

*This opinion is nonprecedential except as provided by
Minn. R. Civ. App. P. 136.01, subd. 1(c).*

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
IN COURT OF APPEALS
A26-0028**

Daniel Quinones,
Appellant,

vs.

Saint Paul College,
Respondent.

**Filed August 10, 2026
Affirmed
Ede, Judge**

Hennepin County District Court
File No. 27-CV-25-14570

Daniel Quinones, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota (self-represented appellant)

Keith Ellison, Attorney General, Adrienne Kaufman, Assistant Attorney General, St. Paul,
Minnesota (for respondent)

Considered and decided by Ede, Presiding Judge; Smith, Tracy M., Judge; and
Beane, Judge.

NONPRECEDENTIAL OPINION

EDE, Judge

This appeal arises from appellant student’s lawsuit against respondent school for declining to accommodate appellant’s disability by assigning only male teachers to his classes and by seating only male students next to him. Appellant argues that the district court abused its discretion in denying his motion for default judgment and erred in

dismissing his complaint for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. We affirm.

FACTS

Consistent with applicable law,¹ the following factual summary stems from the allegations set forth in appellant Daniel Quinones’s complaint, which this court accepts as true and construes in the light most favorable to Quinones, who was the nonmoving party before the district court.

In 2025, Quinones was enrolled as a student with respondent Saint Paul College. When he registered for classes, Quinones requested an accommodation based on “documented medical and psychological conditions.” Based on “specific medical needs [that] are supported by documentation,” Quinones’s request “included the assignment of male instructors and male paraprofessionals, as well as being seated near male students during class.” In May, the college denied Quinones’s request, explaining that it “could not accommodate requests based on the gender of staff members.” Quinones later met with one of the college’s deans to discuss the denial of his request. The dean told Quinones that his request was “‘unreasonable’ and stated that fulfilling [it] would conflict with the college’s commitment to preparing students for the future” and “constitute discrimination against female staff.”

¹ See *Halva v. Minn. State Colls. & Univs.*, 953 N.W.2d 496, 500 (Minn. 2021) (explaining that, in reviewing a district court’s decision to grant a motion to dismiss under Minn. R. Civ. P. 12.02, appellate courts “must accept the facts alleged in the complaint as true and construe all reasonable inferences in favor of the nonmoving party” (quotation omitted)).

On July 16, Quinones served a summons and complaint on the college. Although the complaint does not contain enumerated causes of action, it alleges that the college violated “the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA),” “Title VI of the Civil Rights Act,” “Minnesota Statute[s] [section] 121A.031” (“the Minnesota Safe and Supportive Schools Act”), “Minnesota Statute[s] [section] 609.05,” “Minnesota Statute[s] [section] 609.495,” “Title IX,” “federal disability law, civil rights protections, and the college’s own non-discrimination and anti-retaliation policies.” The complaint also lists the following demands for relief: (1) that Quinones receive “\$50,000 for discrimination and emotional distress”; (2) that “all [his] accommodations . . . be honored so that [he] can attend school”; and (3) that certain administrators of the college, including the dean, “be held accountable for negligent supervision.”

On August 7, Quinones filed the complaint in the district court. That same day, the college filed and served a motion to dismiss the complaint under Minnesota Rule of Civil Procedure 12.02(e), asserting that Quinones had failed to state a claim upon which relief could be granted. Quinones later requested default judgment in his favor by filing an affidavit asserting that “[t]he time allowed by law and specified in the summons for [the college] to answer the complaint has elapsed[,]” “[n]o answer or other pleading was received by or served upon [Quinones], . . . [the college] did not otherwise defend[,]” and that, as a result, the college “is in default.” The affidavit also avers that, because of the college’s purported default, Quinones is due \$50,000 in damages, plus interest and \$322 in court fees. The college subsequently moved to enlarge the time to respond to the complaint.

After a hearing on October 31, the district court filed an order granting the college's motion to dismiss Quinones's complaint with prejudice, on which the court entered judgment for the college. In an attached memorandum, the district court detailed its analysis of the college's motion to enlarge time, which the court implicitly granted, and Quinones's request for default judgment, which the court expressly denied. Addressing Quinones's accommodation, retaliation, and negligent-supervision claims, including that the college "violated a litany of statutes by refusing to provide him exclusively male instructors[] [and] male paraprofessionals, and [by declining to] rearrange his class seating charts to only be next to males," the district court determined that there "is no possibility for any evidence to support the relief he demands."

This appeal follows.

DECISION

I. The district court acted within its discretion in expressly denying Quinones's request for default judgment and implicitly granting the college's motion to enlarge time.

Quinones asserts that the district court abused its discretion because it "failed to rule on [his] motion for default judgment after [the college] filed its motion to dismiss late." Contending that "[t]he district court did not address [his default] motion before granting dismissal," Quinones claims that "[t]his constitutes procedural error and deprived [him] adjudication of procedural rights." The college counters that the "district court properly denied Quinones's motion for default judgment and excused [its] one-day delay in filing the motion to dismiss." We agree with the college.

“A [district] court’s action permitting a party to serve or file a pleading after expiration of a time limit is discretionary and will not be reversed unless the discretion has been abused.” *Coller v. Guardian Angels Roman Cath. Church of Chaska*, 294 N.W.2d 712, 715 (Minn. 1980); *accord Lake Superior Ctr. Auth. v. Hammel, Green & Abrahamson, Inc.*, 715 N.W.2d 458, 471 (Minn. App. 2006) (“The district court’s extension of a time limit under [Minnesota Rule of Civil Procedure] 6.02 is discretionary and will not be reversed absent an abuse of that discretion.”), *rev. denied* (Minn. Aug. 23, 2006).

“If [a rule 6.02] motion is made after time expires, . . . the [district] court may enlarge the time limit ‘where the failure to act was the result of excusable neglect.’” *Lake Superior Ctr. Auth.*, 715 N.W.2d at 470 (quoting Minn. R. Civ. P. 6.02). “Excusable neglect is a basis for relief for clients when they suffer from the negligence of their attorneys” *Firkus v. Harms*, 914 N.W.2d 414, 421 (Minn. App. 2018). “To establish excusable neglect, there are four required elements: (1) there is a reasonable defense on the merits; (2) there is a reasonable excuse for the failure to file; (3) the party acted with due diligence after notice; and (4) no substantial prejudice results to other parties.” *Id.* Similarly,

denial of a motion for a default judgment is proper when four requirements are met: defendant has a reasonable defense on the merits; defendant has a reasonable excuse for his failure to answer; defendant acted with due diligence after notice of the entry of judgment; and no substantial prejudice will result to other parties.

Coller, 294 N.W.2d at 715.

Contrary to Quinones’s argument, the district court explained in the memorandum attached to its order granting the college’s motion to dismiss the complaint with prejudice

that it expressly denied Quinones’s request for default judgment and implicitly granted the college’s motion to enlarge time. The district court stated that “Quinones[’s] request for default judgment is denied” after determining that the college had “a valid defense on the merits, a reasonable excuse for failure to act, ha[d] shown due diligence, and [had] shown that a one-day delay in filing the motion to dismiss^[2] did not result in any prejudice against Quinones.”

More specifically, the district court ruled that the college had a valid defense on the merits based on its decision to dismiss Quinones’s complaint. The district court determined that the college had a reasonable excuse for failing to file within the required period because the college’s counsel “admit[ted] that the delay in filing was because internal correspondence indicated Quinones [had] served his complaint on July 17, 2025, not July 16, 2025.” Because “[c]ounsel discovered the error upon reading the opposition briefing for the motion to dismiss on October 17, 2025 and filed the motion for enlargement on October 24, 2025,” the district court decided that the college “show[ed] due diligence in remedying the error.” Lastly, the district court ruled that “Quinones suffered no prejudice, let alone substantial prejudice, in a one-day delay.” Given that the district court’s determinations are reasonably supported by the record and consistent with applicable law, we discern no abuse of discretion in the district court’s decision. *See Coller*, 294 N.W.2d at 715.

² The college served its motion to dismiss on August 7, 2025, one day after the expiration of the 21-day period that ran from Quinones’s service of the complaint on July 16. *See* Minn. R. Civ. P. 12.01.

We therefore conclude that the district court acted within its discretion in expressly denying Quinones’s request for default judgment and implicitly granting the college’s motion to enlarge time.

II. The district court did not err in granting the college’s motion to dismiss Quinones’s complaint with prejudice.

Quinones maintains that the district court “erred by dismissing [his] disability discrimination claims under Minn. R. Civ. P. 12.02(e) despite allegations satisfying the statutory elements of the [ADA] (42 U.S.C. § 12132), the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794),^[3] and the Minnesota Human Rights Act ([MHRA,] Minn. Stat. § 363A.11).” He also contends that dismissal was erroneous because his “accommodation request [was] based on disability, not gender,” and “the district court misapplied the private right of action” that he claims he has against the college under, among other things, Minnesota Statutes section 363A.33 (2024)—a provision of the MHRA. The college responds that “[t]he district court correctly dismissed Quinones’s reasonable accommodation claim

³ Quinones also argues that he has “a private enforcement mechanism” under “29 U.S.C. § 794a(a)(2).” We decline to address this argument because Quinones did not present a claim based on “29 U.S.C. § 794” in the complaint and the district court therefore did not discuss its consideration of that statute in the order granting the college’s motion to dismiss with prejudice. *See Thiele v. Stich*, 425 N.W.2d 580, 582 (Minn. 1988) (explaining that “[a] reviewing court must generally consider only those issues that the record shows were presented [to] and considered by the [district] court in deciding the matter before it[.] . . . [n]or may a party obtain review by raising the same general issue litigated below but under a different theory” (quotation and citations omitted)). But we would still affirm for the same reasons expressed below even if we were to address this issue because “section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, . . . codified at 29 U.S.C. § 794 (2000), and its implementing regulations have been interpreted to encompass reasonable accommodations provisions that are substantively identical to those in the ADA.” *Hinneberg v. Big Stone Cnty. Hous. & Redevelopment Auth.*, 706 N.W.2d 220, 226 n.5 (Minn. 2005).

under [Minnesota Rule of Civil Procedure] 12.02(e) because his requested accommodation was unlawful and therefore unreasonable.” According to the college, “Quinones’s theory fails because the accommodation he sought—agreeing to provide him exclusively male professors and paraprofessionals, as well as seating by only male students—would require the college to violate anti-discrimination laws by deciding staffing and student seating on the basis of sex[,]” which the college argues “is per se unreasonable,” regardless of any additional facts Quinones might develop. The college’s argument is persuasive.

Appellate courts “review de novo whether a complaint has stated a claim sufficiently to survive a motion to dismiss.” *State of Minn. Off. of Att’y Gen. v. Madison Equities, Inc.*, 29 N.W.3d 700, 706 (Minn. 2026) (quotation omitted). As noted above, appellate courts must “accept the facts alleged in the complaint as true and construe all reasonable inferences in favor of the nonmoving party.” *Halva*, 953 N.W.2d at 500 (quotation omitted). While “absolute specificity in pleading is not necessary,” courts will dismiss a complaint for failure to state a claim “if it appears to a certainty that no facts, which could be introduced consistent with the pleading, exist which would support granting the relief demanded.” *Id.* at 500–01 (quotations omitted).

“[T]itle II of the ADA . . . prohibits public entities from discriminating in the provision of services, programs, or activities on the basis of a person’s disability.” *Hinneberg*, 706 N.W.2d at 226 (footnote omitted) (citing 42 U.S.C. § 12132 (2000)). A plaintiff may “prove discrimination under the ADA” by establishing a “refusal to reasonably accommodate.” *Id.* at 225. “In order to prevail on a reasonable accommodations claim, the plaintiff must make a prima facie showing that the accommodation [they] seek[]

is reasonable on its face.” *Id.* at 226. “The burden is on the plaintiff to show that [their] requested accommodation is (1) linked to [their] disability-related needs, (2) necessary to afford [them] an equal opportunity to enjoy [public] benefits and (3) possible to implement.” *Id.* (quotation omitted). “Another way to formulate this test is by focusing on three key elements: necessity, equal opportunity, and reasonableness.” *Id.* “If the plaintiff satisfies these requirements, the burden shifts to the defendant to demonstrate undue hardship in the particular circumstances.” *Id.*

Quinones does not challenge the district court’s determinations that his complaint adequately alleges that his requested accommodation is both linked to his disability-related needs⁴ and necessary to afford him an equal opportunity to enjoy public education. *See id.* He instead focuses his contentions on the district court’s decision as to the third prong—reasonableness. *See id.*

On that score, we conclude that the district court correctly reasoned that it was impossible for the college to implement Quinones’s accommodation request because doing so “would violate both the federal Civil Rights Act and the [MHRA].” Indeed, under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, employers may not “limit, segregate, or classify [their] employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect [their] status as an employee, because of such individual’s . . . sex.” 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2(a)(2)

⁴ We reject Quinones’s argument that the district court erroneously mischaracterized his accommodation request as one stemming from gender instead of disability. This is because the district court’s analysis appropriately accepts as true Quinones’s allegations as to the link between his accommodation request and his stated disability-related needs.

(2018). The MHRA similarly precludes employers from “discriminat[ing] against a person with respect to . . . terms, . . . conditions, facilities, or privileges of employment” on the basis of sex or gender identity. *See* Minn. Stat. § 363A.08, subd. 2(3) (2024).

Although Title VII and the MHRA provide exceptions to these prohibitions, the facts alleged in the complaint—taken as true and construed in Quinones’s favor—are insufficient to support a viable reasonable-accommodation claim. Title VII permits classifications “where . . . sex . . . is a bona fide occupational qualification reasonably necessary to the normal operation of that particular business or enterprise.” 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2(e) (2018). And the MHRA mentions in each relevant subdivision that classification is prohibited “[e]xcept when based on a bona fide occupational qualification.” Minn. Stat. § 363A.08, subds. 2–6 (2024).

“In interpreting the MHRA . . . [Minnesota appellate courts] will usually follow the lead of the United States Supreme Court’s interpretations of federal anti-discrimination statutes such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964” *Huisenga v. Opus Corp.*, 494 N.W.2d 469, 472 (Minn. 1992). The Supreme Court has instructed that, to constitute a bona fide occupational qualification, “permissible distinctions based on sex must relate to ability to perform the duties of the job.” *Int’l Union, United Auto., Aerospace & Agric. Implement Workers of Am., UAW v. Johnson Controls, Inc.*, 499 U.S. 187, 204 (1991). Because the sex or gender identity of instructors and paraprofessionals does not relate to their ability to perform their duties in teaching classes at the college, they are not permissible distinctions that constitute a bona fide occupational qualification that can serve as exceptions to Title VII and the MHRA. We therefore discern no error in the district

court's determination that it was impossible for the college to implement Quinones's requested accommodation because it would contravene Title VII and the MHRA.

Consequently, we conclude that the district court did not err in granting the college's motion to dismiss Quinones's complaint with prejudice.

Affirmed.