is not properly notified of the hearing date or properly subpoenaed, as applicable.

2. Issues and Proposed Resolutions. The issues at the due process hearing are listed below.

Issue: For the 2013-2014 school year, did District deny Student a free appropriate public education (FAPE) by failing to offer Student an appropriate educational program, including goals, services and placement, that met his unique needs?

¹ At a minimum for the hearing, the room shall be accessible and have separate tables capable of being moved into a courtroom configuration, as follows: (1) one table for Student's representatives; (2) one table for the District's and County's representatives; (3) one table for the ALJ with a nearby electrical outlet; and (4) one witness table. The District shall ensure that all parties and the ALJ have drinking water and tissue available to them.

Proposed resolutions: District shall reimburse Parents for all educationally related expenses caused by its denial of FAPE for the 2013-2014 school year, including, but not limited to, tuition, fees, and transportation for Student's placement at STAR Academy.

3. Exhibits. Exhibits shall be pre-marked and placed in three-ring exhibit binders prior to the hearing. The parties shall use numbers to identify exhibits, but shall place the letter "S" or "D" in front of the exhibit to designate if it is a Student or District or County exhibit, and District and County shall submit a joint binder, (for example, "S-5, S-6," or "D-1, D-2"). Each exhibit shall be internally paginated by exhibit, or all of a party's exhibits shall be Bates-stamped. Each exhibit binder shall contain a detailed table of contents. The parties shall serve their evidence binders on each other in compliance with Education Code section 56505, subdivision (e)(7), by 5:00 p.m. on May 12, 2014. At the hearing, each party shall supply an exhibit binder containing its exhibits for use by the ALJ, and a second exhibit binder for use by witnesses. The parties may not serve exhibits on OAH prior to the hearing. In the event of duplicate exhibits, the most legible version will be used.

Except for good cause shown, or unless used solely for rebuttal or impeachment, any exhibit not included in the exhibit lists and not previously exchanged shall not be admitted into evidence at the hearing unless it is supported by written declaration under penalty of perjury, and the ALJ rules that it is admissible.

4. Witnesses. Each party is responsible for procuring the attendance at hearing of its own witnesses. Each party shall make witnesses under its control reasonably available. The parties shall schedule their witnesses to avoid delays in the hearing and to minimize or eliminate the need for calling witnesses out of order. Neither party shall be permitted to call any witnesses not disclosed in the party's prehearing conference statement except for good cause shown, supported by written declaration under penalty of perjury, and at the discretion of the ALJ.²

The parties are ordered to meet and confer by May 15, 2014, as to the schedule of witnesses, and have agreed to coordinate the availability and order of testimony of witnesses to ensure that there is a witness available to testify at all times during the hearing, and to ensure that the hearing is completed as scheduled. By 1:00 p.m. on May 16, 2014, each party shall serve on the other party and on the ALJ, the final witness list, including the anticipated order of the witnesses to be called at the hearing, an estimate of the length of time for the direct examination of each witness the party actually intends to call, along with time estimates for the testimony of any additional witnesses the party may call, depending on the flow of the hearing and the evidence.³ Prior to the commencement of the due process

² District disclosed an additional witness at the PHC and agreed to e-mail the witness information to Student by closed of business on May 9, 2014.

³ Parties shall not mail a hard copy of any document to OAH that has already been filed by facsimile transmission.

hearing, the ALJ and the parties will discuss the length of time anticipated for cross-examination of each witness and scheduling issues for individual witnesses, and the ALJ will finalize the witness schedule. The parties are encouraged to review and shorten their witness lists prior to the hearing, bearing in mind that evidence will be excluded if it is repetitive, cumulative, or insufficiently probative to justify the time it would take to hear. The ALJ has discretion to limit the number of witnesses who testify and the time allowed for witnesses' testimony.

5. Scope of Witness Examination. After the first direct and cross-examinations, each party shall be limited in examining the witness to only those matters raised in the immediately preceding examination. If a witness is to be called by more than one party, the opposing party may exceed the scope of direct so the witness need only testify once.

6. Telephonic Testimony. Whether a witness may appear by telephone is a matter within the discretion of the ALJ. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 5, § 3082, subd. (g).) Any party seeking to present a witness by telephone shall move in advance for leave to do so, unless the opposing party has stipulated that the witness may appear by telephone. The proponent of the witness shall provide the proposed witness with a complete set of exhibit binders from all parties, containing all of each party's exhibits, prior to the hearing; and shall ensure that the hearing room has sound equipment that allows everyone in the room to hear the witness, and the witness to hear objections and rulings. No witness will be heard by telephone unless all these requirements have been fulfilled.

Student's motion to allow Mother to testify telephonically is granted. Student shall provide Mother with a complete exhibit binder from each party, containing all of each party's exhibits, prior to the hearing, and District shall ensure that the hearing room has sound equipment that allows everyone in the room to hear the witness. Student shall provide OAH and District with notice a day before if Mother will need telephonic testimony.

7. Motions. Student indicated that he may submit motions in limine as to qualifications District's expert witnesses. No other pretrial motions are pending or contemplated. Any motion filed after this date shall be supported by a declaration under penalty of perjury establishing good cause as to why the motion was not made prior to or during the prehearing conference of May 9, 2014.

8. Recording of Hearing. Student's request to audio tape the hearing is granted. District may record the hearing if they wish. The recording by OAH shall be official record of the hearing and no stoppages of the hearing will be granted to accommodate the parties' recording, and parties must cease recording when the ALJ informs the parties that the matter is off the record. Failure to comply will cause the ALJ not to permit the offending to record the hearing.

9. Stipulations. Stipulations to pertinent facts, contentions or resolutions are encouraged. Any proposed stipulation shall be submitted to the assigned ALJ in written form.

10. Conduct of Counsel and Hearing Room Decorum. Counsel, all parties, and all witnesses shall conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner at all times. Cellular phones, pagers, recorders, and other noisemaking electronic devices shall be shut off or set to vibrate during the hearing unless permission to the contrary is obtained from the ALJ.

11. Compensatory Reimbursement. Any party seeking reimbursement of expenditures shall present admissible evidence of these expenditures, or a stipulation to the amount of expenditures, as part of its case in chief.

12. Special Needs and Accommodations. If Mother testifies in person, individuals in the hearing room shall wear masks, provided by Student, due to her health condition.

13. Hearing Open To the Public. At the request Parents, the hearing will be open to the public.

14. Settlement. The parties are encouraged to continue their attempts to reach an agreement before the due process hearing. The parties shall inform OAH in writing immediately should they reach a settlement or otherwise resolve the dispute before the scheduled hearing. If a settlement is reached five business days or fewer before the due process hearing is scheduled to begin, the parties shall, in addition, immediately inform OAH of that fact by telephone at (916) 263-0880. Dates for hearing will not be cancelled until the letter of withdrawal or signature page of the signed agreement has been received by OAH. If an agreement in principle is reached, the parties should plan to attend the scheduled hearing unless different arrangements have been agreed upon by the assigned ALJ. IF A FULL AND FINAL SETTLEMENT IS REACHED AFTER 5:00 P.M. ON THE LAST BUSINESS DAY PRIOR TO HEARING, THE PARTIES SHALL LEAVE A VOICEMAIL MESSAGE REGARDING THE SETTLEMENT AT (916) 274-6035, AND SHALL ALSO LEAVE CELLULAR PHONE NUMBERS OF EACH PARTY OR COUNSEL FOR EACH PARTY. The ALJ will check for messages the evening prior to the hearing and the morning of the hearing.

15. Failure to comply with this order may result in the exclusion of evidence or other sanctions.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATE: May 9, 2014

/s/

PETER PAUL CASTILLO
Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings