

1 I, KATE GALLAGHER, hereby declare:

2 1. I have taught for the past three years at Webster Academy (“Webster”) in Oakland. I
3 taught first grade in my first year, and second grade for each of the past two years. I served as second
4 grade representative on the Webster Leadership Team (‘00-‘01); as chair of the second grade (100-
5 ‘01); and as one of three union representatives (‘99-‘01). In ‘00-‘01, I took the lead in establishing a
6 PTA for Webster.

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

9 3. In my three years at Webster, I have not been provided with an organized and complete
10 set of science materials. The Oakland Unified School District does not use a textbook-based science
11 curriculum, but in my classroom I have found and used partial sets of Scholastic Science Place
12 materials. Webster owns some FOSS kits, which are boxes of materials focused on one concept
13 (living things, soils, balance and motion). These boxes come with teacher’s manuals and everything
14 necessary for the activities, from soil samples to paper clips. However, these boxes become depleted
15 as teachers use them, and Webster has no organized method for replacing these materials. Also, there
16 are not enough kits to allow every classroom to have its own, and the kits are stored all over the
17 school, so teachers must hunt for the one they need. Fresh, complete FOSS kits can be ordered from
18 the OUSD BASTEC office, and teachers can have these kits delivered to their classrooms at no
19 charge. When teachers are finished with the kits, BASTEC will pick them up and replenish them for
20 the next teacher. I started using this service in ‘00-‘01, but many teachers at Webster were unaware
21 of it. The school does not provide training in how to use the Scholastic or FOSS kits, so some
22 teachers shy away from using them. If we had support for our science projects, teachers would feel
23 more comfortable using the kits and would be more likely to integrate them into their science
24 teaching.

25 4. In ‘99-‘00, Webster teachers had no social studies textbooks at all. Like other teachers at
26 Webster, I created lesson plans based on my grade-level content standards. There was no help or
27 oversight to ensure that teachers were teaching the required state or district content standards.
28 Teachers either used books from the library or bought their own. I copied worksheets and maps for

1 each of my students, to connect my social studies-related books with specific concepts, and to help
2 me assess student progress. In '00-'01, we received a comprehensive social studies curriculum,
3 including textbooks, workbooks, maps, posters and audio cassettes. The workbooks used by the
4 students will need to be replaced in the '01-'02 school year.

5 5. There are insufficient books, teacher's manuals, and training for our ELD program. In
6 '00-'01, I had six LEP (Limited English Proficiency) students in my class in '00-'01, and I knew that
7 I was required to provide 50 minutes per day of ELD instruction for these students. However, just
8 before winter break, another sheltered English teacher told me that I was required to use the
9 Hampton-Brown "Into English" program during that 50 minutes. I had not been provided with the
10 materials for Hampton-Brown, but she had an extra manual and almost-complete set of books and
11 tapes that she loaned to me for the rest of the year.

12 6. Because there is no straightforward way to order materials at Webster, it is common for
13 teachers to purchase materials with their own personal funds. I can get drawing paper, pencils,
14 crayons, chart paper, and other basic supplies from our supply closet, but if I need watercolor paints,
15 poster board, tracing paper, or color markers, I buy them myself. Last year I bought all of the
16 materials for a unit on butterflies. Next year, I want to try a unit involving incubating chicken eggs,
17 and I plan to write a grant or find some way to get that unit funded, other than through my own
18 checking account. Most of the \$1,600 I spent last year on my classroom was spent on books, which I
19 will be able to use for years, if I continue to teach in the grades K-2. However, not all teachers have
20 the ability to buy materials themselves, and they should not be expected to do so. In '00-'01, each
21 Webster teacher was promised \$200 in books for classroom libraries. We ordered the books in
22 March (as I recall) and they never arrived. Delays in the delivery of materials seem to be common
23 throughout the district. The tape players we ordered for each classroom never arrived. We ordered
24 playground equipment (jump ropes, hula hoops, balls) which didn't arrive until the last two weeks of
25 school. In the meantime, many teachers bought their own jump ropes and outdoor equipment.

26 7. Teachers at Webster rely on making copies to fill gaps in the instructional materials. I
27 make a minimum of 1,600 copies a month, since each day I generally make 2 copies for each child
28 for in-class work, and 2 copies (back and front of one sheet) for the day's homework. Beyond that, I

1 might need to make copies of science worksheets for special units (like the butterflies), copies of
2 ELD materials, the words of songs we're learning, reading logs, centers logs, and centers activities.
3 Webster has three copying machines for teacher use, and I am given 1,000 copies per month on each
4 machine (plus paper). When a machine is broken or out of toner, I must wait for the machine to be
5 fixed. If only one machine is working, and I've used all of my copies on that machine, I must ask
6 another teacher to make my copies on her ID number, or ask the secretary if I can use the machine in
7 the office. In '00-'01, there were several occasions when none of the copying machines were
8 functioning, and teachers were waiting to use the office machine. This process can be very stressful,
9 especially for new teachers and substitutes, who often need to make last-minute copies as they adjust
10 and re-adjust their lesson plans. In '99-'00, when Webster was using the Macmillan reading
11 program, I was provided with one reading workbook from which I had to make copies for every
12 student in my class. Now, with Open Court, we are supplied with workbooks for each student.
13 These workbooks will need to be replenished at the beginning of the '01-'02 school year.

14 8. The library at Webster was closed all of the '00-'01 school year. Because of
15 construction at the school, all library books were boxed up and moved to the stage. The plan, as I
16 understand it, was to move the books to another room so that students could use them while the new
17 library was completed. Instead, the books were kept in boxes on the stage, and late in the year we
18 received a memo from the principal stating that the books would be moved into the new library
19 (completed in February/March) when the library technicians had completed their training. As I
20 recall, some books were moved into the library to make room on the stage for the Cinco de Mayo
21 assembly, but the library was not open to students. Teachers who wanted to give their students some
22 experience with a library took them to the local public library. I do not know if the library will be
23 open on the first day of school in the fall.

24 9. Every year that I have been teaching at Webster, we've had a minimum of about 10 new
25 teachers. These teachers might be in their first year of teaching, or they might simply be new to
26 Webster. As I recall, in my first year at Webster ('98-'99), I was one of about 20 incoming teachers.
27 I was in my first year of teaching, and about 5 of us met together regularly to give each other support
28 and encouragement. There was no organized, ongoing support for new teachers. In '00-'01, we had

1 no formal orientation for new teachers and as I recall, no "teacher's guide" to the school and district.
2 In my first year at Webster, I received such a guide, in a 3-ring binder. Overall, there's very little
3 support for new teachers at Webster. According to one of our first-year teachers in '00-'01, she was
4 not formally observed by the principal or vice principal all year. Formal teacher observations are a
5 district requirement, and she reported this at a meeting with the superintendent in May. I don't know
6 if she was observed by the end of the school year. This lack of support is very demoralizing for
7 teachers, and undoubtedly contributes to the high turnover at Webster.

8 10. In addition to high teacher turnover, Webster has had a lot of turnover among
9 administrators. We have had three principals in the last three years, and one acting principal who
10 bridged the gap between the first and second of these. One principal quit in May, 1999, and one of
11 her vice principals stepped in to finish the school year and serve as acting principal for summer
12 school and until a new principal was chosen in the fall. The next principal spent one year at the
13 school (1999-2000) and was reassigned. Our principal for the 2000-2001 school year plans to stay
14 for 2001-2002. This lack of continuity has been demoralizing for the teachers, because it has meant
15 that none of the problems at the school have received sustained attention.

16 11. Webster has changed reading programs in each of my three years at the school. This
17 has been very stressful for both the teachers and the students. Before we master one program, we
18 must begin learning a new one. Now Webster, along with many other Oakland schools, is using
19 Open Court Reading (begun in 2000-2001), and I hope we continue with it.

20 12. The substitute teacher shortage continues to be a problem at Webster and in the district.
21 We now use STIP teachers for short-term substitute teaching. On days when there are insufficient
22 STIP teachers, our prep teachers cover those classes. Prep teachers come into classrooms twice a
23 week for 50 minutes, to give the regular classroom teacher time to do some preparation work (making
24 copies, grading papers, meeting with a team teacher, observing in another room). If prep teachers are
25 subbing, then some teachers lose their preparation time for that day. The teachers at Webster chose
26 this arrangement, because we felt that the alternative was worse: dispersing the students of the absent
27 teacher to other classes would disrupt the learning experience of all of the students involved.

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1 Although teachers receive pay to make up for their lost prep time, the money does not make up for
2 the value of time to work outside the classroom during the school day.

3 13. Webster currently has thirty (30) portable classrooms and three (3) portable bathrooms.
4 These rooms line the playground, and when students are outside for lunch recess it can be very noisy.
5 The main building contains approximately eighteen (18) classrooms.

6 14. Most of these portables do not have air-conditioning, and during the spring (May-June)
7 they can become oven-like. Fans don't cool them off efficiently, because the portables have very
8 little cross-ventilation. The windows at the back wall of some of the portables open only a few
9 inches because of the metal gratings on the outside. The main school building can be hot (also, no
10 air-conditioning), but not nearly as hot as the portables. Also, in 2000-2001, some of the portables
11 were without heat when we returned from winter break, and they were bitter cold. Some teachers
12 held class inside the teachers' lounge, and some brought in space heaters. The heaters took some of
13 the chill out of the air, but students still wore their coats all day. It's hard to imagine any real
14 learning going on under these circumstances, and some of those heaters were not repaired for at least
15 a week.

16 15. Computer access at Webster is quite poor. A couple of years ago we received a
17 donation of 50 computers from Oracle, but these "black box" networked computers are now obsolete.
18 I've been told that we can't get new code cards for them, if cards get lost (these are the cards that
19 allow the computers to be turned on) and, as I understand it, Oracle is no longer providing technical
20 support. The district has technicians who will come to the school sites to troubleshoot the computers.
21 The Oracles cannot be upgraded in any way, and because they are run through a central server
22 teachers can't load their own software. It's a closed system. Although the Oracles are connected to
23 the Internet, they are extremely slow, and this is frustrating for students. They have a basic word-
24 processing/drawing program, so I have used them to teach students how to use the keyboard and
25 enter/save documents. We have gone online, but it is a slow and frustrating process. About 30 new
26 computers are on order, to arrive at Webster this fall. The plan is to create a computer lab in the new
27 wing of the building, but 30-35 computers are not nearly enough to serve a school of 1,000 students.
28 Webster students generally do not have access to a computer at home. We have a 6.25 hour school

1 day, so if the computer lab was running and open to classes every minute of that time, each class
2 would have about 40 minutes per week of computer access. This would be a minimum amount of
3 time for students to develop their computer skills.

4 16. Webster has several tetherball poles and one small set of monkeybars. Children are not
5 allowed to climb on stairway railings, but they climb on them every day because there is no other
6 climbing area. Some students spend most of their recess time in line, waiting for their brief turn on
7 the monkeybars. A climbing structure was installed this summer ('01).

8 17. Several teachers at Webster have seen mice or rats in their classrooms, and I have seen
9 rodent droppings in classroom closets and in the open spaces under the wall that separates the
10 women's bathroom from the girls' room.

11 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the state of California that the foregoing is
12 true and correct. Executed by me on this 21th day of September, 2001 at Berkeley, California.

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16 Kate Gallagher
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