

1 Declaration of Cynthia Artiga-Faupusa

2 I, Cynthia Artiga-Faupusa, hereby declare:

3 1. I am a teacher at the Luther Burbank Middle School in
4 San Francisco and if called to testify could and would do so
5 competently as follows:

6 2. The conditions at Luther Burbank are horrendous and make
7 it very difficult for students to obtain a decent education. The
8 school lacks adequate supplies, such as books, an accessible
9 library, and computers that are wired for the Internet; it is run
10 down, unsafe and infested with mice and roaches; classrooms are
11 very cold; and the bathrooms are appalling. The school was built
12 in 1956 and my uncle and mother were in the first couple of
13 graduating classes.

14 3. This is my first year teaching at Burbank. When I
15 arrived at the school, I was shocked to discover how bad conditions
16 were there. My classroom looked as if it had not been painted in
17 well over a decade. Paint was peeling, and the floors were filthy.

18 4. I do not have sufficient materials with which to teach my
19 students. I teach language arts and social studies to one group of
20 36 boys and another group of 36 girls. My team teacher, Mei-Ling
21 Wiedmeyer teaches math and science to the same groups of students.

22 5. At the beginning of the year, I had only 36 copies of the
23 three textbooks that I use - 1) an English and grammar text, 2) a
24 literature anthology, and 3) a social studies text focusing on
25 ancient civilizations. Because I had only enough books for one of
26 the two groups I taught, I could use the books as a classroom set,
27 but could not have my students take home books for homework. As a
28 result, I continually had to have pages from the texts xeroxed, or
waste class time having the students write down the homework

1 questions that are in the books.

2 6. The school also severely limits the number of copies we
3 can make and requires us to give books to the person who does the
4 copies either 24 or 48 hours in advance. Accordingly, it is very
5 difficult to get xeroxed portions of the books for the students to
6 take home.

7 7. The shortage of books is a real impediment to students'
8 learning. On many homework assignments, students should be able to
9 refer back to portions of the text that will help them answer the
10 questions. Also, bright students are denied the opportunity to
11 read ahead in the text.

12 8. The shortage has gotten worse, because over the course of
13 the year a few copies of the textbooks have been lost. I cannot
14 get replacement copies. So, some of my students have to share
15 textbooks. This is particularly bad for boys because boys their
16 age are easily distracted. When they share a book, they tend to
17 talk with each other, hurting their own learning as well as
18 distracting other students in the class.

19 9. Some of the books and other teaching materials I have are
20 totally out-of-date. My social studies books are at least ten
21 years old. There is a map in the book that does not reflect the
22 breakup of the Soviet Union. Many of the books have missing and
23 torn pages as well as writing in them. This matters to my
24 students. Students competed fiercely to use the one pristine copy
25 of the book that we had.

26 10. The world map in my classroom is also out of date and
27 still has the Soviet Union on it.

28 11. We have an excellent supplemental social history/social

1 studies curriculum materials at Burbank. However, there is only
2 one set of that curriculum for the 3 teachers in each grade who
3 want to use it. As a result, the materials are often unavailable
4 when I want to use them. In addition, many of the materials in the
5 one set are missing. The set is missing a lot of the slides,
6 although that does not matter much because the greater problem is
7 that it is almost impossible to get a slide projector to use.

8 12. The problems caused by a lack of basic materials is
9 compounded because the school's library is basically shut down.
10 Occasionally I can get my students in there, but I have to make
11 special arrangements through the librarian. Even when the library
12 is open, there are no after-school hours for the library. The
13 library was shut down last year also. The school has no regular
14 librarian; occasionally a paraprofessional acts as the librarian.
15 She is not trained as a librarian, but is actually supposed to an
16 ESL paraprofessional. She should be in the classroom, not in the
17 library.

18 13. When I can get my class into the library, I have found
19 that the materials there are inadequate. I think the latest
20 version of the encyclopedia is from 1988.

21 14. My students have very limited access to computers and the
22 Internet. We do not have any computers in the classroom. There is
23 a computer lab that has about 30 computers for the 800 or so
24 students at the school. However, only 12 of the computers are
25 wired for the Internet. Since there are only 12 computers with
26 Internet access, I cannot really take either of my classes to use
27 the lab, because there are 30 students in one class and 36 in the
28 other. The computer lab is not open after school either.

1 15. As a social studies teacher, I would love to be able to
2 have my students use the Internet and the library all the time. If
3 they had regular library and Internet access, I would give them a
4 variety of research projects. The lack of these resources severely
5 hinders my ability to teach.

6 16. The school does not provide many other basic materials.
7 For example, art has been cut out of the curriculum because of
8 budget cuts. The district encourages us to include art projects as
9 part of our normal curriculum, but the school does not provide
10 basic materials such as construction paper, scissors, markers, and
11 glue. Students get very excited by art projects, and I think the
12 hands on process increases their concentration and learning. But
13 I have to forego these projects or pay for the materials out of my
14 own pocket to do them.

15 17. The physical condition of my classroom and the school in
16 general is appalling. The paint in my classroom is peeling, and
17 there is graffiti on the walls. One day when my husband was in my
18 class, he tried to open one of the windows and the whole window
19 simply came out of its frame. The only reason the window did not
20 fall on the ground and shatter was because he was able to hold onto
21 it with the handle. It was very fortunate that it was not one of
22 my students who tried to open the window or he or she might have
23 been seriously hurt. Most of my other windows are bolted shut;
24 only two of them open.

25 18. The school is infested with vermin and roaches. I
26 regularly see roaches in my classroom, and I have seen mice on
27 numerous occasions. I have also seen lots of mice droppings.
28 Every time I complain about mice, the only thing that happens is

1 that a custodian brings up a sticky mouse trap. I have only seen
2 one mouse caught in it, but my students have mistakenly stepped on
3 traps a few times, getting them stuck to the bottoms of their
4 shoes.

5 19. I don't think an exterminator has come to the school to
6 try to solve the roach problem this school year. The roaches and
7 mice are really distracting and discouraging to my students. They
8 complain and regularly ask me why they have to go to school in a
9 ghetto.

10 20. My classroom is often so hot or cold that it does not
11 constitute an acceptable place for students to learn. We don't
12 have air conditioning, and all but two of my windows are bolted
13 shut. On hot days, it feels as if it climbs into the 90's in my
14 classroom. Students complain, and I can see some of them get
15 sweaty and flushed. When it is that hot, it is very difficult to
16 get anything done in the classroom. The worst times are when
17 students come to back to my sweltering classroom after Physical
18 Education, so they are already hot and sweaty. It is terrible
19 uncomfortable for them to try to learn when it feels like a sauna
20 bath.

21 21. On cold days, I think it gets below 60 degrees in
22 classroom in the mornings. We do have heat in the classrooms,
23 it does not usually go on until sometime between 11 a.m. and 1
24 After the heat goes on, it does eventually warm up in
25 classrooms, but it never warms up in the hallways, where there
26 not seem to be any heat.

27 22. I allow my students to wear coats, gloves, and
28 even though we are not supposed to. But it would be cruel c

1 make them sit in the cold like that without letting them wear warm
2 clothes. Needless to say, it is hard for the kids to concentrate
3 on their work when they are shivering or all bundled up in their
4 winter clothes.

5 23. The school is full of unsafe conditions, and I often
6 worry about the safety of my students. For example, they recently
7 remodeled two rooms in the school. Workers were breaking through
8 walls and ceilings that were full of asbestos. The workers all
9 worked with safety masks and protective clothing. There was a
10 plastic sheet or curtain hung up over the doors to the rooms. I
11 think it was there to protect against the asbestos fibers getting
12 out into other parts of the school. But there was no warning sign
13 put up, the curtain got torn, and I often saw students poking their
14 head into the room through the rip in the curtain.

15 24. There is a set of swinging doors in one of the hallways.
16 A piece of metal along the bottom of one door came loose and was
17 sticking out. It could easily have cut someone. It did not get
18 repaired for weeks.

19 25. Throughout the school there are windows that have broken
20 and are simply boarded up with plywood, rather than being repaired.
21 Many of the window shades are also torn or broken. The paint is
22 peeling throughout the school, and there are huge pieces of paint
23 flaking off the walls. The main hallways are filthy with graffiti
24 and sticky puddles of soda that do not get cleaned up.

25 26. There is a courtyard in the center of the school where
26 the kids sometimes eat if the weather is nice. It is filled with
27 garbage, the trash cans are usually overflowing, and many of the
28 bricks there are loose. I think there is a real shortage of

1 custodial help since the school is so dirty and run down.

2 27. The condition of the gym is a disgrace, and it is a real
3 safety hazard. Many of the ceiling tiles are missing, and most of
4 the remaining ones are cracked. They look very old. I am afraid
5 they have asbestos in them. Sometimes my students will come back
6 to class with white flakes in their hair, and they'll tell me that
7 a tile or part of a tile fell on them. The holes in the floor
8 where the volleyball posts go are not covered. Graffiti is
9 scattered all over the walls.

10 28. It is very difficult to be a teacher at Burbank. Many of
11 the teachers here are young and enthusiastic. In fact, half of the
12 teaching staff (17 out of 35) are new this year. But enthusiasm is
13 not enough. Of the 17 new teachers, 11 of them are still working
14 on obtaining their teaching credential. That would not be a such
15 a problem if the school and the school district provided support
16 and mentoring for new teachers. But we receive no training or
17 mentoring. The administrative office did not support Mei-Ling and
18 me when we tried to institute a progressive discipline policy. As
19 a result it has been hard to maintain a orderly working environment
20 in my classes.

21 29. The students here are bright. But their chance for a
22 good education is being destroyed by the lack of basic materials
23 and shortage of trained teachers. The damage to their chances is
24 compounded by the slum-like conditions that make them feel unsafe
25 and as if no one cares about them.

26 30. My students know that there are other schools in San
27 Francisco and throughout California that are clean and safe and
28 where the students have books and computers and a good school

1 library that is open and accessible. They know it is not fair that
2 they are Burbank while other students go to decent schools. It
3 breaks my heart when they ask me why their school is so awful.

4 I swear under penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of
5 California and the United States that the foregoing is true and
6 correct. Executed by me this 9 day of Nov 2000 in San Francisco,
7 California.

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Cynthia Artiga-Faupus