

**Declaration of Christopher Gomez**

I, Christopher Gomez, 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 16 years old and a junior on track A at Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles, where I have gone to school for all my years of high school.

3. I make this declaration because the conditions at Manual Arts are so bad that it is amazing that any kids stay in school at all. A lot of kids drop out because of the conditions there; they get discouraged. I don't think I will even try to graduate on time because there are too many classes that I have not been able to take because of school conditions. The teachers blame the students, and say the kids don't really care about their education, but I think the school kind of encourages kids to drop out.

4. Manual Arts is a multitrack, year-round school. We don't really get a complete education because the teachers have to cover so much in only 16 weeks, whereas other schools on traditional calendars can cover the same material in more days. It doesn't help kids to go to school for three months and then go off track while the school year is still in session. There is so much time between tracks that we forget things.

5. The school is overcrowded. Even with only two tracks on at a time, it is too crowded. You can tell a difference between the tracks in issues of crowding too. When B and C tracks are on track, the school is full, but when tracks A and B or tracks A and C are on track, the school is absolutely packed. It takes forever to get anywhere in the halls. A small school shouldn't be able to handle the about 4000 kids Manual Arts has. Because of the overcrowding, you can't get into all the classes you need to take, even the required ones. This year, I couldn't take a math class because there are only two teachers who teach algebra II, and each of them only teaches one or two periods. My chemistry class last year started out with 45 kids, and some kids couldn't take chemistry at all because there wasn't enough room.

6. Every year, I always have at least one class that doesn't have enough seats at first. These are usually the required classes, because they are the most crowded. In my algebra I

1 class in ninth grade, it was so overcrowded that kids were sitting on the desks and tables, and  
2 there were kids standing at the back of the room and standing in the doorway. This lasted for 2-3  
3 weeks. The teacher couldn't even assign seats. There are enough seats in my classes now  
4 because so many people have dropped out or stopped coming to class.

5 7. In many of my classes, there are not enough textbooks. In ninth grade, I only had  
6 one book total that I could take home out of all my classes. Some classes have no textbooks at  
7 all, some have only a few books that are usually outdated. Many of the textbooks are really old,  
8 are missing pages and have no glossaries at the back because the pages have fallen out and are  
9 missing. Textbooks are shared between three or four people in lots of classes. In my chemistry  
10 class in tenth grade, there were only four copies of the good book ( the one the teacher taught  
11 from) and about four or five really old ones. Obviously, most people didn't get to use any book at  
12 all. Our class had to steal books from another class just to catch up. In my geography class,  
13 there were no textbooks at all. Since there aren't enough books, we usually have to copy our  
14 homework assignments from the books during class. The teachers try to photocopy things for us,  
15 but they can only make a certain number of copies, and they have to pay for them.

16 8. There is only one college counselor for the entire school. If you have a problem  
17 with your classes or schedule, you fill out a form, and the counselor tries to fix it, but the  
18 counselor can't do much.

19 9. In my Education Career Planning class, we watched so many movies that I can't  
20 remember all of them. We watched Shaft and New Jack City, and a lot of others.

21 10. We don't have a lot of the materials we need to learn. We got new computers in  
22 January, but they weren't hooked up until April or May. Some of the old computers don't even  
23 have a keyboard or a mouse. There is something always wrong with the computers, like it won't  
24 log onto the Internet or print from the classrooms. There are no graphics calculators for the math  
25 classes, even though our textbooks say we are supposed to use them to solve the problems. In  
26 our chemistry class, we saw only one experiment last year, and the teacher brought the equipment  
27 in himself.

28 11. We have to pay for our practice uniforms for football ourselves. If we don't raise

1 the money, we don't get to go to any competitions.

2 12. We don't really have a football field. In the school brochures, the map says  
3 'natural grass field', but there is no grass. It's just dirt, and on windy days, the dust gets all over  
4 everything. When we go to games at other schools, their cleats look like new compared to ours,  
5 because ours are covered in brown dust.

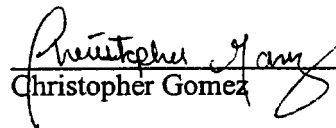
6 13. During the day, there are only two boys bathrooms unlocked, and a lot of the time  
7 they're full. After lunch, starting at 1:00, there is only one boys bathroom open for the entire  
8 school.

9 14. I've seen mice every year that I've been at Manual Arts. The girls aren't even  
10 scared of them anymore because we're all so used to seeing them. A few days ago, a mouse ran  
11 right past my foot in the hallway of the Wilson building. I saw another one about a week and a  
12 half ago in the science building.

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14 I declare under penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of California and the United  
15 States that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 14 day of June, 2001 in Los Angeles,  
16 California.

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Christopher Gomez

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