

1 **DECLARATION OF VINCENT NG**

2 I, VINCENT NG, hereby declare:

3 1. I make this declaration based on my personal knowledge, and if called to testify I  
4 could and would do so competently as follows:

5 2. I am a senior at Balboa High School in San Francisco, California. This is my third  
6 year as a student at Balboa.

7 3. Some classes at Balboa are taught by one or more substitute teachers for long periods  
8 of time. During the 2000-2001 school year, my trigonometry class started off the school year  
9 without a permanent teacher. We were taught by a substitute for the first three or four weeks of  
10 school until a teacher was finally hired for the class. Starting off the school year with a substitute  
11 slowed down our class. We were confused by the substitute, who did not teach us correctly or in a  
12 way that we could understand. The weeks during which we were taught by the substitute were  
13 wasted weeks; when a permanent teacher was finally hired, we had to start learning trigonometry  
14 from the beginning. The new teacher said he would start teaching us the material from the beginning  
15 of the book because he felt no one understood the material we had supposedly been taught in the first  
16 weeks of school. We were never able to make up for this lost time. By the end of the year, we had  
17 covered only about two thirds of the material in the book; I know students at other schools who  
18 covered the entire book in the year. Having a substitute teacher for a month in that class really  
19 affected my progress in math. I used to be a "B" - "A" student in math, but last year my grades  
20 dropped. I felt unprepared for the SAT-9 last spring, and I do not feel adequately prepared for my  
21 calculus class this year. Other students in my trigonometry class told me that they also felt that they  
22 had not learned anything in the class and that they were worried about not being adequately prepared  
23 for college-level math courses. Some of them took trigonometry at City College of San Francisco  
24 this past summer to try to learn what we were supposed to have been taught last year.

1           4.       I heard that the advanced algebra class last year also was taught by a series of  
2 substitutes. After first semester, a few different substitutes taught the class over a period of a couple  
3 of months until a permanent replacement was found. My friends in that class complained to me that  
4 each substitute kept teaching them the same material over and over again, so the students did not  
5 learn much. At least one of the teachers they had was not even a math teacher. It is not right for the  
6 school to assign substitutes to teach math classes because math is very valuable and it is important  
7 that we learn it well.

8           5.       A lot of teachers leave Balboa. More than one half of the teachers I had in my  
9 sophomore and junior years have left the school. I keep in touch with some of these teachers, and  
10 they tell me that a lot of teachers leave Balboa because they do not feel that they get respect from the  
11 school and the district. They also say that teachers quit because the salary is too low and there is not  
12 enough money to pay for the textbooks or programs that students need. Having so much turnover  
13 amongst the teaching staff is a problem because the school keeps hiring substitutes or untrained  
14 teachers to replace the teachers who leave. Some teachers have told me that a lot of teachers at  
15 Balboa are not trained to teach. The teacher who was hired for my trigonometry class, for example,  
16 told me that he came from a business job, and I do not think he was trained to be a teacher. The high  
17 teacher turnover also makes it difficult for me to get the teacher recommendations I need for my  
18 college applications.

19           6.       There are not enough textbooks at Balboa. Since I have been a student at Balboa, the  
20 math department has not had enough textbooks, and the books it has are very old and in poor  
21 physical condition, with pages ripped out. In my tenth grade advanced algebra class during the  
22 1999-2000 school year, we were not allowed to take our books home because we did not have  
23 enough for each student. In my eleventh grade trigonometry class, some students had no books for  
24 the first semester, and the only reason there were enough books during second semester was that a

1 number of students dropped out because they felt like they were not learning anything. To deal with  
2 the lack of books, sometimes we had to share books in class. I complained to my math teacher about  
3 not having a book to take home because it is really hard to learn math without a textbook. The  
4 teacher told me that the school does not provide the teachers with enough books. I have heard other  
5 teachers complain about the lack of textbooks, and they say that the school cannot afford enough  
6 books for every student.

7         7.       By not giving us our own math books, the school puts us in jeopardy of not learning  
8 math. Some students, including myself, are just better at learning on their own. Others have trouble  
9 understanding the teacher in class because of language barriers; these students should be allowed to  
10 take a textbook home, so they can figure out the questions they had in class on their own.

11         8.       The lack of textbooks is a problem in other classes as well. In both my junior and  
12 sophomore English classes, the teacher said we could not have textbooks because there were not  
13 enough for every student. Instead, the teacher handed out photocopies of textbook pages or assigned  
14 us work that did not involve a textbook. I wish I had been given a literature book because it would  
15 have allowed me to improve my writing skills without having to ask my teacher for help all the time.  
16 I have heard students in history classes, like Modern World, complain that they do not have enough  
17 textbooks, as well. Their teachers make photocopies every time they give the students assignments;  
18 students have to return these photocopies to save resources. I also have friends who had no books in  
19 their chemistry classes during the 1999-2000 school year. They only covered eight chapters worth  
20 of material in the entire year, whereas my class, which had books, covered twenty-six chapters in a  
21 year. The reason my class had enough books was that it was an honors chemistry class, taught by  
22 the head of the science department, so he made sure we had enough books.

23         9.       The condition of bathrooms at Balboa is also a problem. During my sophomore year  
24 the 1999-2000 school year, the bathrooms never had any soap, paper towels, or toilet paper. That

1 year, I was part of Beautifying Balboa, a group of about 15 students and a couple of teachers at the  
2 school. One of our main priorities as a group was to fix the bathrooms. At the end of that year, the  
3 school started putting some soap in the bathrooms. Last year, the 2000-2001 school year, some of  
4 the bathrooms had soap and paper towels sometimes, but the problem was not fixed entirely. The  
5 bathrooms were still generally filthy. There was a lot of urine on the floor, so most students just did  
6 not use the bathrooms. I stopped using the bathrooms because they smelled so bad. Sometimes in  
7 class, I have to use the bathroom but I cannot force myself to use the bathrooms because they are so  
8 gross; during those times, it gets very distracting trying to focus on class.

9       10. Most of the bathrooms at Balboa are also locked during the day, so any student who  
10 wants to use the bathroom must ask a security guard to unlock it. The bathrooms that are unlocked  
11 are far away from most of the classrooms. I think the school should unlock the bathrooms and give  
12 us some peace.

13       11. Balboa is overcrowded. Some classes have too many students. Some small  
14 classrooms that are meant for only twenty students have between thirty and thirty-three students.  
15 This was the case with my history class during the 2000-2001 school year. I could tell the class was  
16 meant for only about twenty students by looking at the number of desks and seeing how much space  
17 there was in the room. The desks in that class were long tables meant for four students, but six  
18 students would sit at each table. It felt very crowded in there. It was also distracting not to have  
19 enough space, and it made it harder to communicate with the teacher because there were so many  
20 students. In my tenth grade social studies class, the room could handle 28 students comfortably, but  
21 the school placed 36 students in there.

22       12. In tenth grade, during the 1999-2000 school year, my math and science classes were  
23 so packed in the beginning of the year that there were not even enough chairs and desks for students  
24 In advanced algebra, for example, there were over 50 students in the class on the first day of school.

1 After a couple weeks, some students transferred to other classes, but there were still well over 30  
2 students in the class. During the first one or two weeks of the school year, between five and ten  
3 students in my math and science classes did not have desks. Sometimes, students would have to  
4 stand up in the back of the room without chairs. Other times, the teacher would borrow chairs and/or  
5 desks from other classrooms. It does not make any sense that the school would not budget enough  
6 money for chairs and desks, which are basic needs. It is very distracting to not have enough chairs  
7 in a class. We should be focusing on learning the material we are being taught in class, but instead,  
8 we end up worrying about the lack of supplies and the financial problems at the school.

9 13. Another result of the overcrowding is that the lunchroom is way too crowded. The  
10 lunchroom itself is very small, even though it is supposed to serve all the students at the school. The  
11 line for the cafeteria gets so long that by the time students get their lunch, the lunch period is over.  
12 A lot of people just do not eat as a result and instead spend the lunch period in the quad or in other  
13 classrooms.

14 14. The school rarely turns on the heater, even when it is cold inside. Almost every day  
15 between October and January or February of last year, students kept their jackets on during class  
16 because it was so cold inside. I complained to various teachers, but they said the school felt it was  
17 unnecessary to turn the heater on. I think it is necessary, though, because when I get really cold in  
18 class, I cannot think straight; all I can do is concentrate on getting warm. I think the lack of heat is  
19 the reason that I kept getting colds throughout the school year.

20 15. Last year in my social studies class, we saw a mouse run across the floor. The  
21 teacher told me that mice were still in the room after that. She put traps up herself to deal with the  
22 problem. I have also heard complaints about mice in classrooms from other teachers.

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1           16.     During my sophomore year, I heard that the basement, where special education  
2 classes and the computer lab are located, flooded once when it rained. It took a couple of weeks for  
3 the school to clean up the problem.

4           17.     During my sophomore year, the teachers would tell us not to use the water fountains  
5 because the water was dirty.

6           18.     Some classes do not have shades; the sunshine makes it difficult to see the black  
7 board.

8           19.     The school is desperate for more money, which hurts the students. Balboa students  
9 have to work so much harder to get into college than students from other schools because we do not  
10 have enough books or trained teachers. School feels like a joke a lot of the time. Students feel that  
11 the school does not care about them because the school does not even have enough chairs or books  
12 for them. Many students also feel that school is a waste of time because we are treated like  
13 prisoners, instead of students. Balboa feels like a prison because the administration does not seem to  
14 trust the students at all. The school is completely gated, we cannot leave the campus during lunch,  
15 and we cannot wear red because it is supposedly a "gang color."

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17           I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing  
18 is true and correct. Executed on October 17, 2001, at San Francisco, California.

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Vincent Ng

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