

Declaration of Martha Monje

I, Martha Monje, hereby declare:

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

2. I am the mother of three children who attend or who have just recently graduated from Cesar Chavez Academy. My daughter Krystal and my son Eric just graduated from the eighth grade in June of 2001. My daughter Myra just finished the third grade and will be returning to Cesar Chavez in September of 2001 as a fourth grade student.

3. There are not enough bilingual teachers at Cesar Chavez. None of my children had a teacher who could speak both Spanish and English fluently or even proficiently during their time at Chavez. It makes it very difficult for parents who are Spanish speakers to communicate with a school when very few teachers speak Spanish. So many of the students suffer because their parents cannot take an active role in their education, because of the communications barrier. Friends of mine bring their children with them when they go to the school so that the children can translate for them.

4. Due to the school's error my son was held back in eighth grade. The school was supposed to send home papers telling me that my son had to take summer school classes before entering high school, but the papers never arrived. A week before my son's high school year started for the 2000-2001 school year, the school sent home a letter saying that because my son had not attended summer school he would have to repeat eighth grade. It was horrible for my son and for our family. The schools do not communicate effectively with the parents, and they fail to inform us about what the requirements are for our children. There should be a counselor at the school who understands the schedules and who tracks what is happening to the students. I have been told there is not a single counselor in the entire school.

5. During the 1999-2000 school year a huge portion of the teachers left Cesar Chavez because the principal of the school left. My children have had classes where teachers have left during the middle of the school year or they have had lots of substitutes. For example, in my daughter Krystal's eighth grade language arts class during the 2000-2001 school year her regular

1 teacher was fired for standing up for the children and for working with the parents to try and
2 improve the school. My daughter really loved this teacher. When he left, the school had a hard
3 time finding a replacement, and so my daughter had three different teachers and several
4 substitutes for the rest of the school year. I was very concerned that she was not learning what
5 she needed to learn because of the amount of chaos in her classroom, and because she was
6 constantly receiving different types of instruction. In my daughter Krystal's seventh grade science
7 class, during the 1999-2000 school year, the teacher left during the third quarter. For the rest of
8 the year my daughter had substitutes. These substitutes could not have known what the students
9 had been learning during the earlier part of the year, may not have been trained in the subject, and
10 could not know the students' strengths and weaknesses because they were only in the class for a
11 few days. This is very unfortunate, and I worry that my daughter falls behind when she does not
12 have a permanent teacher for the whole school year.

13 6. When I have visited the school on parent's night both in February and November
14 of the 2000-2001 school years, I have noticed that the school appears dirty and dingy, there are
15 broken lights in some of the hallways, and in one of the classes the air vent was all covered with
16 grime and dirt. Additionally, I noticed that several of the water fountains had mold and mildew all
17 over them and that they appeared broken.

18 7. My son's teacher sent home a notice that I had to buy a specific type of folder for
19 his reading class, and that if I did not get the folder he would give my son a lower grade. I did
20 not have the money at the time to purchase the folder, and I did not think it was right for the
21 school to condition my son's grade on a purchase that I was unable to afford. Additionally, the
22 school has called me several times to tell me that I have to buy my children different blue pants as
23 part of their school uniform. I have three children at Cesar Chavez, and I did not have the money
24 to buy these pants. I told the administrators who called me that I did not have the money, and
25 they said that my son had pants on and so how did I get the money to buy the pants that he was
26 wearing. It was humiliating. I told them that the pants my son was wearing were donated to our
27 family. The school was harassing my son and myself for something that I was unable to afford.

28 8. Cesar Chavez is overcrowded. The school had to tear down a playground space

1 for the children on campus just so they could put in additional portable classrooms. The school
2 should not have to take away valuable play space in order to squeeze in more classrooms.

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4 I declare under penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of California and the United
5 States that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 10th day of July, 2001 in East Palo
6 Alto, California.

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