

Declaration of Lucia Ortiz

I, Lucia Ortiz, 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 17 years old and just completed my junior year at Locke High School in Los Angeles.

3. My school does not have enough books for every student. One year ago, I did not have any books in my 10th grade English class. The teacher gave us worksheets that she used for different classes throughout the years. She had used these copies for so many years that they were a yellow and brownish color. The worksheets had stories on them that we had to read; when we were done reading she gave us another worksheet that contained questions about the story we just read. We couldn't write on these worksheets so we had to write down the questions on our own paper to use at home for homework. We mostly answered these questions from our memory of the story, because we didn't have our own worksheets. If we had our own books and materials then we would be able to refer back to the story and look at examples. The only books that we had in this class were old dictionaries that we used for our vocabulary work. The teacher had the dictionaries locked up in a case and we only had access to them on Mondays. If we didn't finish our vocabulary work on Monday, then we either had to do the work on our own from a dictionary out of class, or we had to beg her to let us borrow a dictionary. My ninth grade English class did not have any books either. For work, my teacher had us write essays on random topics, since we didn't have a book or other structured curriculum. She also read us poems from her own books and would then assign us an essay from that poem. The teacher made her book available during class time, but the whole class had to share this one book. I think it's crazy that we didn't have any books in an English class. We're supposed to read in this class, yet, I had nothing to work with. My integrated science II class in the 10th grade did not have any books either. The teacher gave us worksheets for work. My ninth grade math class did not have enough books for all of the students. We worked from worksheets and took notes from the teacher.

1 When we didn't have worksheets, we had to work from the books which meant that every two
2 students shared one book.

3 4. I think that the students at Locke are being cheated out of an education. Students
4 at other schools have books to take home. It's not fair that we don't have our own books because
5 then we're not able to read and learn beyond what the teacher tells us in class. Books contain
6 information that the teacher does not give to the students; this is especially true for new teachers
7 because many of them don't know how to teach. If the teachers don't have books for their
8 students, then they have to come up with other lessons to teach. We would definitely learn more
9 with books.

10 5. The books in my integrated science class during my 9th grade were extremely old.
11 I believe these book sets were from when the school first opened, because they were dated from
12 the 1950's to 1960's. On the inside front cover of the book there is an area where students once
13 entered their names and the years that they used the book. These books had students' names and
14 years from about 1968. Even though we did have books in this class, they were not good books
15 because a lot has changed in science since the 1960's.

16 6. There is also a lack of materials at Locke. In my ninth grade Integrated Science
17 class we only did one lab for the whole year. We're supposed to do labs in this class because it
18 consists of chemistry, biology, and other sciences. My science teacher told me that the science
19 teachers ordered materials and supplies for the labs during the summer before we started the
20 semester. However, they did not receive the supplies until the end of the year. We only had the
21 opportunity to do one lab in which we had to dissect a cow's eye. Even with this lab that we did
22 get to finally do, we had to share one cow eye and do the lab with five students. This upsets me
23 because it shows how little importance the administrators place on the students at Locke.

24 7. There are too many teachers at Locke without teaching credentials. My chemistry
25 teacher from my 11th grade did not have his credentials. I could tell that he had a difficult time
26 teaching because he was always trying to find new ways to teach. Since he didn't know how to
27 teach very well, he had to research and ask other teachers about teaching techniques. My teacher
28 for integrated science II during my 10th grade year was part of the Teach for America program

1 and did not have his teaching credentials either. My ninth grade English teacher did not have
2 teaching credentials. The fact that we have teachers that don't have teaching credentials is not
3 good for students. It kind of cheats us out of our education. An experienced teacher that has
4 been through teaching training knows different methods and approaches to help students; new,
5 experienced teachers don't have that training. It seems like we're the guinea pigs because they're
6 learning how to teach with us for the first time. This is not fair because we don't get the same
7 opportunity to get into college.

8 8. Many classes at Locke are too crowded. My A.P. Spanish class during my 9th
9 grade year was so crowded that the teacher could not get around to everyone. We were very
10 crowded because there were about ten rows of desks, plus two big tables at the back of the class
11 at which other students sat.

12 9. Substitutes are common at Locke High School. My student council advisor left
13 Locke, so my class was left without an advisor. We had about four substitutes in the two weeks
14 after the advisor left. We did get a new permanent advisor, but having two different advisors and
15 four substitutes really interrupted our class because we couldn't do anything without an advisor.
16 This made me really sad because the student council is very important to the school. We were
17 supposed to serve the student body, but with so many changes, it was hard to do so. It upsets me
18 that we have so many substitutes at my school. There have been classes where there were
19 substitutes throughout the whole school year so that the students never get a permanent teacher. I
20 have also seen some classes where neither the teacher nor the substitute show up for class. Since
21 there is no teacher in the classroom, students begin to get restless and eventually leave the class
22 and walk around the school. Once, I saw that a substitute got to a classroom for the last ten
23 minutes of class, but by then, all of the students were roaming around the campus. I don't think a
24 class should ever be left without a teacher.

25 10. There are not enough counselors at Locke High School. During my 9th grade year,
26 my counselor was ill and was not at school for almost a whole semester. For my first semester of
27 English, I was placed in a Contemporary English class, which is for 11th graders. I tried talking
28 to other counselors about transferring me out of Contemporary English and placing me in the

1 correct English class. I was told that they were too busy and that I would have to wait until my
2 counselor came back to school. Therefore, I was the only freshman in this class with juniors and
3 seniors. For my second semester of English class I was placed in English 9B, which is the correct
4 level, but I was behind other students that had English 9A for the first semester. I had to go to
5 summer school to take English 9A. This would not have happened if we would have had an
6 adequate number of counselors. My counselor is in charge of so many programs like the
7 Outreach program, Educational Academic Outreach Program, and is the advisor for seniors,
8 among other things. He is in charge of more than 1000 students, so when he's not available,
9 everyone suffers the consequences. I have a lot of friends that have been placed in the wrong
10 classes, and then they have to wait until the counselor is available to change their schedules. I've
11 seen some of my peers take the same math class for two years, even though they had already
12 passed it the first time.

13 11. The restrooms at Locke are also a problem. More than half of the about 2,500
14 students at Locke are women, but there is only one bathroom open for us during class time. If I
15 have class in the bungalows and want to go to the bathroom, I have to spend about 10-15 minutes
16 out of class in order to walk over to the bathroom that is open, go to the bathroom, and then walk
17 back to the bungalows. There is rarely toilet paper, the soap dispensers don't work, and there is
18 never any soap. The hand dryers have not worked for two years. The bathrooms are really nasty.
19 This is a health issue; they are too dirty so the students don't want to use the bathrooms.

20 12. A lot of the classrooms do not have air conditioning. It gets so hot in the
21 classrooms that it feels like I'm outside in a hot summer day. There are a lot of people in the
22 classroom, so that makes it even more hot and stuffy. When it gets hot in the classroom it makes
23 me tired and sleepy, so I can't concentrate on my work. It is hot in the classes for like 5 months
24 out of the school year. The heat in the classrooms makes students not want to come to class.

25 13. I have seen rats and roaches at my school. I was once setting up for a meeting in
26 the parent conference room, when I saw a rat trap that had a rat's tail trapped, but the rat's body
27 was missing, and there was blood all over the trap. Across from this room is the Title I office,
28 where I was told that some school administrators found and killed a rat. In my art class from my

1 junior year there was always rat poop. The droppings looked like chocolate sprinkles all over the
2 floor. This was dangerous to our health because rats are nasty animals and can carry diseases.
3 There has been an increase in the infestation of rodents this year at Locke. I think this may have
4 something to do with the new construction at the school because the construction workers place
5 large piles of construction debris around the school.

6 14. For my junior and sophomore years there was constant noise from construction
7 during school hours. I frequently heard drilling in class. We could not hear the teachers talk
8 because it sounded like if the construction workers were drilling the concrete. I could also feel
9 the vibrations from the drilling during class. This really distracted our learning.

10 15. There are many windows at our school that are jammed or broken. The broken
11 windows are a danger to students, but no one fixes them. My English classroom from the 10th
12 grade had a window that was shattered for a whole semester. My teacher blocked off the area
13 herself and just told us not to go near it.

14 16. All of these things at my school make me angry; it's unfair that we have to battle
15 for things that should already be there. Once you learn how to fight the educational system then
16 you at least have a chance of getting the classes and education that we should all get. Too many
17 students get run over by this educational system.

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19 I declare under penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of California and the United
20 States that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 3 day of July, 2001 in Los
21 Angeles, California.

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