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#### DECLARATION OF NICOL LACAVA

#### I, NICOL LACAVA, hereby declare:

- 1. I make this declaration based on my personal knowledge, and if called to testify I could and would do so competently as follows:
  - 2. I teach second grade at Hawthorne Elementary School in Oakland, California.
- 3. Hawthorne is severely overcrowded, with 1400 students attending a school that should house only between 900 and 1000 students. As a result, the school is on a "multitrack" schedule. Each month, one of the four tracks at the school is on vacation. The multitrack system impedes communication between and collaboration amongst the staff since the entire staff is never together at the school at one time. The lack of collaboration affects instruction because collaboratio amongst teachers is important for creative instruction. While smaller groups of teachers will collaborate, it is impossible for all the teachers at the school to get "in sync" with each other in term of the educational program at the school. Similarly, the multitrack schedule makes it difficult for students to develop a sense of belonging because school is always going on, even while they are on vacation. When they return to school, they find out that certain policies, such as playground rules, have been changed while they were on vacation. This impairs the sense of community among the students.
- 4. Every now and then, at the beginning of the schoolyear, there will be a class with no permanent teacher for the first four weeks of school. Students in such a class will be taught by a substitute or series of substitutes until the district hires a new teacher. The district has a policy of waiting four weeks before hiring the new teachers, who are usually uncredentialed.
- 5. Even more common than a class with no permanent teacher at the beginning of the year is having several classes which are overcrowded at the beginning of the year. For example, some classes will have 23 students, instead of 20. After four weeks, the district will decide how

many new teachers are needed to teach "overflow classes," or classes made up of the "extra" students from the various overcrowded classes at the school. Once the new, usually uncredentialed teacher is hired, students are pulled out of their classes and placed in the overflow classes. Most often, it is those students who are the lowest achievers who are placed into those classes. It is disruptive for them to have to start all over in the new overflow class after they have already bonded with another class.

- 6. Because of the overcrowding, not every teacher gets his or her own classroom; instead, between ten and thirteen classes must "rove," or move each month to a different teacher's classroom as that particular class goes on vacation. I was a rover for three months in the beginning of this year before new portables were set up at the school. This meant that I had to move each month. Because I usually only had about one hour to move everything in my class, I was forced to use only the most basic materials in teaching my class. For example, I would use reading books and curriculum guides, but I had no science equipment. It just was not practical to move, each month, all of the instructional materials that I normally would use; instead, I chose to store most of those materials until I got my own classroom.
- 7. In mid-January, I moved into one of the six portables the school acquired this year. The portables are processed with chemicals and smell very bad. I have to air out my classroom each day because the chemical smell is so strong. There is no running water—neither a sink nor a water fountain—in the portable. This affects my ability to do all the science and art projects I would otherwise do. It also makes it difficult for the students, who must walk a distance to get a drink of water.
- 8. Because the portables have no bathrooms, students have to walk between 50 and 100 yards unsupervised through the yard to bathrooms that are in an unsecure place. These boys and girls bathrooms, shared by 135 students, have only two stalls each. During recess, my students mus

use the portable bathrooms on the yard, which are filthy. Those bathrooms often lack soap, paper towels, and toilet paper.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on April 15, 2001, at Oakland, California.

Nicol LaCava