

Declaration of Margaret Paolucci

I, Margaret Paolucci, 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 have taught social studies at Fremont High School in LA for 19 years.

3. Fremont High School has a serious overcrowding problem. This year, I had 65 students in my third period class on the first day of track A in August. Two weeks later there are now 39 students in this class. This year, I have 209 students every day in my six classes, including 42 in my fifth period class, 38 in my sixth period class, and 39 in my third period class. The classroom that I teach in is not designed for approximately 40 students because this many students makes teacher mobility impossible.

4. The overcrowding at Fremont High School has serious consequences for student learning. As a result of overcrowding I cannot give my students the individualized instruction they need, or mark, return and give feedback on their work in a timely manner. Because there are so many kids in each of my classes, my students have difficulty seeing the board or the overhead projector screen. As a result of my overcrowded classrooms, there is constant, very disruptive, shifting among the students to see the overhead projector, my writing on the board, or the wall maps. This is very detrimental to the learning process and some students feel alienated, unimportant and anonymous.

5. Because of my overcrowded classes I have had problems with desks and work areas for my students. There is only room for 38 desks and so any number of students over 38 have to work at my desk, work tables, the computer and media areas and often must stand to take notes in class. Students sit in every available space, their desks are jammed up against the computers, file cabinets and wall maps. I have not been able to use the computer and media areas for the special projects they are designed for due to large classes in the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years. As a result of the lack of space, it is uncomfortable for students to get up and move around and I have had to stop using important teaching methods like debates, role-plays and group work. Because of the overcrowding, it is very difficult for me to physically get around the

1 class to help students, I don't fit between the rows of desks due to the cramped space.

2 6. There was a severe shortage of desks at Fremont High School in the early to mid
3 1990s. During this period, I could not get the extra desks I requested. The desks I did have in my
4 classroom were dirty, rickety, written on and pieces would fall off of them while the kids used
5 them. In one instance, in 1996, I had a desk break as one of my students sat in it, with the student
6 falling to the floor.

7 7. The overcrowding at Fremont High School is so severe that it is difficult to get
8 around campus. The halls are packed wall-to-wall with a solid mass of people standing-shoulder
9 to-shoulder and this has contributed to a tardy problem where students are not able to get to class
10 on time because of the overcrowding. This reduction in class time has been detrimental to student
11 learning.

12 8. The fact that Fremont High School is now a year round, multi-track school has
13 also created a number of problems with classroom space. Every other semester I have to move
14 between room 223 and 225 to teach my classes. Many teachers have to travel with all of their
15 supplies and equipment through the packed halls to teach their classes every day. It often takes
16 10-15 minutes to pack supplies, travel between classes and set up for the next session; class starts
17 late, ends early and is rushed with the end result being the students get less of their teacher and
18 their education suffers. With multi-tracking, teachers are forced to share their classrooms with a
19 number of other classes and teachers and equipment, books and supplies are overused and
20 damaged and often get lost. During the 1998-1999 and the 1999-2000 school year I shared my
21 classroom with 4 other teachers and classes, 2 different rotating teachers and classes during the
22 day, 1 teacher and class during my preparation period and a night school class and teacher.

23 9. The fact that Fremont is a multi-track school also means that students miss out on
24 programs and face more difficulties with AP tests than students in traditional programs do. I teach
25 AP history and my students are significantly disadvantaged because the AP history examination is
26 in early May and track A has no class in January or February. I meet students on my own time
27 during their vacation but not all of them are able to come in and it is not nearly as effective as
28 having class every day of the week. It is hard to teach AP history in a compressed schedule and

1 then come in off track to help students. At Fremont, the magnet program is only offered on C
2 track.

3 10. Because Fremont is a multi-track school and we have 2 tracks in session while the
4 other is off, we have "summer school" or intersession for the off track while the two other tracks
5 are in session. There is little room or space to do this and during the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000
6 school year I was displaced from my classroom during my critical preparation period by
7 intersession classes.

8 11. There is a problem with textbooks at Fremont High School. During the 1998-1999
9 school year I had 38 books for all four of my U.S. History classes for the whole year. Because
10 there was only 38 books, none of the students in these four classes had a book to take home and
11 use for homework for the whole year. From 1993-1999, I did not have enough books to allow my
12 students to have their own book and bring it home to work from. The lack of textbooks has
13 critically affected my students ability to learn history because this particular subject requires
14 reading. Students cannot review and study from their books, and the presentation of history that I
15 am able to provide loses depth and richness.

16 12. The textbooks that we do have for our students are often in very poor condition.
17 The history textbooks at Fremont have often been warped, had torn and missing pages, been full
18 of graffiti, had gum sticking the pages together and had loose bindings. The tattered and outdated
19 textbooks have a critical effect on students ability to learn. My students often ask for better
20 books, are happy when given new ones and do not want to use the old and tattered ones as much.
21 They argue over who gets the undamaged copies. My students have been concerned with
22 profanity written in their books. With books in poor condition, kids feel disrespected and that they
23 are not important or valued as students.

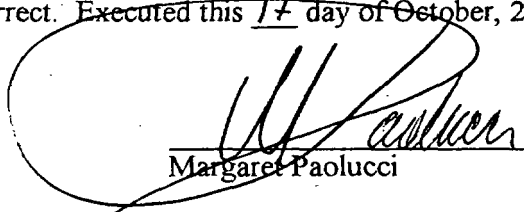
24 13. The bathrooms have been a problem at Fremont High School for all of my 19 years
25 there. The bathrooms are often locked and on a number of occasions, mostly between 1994 and
26 1997, I have given my students a pass for the bathroom and have them return some time later
27 saying that they could not find an open bathroom. I have had students complain to me,
28 particularly in September 2001 and in most of 1998-1999, that the lines for the bathroom were so

1 long at lunch that they could not use the facilities. Kids have to choose between eating lunch and
2 going to the bathroom. The lack of access to the bathrooms impacts learning in that my students
3 squirm in their seats and have difficulty focusing when they are unable to go to the bathroom.

4 14. The bathrooms at Fremont High School have been in poor condition for the 19
5 years I have been at Fremont High School. I have seen stalls without doors, faucets that don't
6 work, bathrooms with no toilet paper, and bathrooms that have water, dirt and paper on the floor.
7 Finally, none of the bathrooms that I have seen at Fremont have ventilation and therefore they
8 smell horrible.

9 15. Fremont High School has a problem with roaches, mice and rats. During the 1998-
10 1999 school year I saw mice and rats running around in the support beams when they were
11 replacing the ceiling panels. In May of 1992, I saw and heard rats and mice in the auditorium at
12 least three times each week while we rehearsed for a play. There was lots of trash back stage and
13 in the dressing rooms and it was apparent that the vermin were living there. During my 19 years at
14 the school I have seen roaches in my classrooms almost every year, an average of at least three
15 times a year.

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17 I declare under penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of California and the United
18 States that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 17 day of October, 2001 in Los
19 Angeles, California.

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21 Margaret Paolucci
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