

1 **DECLARATION OF ALI RASHID ABDULLAH**

2 I, Ali Rashid Abdullah, hereby declare:

3 1. I make this declaration based on my own personal knowledge and if called to
4 testify I could and would do so competently as follows:

5 2. I teach first grade at Burbank Elementary School in Oakland, where I have been
6 teaching for about nine years. I have taught for about 25 to 30 years total, both in California
7 schools and in New York.

8 3. My decision to make a declaration had to do primarily with unsuitable conditions
9 outside my classroom that I've observed at Burbank Elementary School, and also with the severe
10 substitute shortage in the Oakland Unified School District.

11 4. The temperature situation in the portable classrooms at Burbank is often
12 unbearable. Three of the five portables have no air conditioning and they are located on the hot
13 side of the campus, so these portable classrooms are stifling inside on hot days. I'm aware of the
14 heat situation from hearing complaints from teachers and from visiting the classrooms myself.
15 The children and the teachers are miserable in the heat. Sometimes the shade outside will be just
16 a little shadow next to the building, and the kids will be all crowded in that little shade during
17 recess and then they have to go inside their hot classrooms.

18 5. I do not have air conditioning in my classroom either, but my classroom is on the
19 cool side of the building, so I don't experience too much heat in the classroom. On those days
20 when even my classroom on the cool side of the building is hot, though, my kids are falling
21 asleep in class and cranky from the heat and it's hard to teach them. That's how I know it must
22 be miserable for the classes in the portables on all those hot days. My class and I can fight
23 through the heat on our hot days because we know we aren't suffering like those other kids in the
24 portable classrooms, and we won't have to suffer for as long as they do. What's going on in
25 those portables is above and beyond -- I thank God I'm not in those portables on those hot days.

26 6. The portables also have frequent distracting noise problems because they are
27 located on the playground. Children go to recess in shifts at Burbank, and they also take PE
28 instruction on the playground, so much of the school day involves time when children are playing

1 and making noise right outside the portables on the playground. I know that it is extremely
2 disruptive to the classes in the portable to have to try to learn despite the noise from the
3 playground.

4 7. The portables are not large enough to house all the children in the classes in them.
5 The children look like they're just stuffed in there when I've gone into a portable during class
6 time. They can get in there, but there's not much room for them to move around in the portables.

7 8. Teaching under the best of conditions is a great challenge because you're dealing
8 with all these little personalities in children. It is really neglectful to have a situation in school
9 that could be corrected with just an investment but yet is not being corrected.

10 9. In addition to the heat and noise and space problems in the portables, we have a
11 serious lack of substitutes at Burbank and throughout our school district. The district is unable to
12 provide a substitute pool to cover teacher absences, so often no substitute teacher is available
13 when a teacher is absent. When that happens, we have to swap children, which means that we
14 move some of the children from an absent teacher's class into one other classroom for the
15 duration of the teacher's absence, and we put other children from the class into still another
16 classroom, and so on until we have housed all the children from the absent teacher's class. There
17 are not enough classes of the same grade levels to accommodate all the children from an absent
18 teacher's class, so we have to put children in with other grade level classes. Third grade students
19 might go into second grade classes or even into first grade classes rather than spending the day in
20 another third grade class. The children who have to be swapped into other classrooms do not get
21 their regular instruction for the day, which a substitute teacher could have provided to them. In
22 addition, the other classes into which the swapped children are placed have their classes
23 disrupted. The procedure is enormously disruptive for teachers as well. You go in to school and
24 you have a plan for the day, but then you have to take in other kids when you get there because
25 no substitute could come to the school. One teacher at Burbank told me on March 15, 2001 that
26 she has had children swapped into her classroom 33 times already this year. That means that for
27 33 days of this school year, she and her class have had their instruction time undermined by the
28 lack of substitutes. The procedure for swapping children into other classes when a teacher is

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absent and no substitute can take the teacher's place was supposed to have been an emergency procedure. But this emergency procedure has become the normal procedure at Burbank because now we usually do not have substitutes who can fill in.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on April 1, 2001 at Oakland, California.

Ali Rashid Abdullah
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