

1 **Declaration of Beatriz A. Lizarraga**

2 I, Beatriz A. Lizarraga, 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 am a senior at Jefferson High School in Los Angeles, where I have gone for all
6 my years of high school.

7 3. My school is so overcrowded that we're on a multitrack, year-round schedule that
8 has students only going to school for 163 days, which is 17 days less school than kids in
9 traditional schools get. The multitrack, year-round schedule takes away our time to learn. We go
10 to school for a longer time during the days we're in school than kids on regular calendars do, and
11 the other kids and I lose focus by the end of the day because we're tired. We have to give our
12 books back every time we go off track so other kids who are going on track can use the books.
13 That means that when we're off track, we don't have books to study from, so we can't keep up or
14 study more. Our school can't ever go through maintenance when students are gone because
15 we're on the multitrack, year-round schedule. There are constantly students there, so if the
16 school is going to get maintenance and paint work done then it has to be done while the students
17 are there. The multitrack year-round schedule is also hard on teachers because they have to teach
18 the same material teachers in traditional high schools have to teach, but they have to teach the
19 material in less time. I'm in advanced placement (AP) classes, and the other students and I can't
20 prepare for the AP exams as well as students in regular schools can because we go to school for
21 less time. I'm lucky among students at my school because I'm on the C track, and the C track
22 schedule ends in time for us to take AP tests after our class is over. But kids on the A and B
23 tracks in AP classes have to take AP tests even before their classes are over because of the year-
24 round schedule.

25 4. The State should not allow multitrack, year-round schools to exist. If there's
26 overcrowding in a school, then the State should build more schools. They can build schools up if
27 they have to, like they do in New York. That way we wouldn't necessarily need to find more
28 land to put new schools on; we could just build more classrooms and more floors on existing

1 schools if necessary. But we need to create places for students to go to schools on traditional
2 calendars so some students don't have to miss out.

3 5. Jefferson is so overcrowded that not all the teachers have their own classrooms. I
4 have a teacher for English who teaches three classes but has to use two different rooms because
5 there are not enough classrooms for all the teachers. She shares both classrooms she uses with
6 other teachers, so a lot of the time we can't put our work up on the walls because the other
7 teachers are already using the wall space. Also, if we need help with something, we don't know
8 where to find the teacher because she doesn't have a permanent classroom she works in. She
9 usually uses the principal's conference room to work, but the whole class can't fit into the
10 principal's conference room, and we could fit into a classroom if she had one. Sometimes she
11 can borrow a classroom for us to use for a meeting after class when students want help. But she
12 should have her own room so we could work together in that room during class and after class.

13 6. For almost the whole first semester of this school year, there was a science class
14 on my track with substitutes every day because the teacher left the school. The class had a lot of
15 different substitutes, so they weren't learning in the class. My friend's sister in 10th grade was
16 in that class, and she told me they didn't learn anything.

17 7. The bathrooms at Jefferson usually look pretty bad. Lately we've been having
18 enough toilet paper finally, but usually we don't have paper towels to use to dry our hands. In
19 the bathroom in the science building, there's almost always at least one toilet that does not work.
20 We have two bathrooms that are open for girls most of the time, and a third bathroom is open for
21 girls during lunchtime. But there are other bathrooms on campus that the school just uses for
22 storage. I never even knew those bathrooms existed until this year when someone told me they
23 were used for storage. Those bathrooms should be open for student use, too.

24 8. When the WASC team was here for three days around April 16, the school was
25 beautiful, but that was just a big fake show. The floors were waxed, the walls were painted,
26 posters were up on the walls, and the display cases were fixed. Jefferson finally looked like a
27 school and it made everyone feel proud to go there. We all talked about how good it looked in
28 class, and my friends told me how proud they felt to go to a school that looked that good. It's sad

1 that the school put on a show for those people, when the school doesn't look like that most of the
2 time. After the WASC team left, we had no more waxed floors and no more beautiful fixed-up
3 school. Before the WASC team was coming, the school was in a shambles and it's going back
4 that way now. You wouldn't want to eat at a restaurant where they fix the grills only every six
5 years and tell the restaurant first that a review team is coming. But that's what our school is like.
6 The school knows in advance when the WASC team is coming, so they fix it all up in a way that
7 they never fix it up for the students, and they only even do that once every several years when the
8 review team is coming.

9 9. For my advanced film class this year, I'm working on a documentary film that
10 focuses on how inequities in schools are caused by the State and by society. The two other
11 students I work on the film with and I have driven up to Oakland to interview students there and
12 to film conditions in those schools, and we've also visited other schools in Los Angeles for the
13 same thing. We've visited some really nice schools to compare with schools like mine and some
14 even worse schools, like Fremont High in Oakland. I've seen from my work on the film that the
15 schools where there are low-income families and minorities are the schools that are messed up.
16 White people live in one set of neighborhoods and minorities live in another set of
17 neighborhoods. That's how society is and so that's how our schools are. But that's not right, and
18 it should change. We should all have the same opportunities rich kids have. We're the future,
19 we're the ones who are going to be out there working and living in this State. The State should
20 spend money on our schools to make them places where we can learn. I hope our film shows
21 people that every student deserves the same opportunities and that the level of your education
22 should not be determined by how much money your parents make.


23 10. When this lawsuit was first filed last May, I read in the newspaper that my
24 principal said the awful conditions at Jefferson don't exist. I don't understand how the principal
25 could say those things don't go on. If she hasn't been to other schools like I have now, then
26 maybe she doesn't know how a school should be. But anyone who goes to Jefferson can see how
27 terrible the overcrowding is and how awful the bathrooms are. It's important to talk about the
28 conditions of our school because if no one finds out, then how are the conditions going to

1 change?

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3 I swear under penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of California and the United
4 States that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed by me this 21 day of April, 2001 in Los
5 Angeles, California.

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Beatriz A. Lizarra

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