

L.V. v. NYC Department of Education, 03 Civ. 9917 (SDNY)

Parents of children with Individualized Education Programs who received or who may receive an order at the conclusion of an impartial hearing should read the attached notice about possible disclosure of information and documents about their children as part of a federal court litigation.

Translations in Spanish, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, and Urdu are available on the DOE webpage at <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/special-education/help/impartial-hearings>

Notice of Potential Disclosure of Student Education Records

Please read this notice carefully. This is a message about possible disclosure of documents or data that might contain information about your child, if your child has been classified as a student with a disability and has been or may be the subject of a final Impartial Hearing Order.

I. Nature of the Lawsuit

This lawsuit challenged the failure of the Department of Education (“DOE”) of the City of New York to timely implement orders issued by impartial hearing officers in connection with impartial hearings held pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”), 20 U.S.C. § 1400, *et seq.* and N.Y. Education Law § 4401, *et seq.* In 2007, the parties entered into a Stipulation of Settlement (the “Stipulation”) in which the DOE agreed to timely implement these orders.

In January 2021, the Court granted plaintiffs’ motion for the appointment of a special master. On April 14, 2021, the Court entered an Order appointing David Irwin of Thru-Ed as the Special Master. On May 14, 2021, the Court entered an Order detailing the duties and authority of the Special Master which include, among other things, the authority to review DOE’s processes for implementing impartial hearing orders and to recommend to the Court improvements to enable DOE to timely implement orders. Pursuant to this Order, the Special Master may have access to education records of students, upon DOE’s compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 C.F.R. Part 99) (“FERPA”).

II. Data Ordered to Be Disclosed

In order for the Special Master to perform his duties, the Court has directed the DOE to provide the Special Master (and employees and consultants at Thru-Ed) with access to records containing confidential student record information, including, but not limited to, documents submitted in the impartial hearing process, impartial hearing orders, data about compliance, and students' special education documents, such as individualized education programs, evaluations, authorizations, invoices, etc. The Special Master is required to keep any student documents and information confidential. No student-specific information will be shared with plaintiffs' counsel unless the student's parent specifically consents. If there is any student-specific information in the Special Master's reports to the Court, that information would not be made public.

The Special Master will use this information only for his work to review DOE's processes for implementing impartial hearing orders and to recommend to the Court improvements to enable DOE to timely implement orders. The disclosure of this information does not affect any of your rights as a parent to seek special education services for your child.

IV. Objections to Disclosure

If you agree to the disclosure of this information to the Special Master, you do not need to do anything more.

If you do not want your child's information shared with the Special Master, you must object to this disclosure by submitting an objection to DOE's attorney, addressed to:

Jeffrey S. Dantowitz
NYC Law Department
100 Church Street, Room 2-121
New York NY 10007

or via email at LVO objection@law.nyc.gov. Please reference the *LV v. DOE* lawsuit (Case No. 03-9917) when writing. An Objection Form accompanies this Notice, though no written objection will be rejected if it is not submitted on this form. If you object, no records containing you and your child's personally identifiable information or other FERPA-protected information will be provided to the Special Master, although nominal and incidental disclosure of your child's name may occur. **Any objections must be received by December 3, 2021 or for impartial hearing orders issued after November 12, 2021, within 3 weeks of the issuance of the impartial hearing order.**

If you would like more information about this notice, please contact the attorneys for plaintiffs, Rebecca Shore, of Advocates for Children of New York, Inc. at 646-532-6078.