

Declaration of Gabriella Gonzalez

I, Gabriella Gonzalez, hereby declare:

1. I am a third grade teacher at Hawthorne Elementary School in Oakland, California. If called to testify, I could and would do so competently as follows:

2. I have been a teacher at Hawthorne Elementary School for eleven years. I currently teach third grade students.

3. Hawthorne is extremely overcrowded. There are currently 1,450 students enrolled, although the facilities are made for approximately 800 people. The school is on a year-round, four track "multitrack" schedule. As a result of "multitracking", many teachers and students have had to rove from classroom to classroom on a monthly basis. The roving from empty class to empty class causes disruption to other classes during instruction time due to the loud noise. This has resulted in many instructional days lost due to packing and unpacking. Another contributing factor is the use of portables. The severe overcrowding has forced the district to resort to immediate use of portables, when classrooms would be better for students, as I stated below. Most importantly, "multitracking" has a negative impact on academic planning, curriculum development and proper assessment for the students because there is a lack of communication amongst the staff, teachers, parents and students.

4. The buildings at Hawthorne Elementary School are in horrible condition. I have had all my classrooms in outside portables for the last nine out of eleven years since I have taught at Hawthorne Elementary School. I currently have my classroom in an outside portable. The portable itself is one that was at one point used for army barracks. It is made of wood and has no insulation. The ceiling itself displays raw wood. For several years, when it rained, puddles of water formed on the floor and desks.

5. During the winter months the portable classroom is not heated properly. At one corner of the portable, there is a built-in blower type heater with a timer. The heater is loud and disruptive and dries the air excessively. The students always complain to me that it is too cold. Most of the times during the winter months the students and I have to wear our jackets in the mornings just to keep warm.

1 6. There is no air conditioning in the portables. During the summer, the portables are
2 extremely hot. The school district provides the portables with portable water coolers, which do
3 not cool enough, are too loud, and therefore disruptive to the children's ability to learn. The
4 children constantly complain of the heat. They are not attentive to instruction, their faces get red,
5 and they often get nausea and get nose bleeds frequently due to the heat. In addition, I bring
6 water jugs from my home to ensure that the children have water at all times because they
7 complain constantly that they are thirsty in the heat. On the hottest days, I resort to purchasing
8 bags of ice cubes; and putting the ice in individual plastic bags for each student to hold and put
9 against their forehead to cool down.

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11 7. There are not enough bathrooms available to the students at Hawthorne.
12 Sometimes the bathrooms are kept locked. The students during class time will ask permission to
13 use the bathrooms and will return back complaining that they were unable to use it because it was
14 locked. Often the students complain that the bathrooms are dirty, smell bad and there is no toilet
15 paper and paper towels. The teacher portable bathroom is always flooding and constantly leaks.

16 I swear under penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of California and the
17 United States that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 24th day of

18 April, 2001 in Oakland, California.

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Gabriella Gonzalez
Gabriella Gonzalez

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