

1 **Declaration of Toi Benford**

2 I, Toi Benford, 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 tenth grade student at Locke High School in Los Angeles, and I am a  
6 member of the Locke Student Union, an organization formed to try and make the school a better  
7 place for all of us to go to school. I also went to Locke for ninth grade.

8 3. In my Spanish class this year my permanent teacher only came to class for about  
9 four or five weeks. For the rest of the year, we have had rotating substitutes, and most of them  
10 do not speak Spanish. Last week, we had an English teacher as our substitute for a few days, and  
11 now we have a new substitute. Earlier we had an art teacher substitute for us for a few weeks,  
12 and we had about five other substitutes, too, who stayed for shorter periods of time. The majority  
13 of our substitutes do not know how to teach Spanish, and so we basically did nothing in class. I  
14 am upset because the art teacher who is giving us our grades has said that they will be based in  
15 large part on our behavior in class, and not on our efforts or ability to learn Spanish. I think that  
16 is wrong. I don't believe I really learned anything in Spanish this year, and last year, because of  
17 overcrowding I could not take a foreign language so I feel that I am very behind in Spanish, a  
18 requirement for graduation. I also worry that I will not be able to keep up in my Spanish class  
19 next year, because I learned so little this year.

20 4. The only classes where I am allowed to take home my books are my honors  
21 classes. In almost every other class I have had at Locke High School we have not been allowed  
22 to take our textbooks home with us to study or do homework. In many of my classes there have  
23 not been enough books in the class set for all the students to use, and so we have to share or wait  
24 for other students to finish. In my Spanish class this year we have to share books in class, two or  
25 three students to a book. We aren't allowed to take the books home, because there aren't enough  
26 for all the students. It is really difficult to learn when I can't take my book home, because a lot of  
27 times the teacher will give me an assignment to translate Spanish words, but I don't have a book  
28 to look at to check if I am doing the assignment right. I can't look at other model answers or re-

1 read the section that I went over in class. I think it really affects my learning. Also, the teachers  
2 have to make photocopies of the assignments, or they spend class time writing out an assignment  
3 for us on the board, and then we have to re-copy it into our notebooks. I and many of my friends  
4 struggle, because we don't have material to look back at, and so it is hard for us to do our  
5 assignments and that affects our grade. In my second semester English class, we didn't have  
6 textbooks at all. So the teacher would make up hypothetical topics for us to write a paragraph on  
7 or he would write down some vocabulary words on the board for us to learn. I could tell this  
8 teacher didn't really care about teaching us, but without books it was even worse.

9       5.       The foreign language classes were so crowded during my ninth grade year that I  
10 could not take one. The administrators made up a new English class for us to take instead of  
11 giving us the foreign language that was a requirement for graduation. I think I still have the class  
12 schedule where the counselor tried to put me into two other classes first, but they were  
13 completely full. Finally they brought in a teacher, who no longer works at the school anymore,  
14 and had us take English instead of a foreign language.

15       6.       As a student, I am very concerned about the conditions at Locke. I go to the  
16 school to learn, and I depend on the teachers to teach me, but a lot of times I feel like I leave  
17 school with nothing. When we have gone to our principal to tell her our concerns, she has  
18 ignored us, laughed at us, and denied that these bad things are happening to us, but we just keep  
19 trying to tell people that this is wrong. We are not going to give up.

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

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Toi Benford

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